Alumni Schools Committees + Regional Associations = A Dynamic (Alumni Community Building) Duo

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Alumni Schools Committee (ASC) and Regional Associations

ASC and Regional Associations are critical engines for alumni engagement.

Finding ways for ASC+Regional Associations to partner helps to bolster local event programming, broaden engagement, and strengthen the sense of local alumni community.

Today’s call will highlight some ways to tighten the linkages between ASC and regional associations to create a “win-win” for both groups.

We will focus on three ways that ASC and Regional Associations can leverage each other’s strength:

- recruiting, training and retaining volunteers
- organizing alumni interviews
- planning events to welcome and support admitted students and parents
Recruiting, Training and Retaining Alumni Interviewers

Alumni Schools Committees and Regional Associations should cross-promote activities and engagement opportunities whenever possible.
- Regional Associations are a primary vehicle for welcoming new alumni to the region and are uniquely positioned to promote the variety of local engagement opportunities, including ASC work, to all alumni.
- For those alumni who desire more service-oriented activities, ASCs provide ready-made opportunities for community outreach. *All alumni can be Princeton “ambassadors!”*
- ASCs can serve as a gateway for young alumni engagement in local activities by inviting them to new student events and fostering the sense of alumni association engagement.
- Volunteer recognition events or communications driven by the regional associations can be incredibly useful in recruiting and retaining great alumni volunteers - *Thank you matters!*

By partnering, regional associations and ASCs can better help navigate volunteer lifecycles by providing an array of opportunities that evolve as interests and availability may shift.
Recruiting, Training and Retaining Alumni Interviewers

ASC Kickoff/Training events in the fall are a great way to engage local alumni volunteers

- Ready-made content for alumni gatherings
- Great way to build morale among existing volunteers AND to help attract new volunteers
- Opportunity to showcase other regional activities beyond ASC work
- Potential to coordinate with Admission Office travel if planned in advance
- In-person events are ideal- but teleconferences can work too! PSC Leaders are available to help facilitate the calls and provide useful content.
  
- The key is to actively engage in volunteer support -make alumni engagement a rewarding experience for all involved!

Case Study: Bliss Smith ’87, Dallas ASC Chair
Recruiting, Training and Retaining Alumni Interviewers

Committee on Regional Associations (CORA) awards grants annually to regional associations to help bolster their programming.

- Two recipients in the last year won for their efforts to link ASC + Regional Associations.
  - **PC of Georgia:** The funds were used to support the effort to convert Alumni Schools Committee volunteers to become actively engaged with the regional association.
  - **PAA of Central and Eastern Kentucky:** The grant was awarded to support their special Alumni School Committee event, which aims to increase young alumni engagement.
Organizing Alumni Interviews - Try A Blitz!

**Benefits**
- Helps organize large numbers of applicants in a way that is easy for interviewers to participate.
- Particularly effective for regions that have a vast geography and/or large number of applicants to cover, and a relatively smaller volunteer pool.
- These sessions have a secondary benefit of building camaraderie among the alumni who participate in these blitz sessions.

**Success Stories in multiple regions**
- Inland Empire, California
- Atlanta, Georgia
- London, England
- New York, NY
- South Florida

**Case study: Harry Aldrich ’82, Princeton Club of South Florida**
Interviewing Applicants - Helpful Tips and Tools for a Blitz!

- Weekends typically work better for both students and volunteers.

- Ask the regional association to help provide snacks and drinks for volunteers - and make sure to build in some time for volunteers to spend time together before, during or after the event.

- Schools, local libraries, law or consulting firms, and even shopping malls have been locales for effective blitz sessions. Survey your local alumni and resources to see who might have a space that works.

- Always advise the Office of Admission (asc@princeton.edu) of any planned blitz sessions so that they can more adeptly field parent or applicant inquiries.

- Consider creating a specific Princeton ASC email address from which to send any blitz invitations, e.g., PhiladelphiaPrincetonASC@gmail.com to convey a sense of professionalism and legitimacy to the invitation.

- Free scheduling software can make the process even easier.

- Email templates and case studies are available on the ASC website.
Engaging Newly Admitted Students and Families

Hosting events to welcome newly admitted students and their families can also help to strengthen the local alumni community as a positive by-product.

- Examples of ways to welcome new admits:
  - Admitted student receptions in January (for Early Admits) or April (after regular decisions are released, but before the May 1 commitment deadline) where interviewers, local alumni, and newly admitted families are present
    - New students can ask questions, parents can make connections to other parents
    - Provides additional opportunity for alumni to connect with one another
  - Summer picnic to send off newly admitted students before arriving on campus in fall
  - Winter break “reunions” activities for current students
- Consider inviting current Princeton students to attend - not only to increase the bonds among local matriculants, but also to recruit early your next generation of ASC and regional volunteers

Case study - Candace Jackson-Akiwumi ’00, ASC Chair for the Chicago region
Regional Associations + ASCs = A Winning Combination

A strong alumni community can be built through an ASC + Regional Association partnership

- Built-in regional events when ASC is incorporated into an event calendar
- Higher levels and broader levels of alumni can be involved
- Tighter linkages are built among newly admitted students, current students, alumni and parents
- ASC interviewing can provide alumni with “the first step” to engaging with the alumni and regional community

When ASC and Regional Associations partner together, it furthers a culture of engagement and a sense of belonging.
Many thanks to......

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