

Best Practices for Student Groups Working with Alumni for Programs and Events

Penn alumni can be an excellent resource to learn more about career fields. Student groups may want to reach out to alumni to speak at events, or to participate in your group's professionally-oriented activities. Check out Career Services' tips on working with alumni before reaching out! Advisors from Career Services have extensive experience working with employers and alumni, and these best practices can help your next event to be a success.

1. Consider connecting with an advisor at Career Services to share your ideas. We have extensive experience working with alumni and employers, and can share thoughts on the event you are planning, and ideas on how to involve alumni effectively. In some cases, there are other events that are happening through Career Services that you may want to know about that might support or conflict with yours.
2. Work with Alumni Relations to identify employers of interest before you reach out – many alumni employers have already indicated that they are open to hearing from students and this is the best place to start. Send an email to Elise Betz (ebetz@upenn.edu) and she can direct you to the right person in Alumni Relations to work with your student group.
3. Brainstorm with your group about what you are asking to alumni employer to do – it is best to have several options of how they can get involved instead of one big “ask”. We encourage you to think about involving employers in ways which are both educational and for professional development. In many cases, employer information sessions are best handled by Career Services. Ideas for student groups can include:
 - Industry panels, site visits, judging of student competitions, and networking events
4. Student groups are welcome to ask alumni for their time, but should refrain from asking them or their employer for financial assistance for events or student groups. This is best left to Alumni Relations – check with your contact in the alumni office if your group wants to discuss finances with alumni or their employer.



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5. Be respectful of the alum's time – be sure to ask for assistance with something that is reasonable in terms of their time commitment. For example, weekend and evening events may or may not work for their schedule, so offer flexibility to them to show respect for their time.
6. Decide on who in your group will reach out to the alumni – your group's leader may be the best choice, or someone who has worked as an intern there, or who has some sort of connection. Initial contact should be over email, as this can be a non-intrusive way to start off the conversation.
7. Under some conditions, an alum may be open to inviting students to their place of work to showcase their organization or project work. These educational visits to employers are a great way for your group to be involved – but participation needs to be open to all members of the organization. If participation needs to be limited because of space, assign spots to students on a first-come, first-served basis or by a random selection of attendees.
8. Once your event is created, and if you want to advertise it to the broader Penn student community, you can add to the Career Services website for additional advertising. Reach out to an advisor at Career Services to let them know you wish to do this, and then follow this link (<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/account/guests/>) to get it listed on our events calendar.
9. Ensure that your event is well organized and makes good use of the alum's time – a little planning to make sure that the event is on time and runs smoothly will make for a happy alum who wants to return! It can take several months to organize some alumni events – especially if you are trying to coordinate the participation of several alumni from different employers. Sometimes, an alum may have to cancel at short notice if work projects become a priority.
10. Be sure to thank the alum for their time and assistance, both in person and after the event over email. If you have photos of the event, share them with any alumni who participated. Let Penn Alumni Relations know how the event went too.



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