

HANDBOOK FOR CHAPTER LEADERS

Values Statement

As a Catholic university in the Franciscan tradition, we dedicate ourselves to the following Core Values and to making them live and thrive at St. Bonaventure:

Discovery: We steadfastly pursue intellectual, spiritual and personal growth in a way that reflects our belief in the wonder, excitement and joy of discovery along life's good journey. Central to that journey is an appreciation for the best that has been thought, written and discovered. It is our firm intent that our faculty and students add to this body of knowledge, sharing the adventure of inquiry in an atmosphere of academic freedom, both within and outside the classroom.

Community: We believe in an inclusive community that values diversity as a strength. We foster and celebrate practices that nurture living and learning in an atmosphere of caring, respect and mutual accountability. We seek to enhance the quality of life in the world around us, particularly by reaching out to the poor, the less fortunate and the disadvantaged. We not only demonstrate this spirit of community on our campus; we manifest it wherever we go.

Individual Worth: At the core of our identity is a strong belief in the goodness of life and the God-given worth of every individual. We treat all members of our community with dignity and strive to help them reach their full potential. We commit ourselves to actions that empower all members of the St. Bonaventure community and encourage their full participation in creating our future.

Statement of Distinction

At St. Bonaventure University, we strive to foster the development of knowledgeable, skilled, compassionate and ethical individuals by mentoring students within vitally engaging learning environments, ever mindful of such Franciscan values as individual dignity, community inclusiveness, and service to others.

Chapter Introduction

On behalf of the Office of Alumni Services and National Alumni Advisory Board (NAAB), thank you for taking on the important role of volunteer leader of your regional chapter. The regional chapter program has been designed to strengthen the connection between alumni and the University. Your involvement is vital to our efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for alumni to connect or reconnect with the mission of St. Bonaventure University.

As a chapter volunteer, you will help St. Bonaventure better serve our 27,000+ alumni and help sustain the enthusiasm that we all share for our alma mater. The regional chapter network provides opportunities for alumni to participate in social, recreational, educational and spiritual programs in their own backyard.

Alumni Chapter Mission Statement

Alumni are the cornerstones of a successful advancement program; they continue the “Good Journey”, therefore alumni programs are key components of the development effort. The programs help identify potential donors and volunteers, and help activate alumni involvement with the university and each other.

Alumni programs bring the university and alumni together. They seek to tell the St. Bonaventure story, advance its mission, promote fellowship among alumni and stretch the Bona spirit. We also seek to engage alumni in university fundraising and development efforts, provide career advice and assist university admissions efforts in both formal and informal manners.

Alumni Association History

The St. Bonaventure Alumni Association was founded in June 1888. Father Joe Butler, O.F.M. convened a small group of alumni to assist the college in continuing the fellowship they experienced during their student days. In addition to establishing the alumni association, Fr. Joe and those alumni pioneers began the first annual fund campaign.

In 1929, when the alumni association met in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to celebrate the college’s 60th anniversary, it established regional alumni chapters. In 1981, the National Alumni Board was established in its present structure.

Chapter Membership

St. Bonaventure University alumni chapters must be dynamic resources that play a vital role in building, supporting, and sustaining a life-long connection for the alumni and the University. The chapters promote a sense of community and help foster education, charity, sports, and spiritual events that reinforce the mission of the University and the Franciscan spirit.

All graduates of St. Bonaventure University, and those who have attended St. Bonaventure for four semesters are members of the alumni association, and a local chapter, if one exists in their region.

Chapter Leadership

Individual chapter leadership structure depends on the specific format best suited to each region. There are generally two forms: President/Vice President or Chapter Committee.

Roles & Expectations:

- Plan & preside over chapter meetings
- Oversee local alumni programming sponsored by the chapter
- Maintain consistent contact with the alumni office
- Assist in the planning and development of events that reach a variety of audiences, as well as establishing a calendar of those events
- Communicate final event details and/or other chapter plans on a timely basis with the alumni office for dissemination to alumni via invitations, e-blasts, social media, and the website
- Collaborate with the alumni office to identify local opportunities to promote the mission of St. Bonaventure University and to represent the needs/interests of our alumni community in that chapter
- Work with the alumni office to promote/train an informed and enthusiastic successor to ensure the continuation of the chapter
- Provide chapter annual report (see attached template)

*** Chapter leaders are invited to participate in all NAAB meetings either by phone or in person***

Goals:

- To allow St. Bonaventure alumni to gather socially and stay connected with the university and with fellow alumni
- To share pride in and foster dialogue about the current state of the university
- To facilitate networking among alumni
- To invite students' families to participate in the St. Bonaventure community and to welcome new students to the university
- To help the alumni office maintain accurate records of all alumni within the chapter territory
- To represent the ideals of the Franciscan education received at St. Bonaventure
- To assist and support the university's annual fund

When planning chapter activities, it is important to consider how you will determine the success of your efforts. While event attendance and the scope of events offered are obvious indicators of success, the size of the chapter, as well as alumni response and enthusiasm are also important. Because communications are central to the success of your events, the alumni office will help you to reach out to alumni.

It is also important for chapter leaders to network and brainstorm with other chapters to find out what works and what doesn't. We will provide a list of chapters, leadership, and contact information. The chair of the NAAB Chapter Relations Committee is also available to help.

List of Major ChaptersNew York

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • Albany | • Atlanta, GA |
| • Binghamton | • Boston, MA |
| • Buffalo | • Charlotte, NC |
| • Corning/Elmira | • Chicago, IL |
| • Metro | • Cleveland, OH |
| • Rochester | • Northern, NJ |
| | • Philadelphia, PA |

- Syracuse
- Richmond, VA
- Washington, DC
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Chapter Events

Chapter events generally fall into one of four major categories:

- Spiritual: Mountain on the Road, Mass, retreat
- Volunteer: International Service Day, soup kitchen/food pantry
- Social: Bonnies basketball games, pre/post-game receptions, other sports related events, Christmas parties, cruises, golf outings, summer picnics
- University Support (Sponsored): Visit by the president, friars, faculty, staff with updates from campus, assistance with advancement receptions and activities, Gaudete Awards, etc.

The main alumni event of the year is Reunion Weekend (in June). Another important event is Homecoming Weekend (usually mid-February). These are campus events that require considerable planning time by the alumni office. Please keep these two major events in mind when scheduling your chapter events.

As a chapter leader you may be called upon to participate in other events held in your region. These could be development in nature (School of Business), Gaudete Awards, or Hellinger Awards. You may also be asked to assist with student trips into your region, for example, networking receptions.

Along with alumni, their families and friends; parents of current students, and prospective students and their parents are also welcome to participate in chapter activities.

The alumni office aids in coordinating about 70 events throughout the year with roughly 6,000 attendees.

Planning Chapter Events

A key responsibility of the chapter leader and committee members is determining the types and frequency of events most likely to appeal to alumni in your region. Planning meetings, open to all alumni or just committee members, providing forums for brainstorming ideas for future events, and outlining an event schedule.

Planning meetings can be held annually, quarterly, or even monthly, depending on your chapter's level of activity. All chapters are encouraged to begin planning for upcoming events as far in advance as possible, in order to allow enough time for event logistics and communications to be completed in a timely manner.

Events and Activities

Chapters should conduct annual meetings to develop a tentative calendar of meetings and events for each year. All programming should have a purpose! Is your chapter trying to involve alumni in the annual Bonaventure Fund? Are you trying to get more young alumni involved? Do you need to focus on building a stronger career network in your region or host a campus speaker?

Here are some examples of activities that you might plan for alumni in your regions:

- **Student Recruitment** - Receptions for prospective students. *These must be planned and coordinated through the Admission Office.*
- **Career Networking** - Career networking receptions, career panels, business card exchange.
- **Educational/Cultural** - Talks by faculty or staff from the university on current topics, historical tours, museum exhibits, theatre productions, orchestral performances.
- **Community Service** Neighborhood cleanup, soup kitchen visit, Habitat for Humanity
- **Social/Family** - Family picnics, cruises, cocktail receptions or happy hours, major athletic events, viewing the Bonnies on TV, etc.
- **Spiritual** Masses and reception, Mountain on the Road
- **Special Initiatives**

In addition to playing a vital role in engaging alumni with the University, regional chapters also advance the goals and objectives of the university. In any given year, the NAAB and the University may decide to focus on special initiatives, such as career mentoring and student networking receptions. The president of the university may also plan to visit your chapter. In such cases, your chapter might be targeted for these initiatives and may be asked to develop associated programming.

Tips for Running an Effective Planning Meeting

- Choose a convenient date, time, and location: Weeknights usually work best, and the venue should be conducive to open conversation.
- Prepare an agenda: Volunteers will be more likely to stay involved when they see that chapter meetings are well organized and an efficient use of their time.
- Distribute a sign-in sheet: Meetings provide a good opportunity to make sure St. Bonaventure has updated contact information for alumni.
- Encourage discussion: In most cases, the chapter leader serves as the moderator for the meeting, keeping the conversation going, inviting participants to offer their opinions, and delegating follow-up tasks.
- Identify next steps: Meeting participants should leave with a clear sense of what will happen as a result of the meeting (e.g., a draft event schedule will be circulated by e-mail,) and any follow-up tasks for which they are responsible.

Tips for a Successful Alumni Chapter

- Keep faithful to the mission, vision, and values of St. Bonaventure University.
- Be innovative in developing programs to meet your unique membership.
- Engage volunteer leaders who are dedicated and committed.
- Recognize and reward volunteers in your chapter.
- Share your successes with the alumni office and other chapters.
- Chapter presidents are always welcome to participate in NAAB meetings.
- Partner with the admissions office to help identify and recruit students.
- Partner with the advancement office to help promote alumni giving.
- Give back to your local communities through special projects.
- Have fun!

Planning Events - Working with the Alumni Office

The alumni office should always be your first contact when planning an event or activity for your local chapter. The staff works year-round to support dozens of alumni events and programs across the country.

They help with event publicity, coordinating details with vendors, and coordinating appearances by university leaders like the president and deans. They also support the activities of your National Alumni Advisory Board. The office is located in Francis Hall. Phone: 716-375-2302 or email: alumni@sbu.edu.

PLANNING EVENTS

- **Allot at least eight weeks of lead-time for planning an event.** Though this may seem like a long time, experience shows that eight weeks is best. Alumni are enthusiastic to participate in alumni events, but need ample notice to avoid date conflicts.
- Never sign contracts or agreements. To avoid personal liability, it is imperative that these be handled by the alumni office.
- Events involving alcohol. Alcoholic beverages can be the #1 liability facing your local chapter. Let the alumni office staff help you avoid the worst-case scenarios with some easy tips.

SENDING COMMUNICATIONS

The alumni office will send e-blasts, postcards and use social media to build awareness for your activities. However, time and budget constraints may apply. The best way to ensure your message gets out is to contact the office at least eight weeks prior to your event.

Communication

Communicating with alumni is a critical success factor in building and maintaining a vital chapter. As alumni cross multiple generations, it is important to provide information through multiple communication vehicles to ensure that all alumni are reached. By utilizing a variety of communication tools, you will be able to effectively reach your audience, while building a chapter brand.

Communication Tools

Announcements

Your upcoming events will be posted on the alumni website at www.sbu.edu/alumni-events. The date, time, location, and event details are needed as soon as details are finalized.

Photos

Digital photos of chapter events are encouraged. Images should be clear and send a positive message. Close-up images work best. Photos may be used for the alumni, or your chapter Facebook page, Pinterest, or Twitter.

Email Blasts

The alumni database has email addresses for approximately 16,000 alumni. E-blasts are sent to alumni announcing alumni events in their chapter/region. An initial blast is sent, and a second blast is often sent as a reminder.

Websites

All chapters have a chapter webpage on the alumni website, maintained by the alumni office. Chapter events and contact information are listed on the pages.

@SBU E-newsletter

A monthly e-newsletter is sent to 16,000 alumni. The sole purpose of the newsletter is to keep alumni up-to-date with campus news. Chapter events (dates and cities) are also listed in the newsletter.

Social Media

Social media has greatly enhanced connectivity and timeliness of communication. Although the alumni office maintains an alumni Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bonaalumni, each chapter is encouraged to set up a Facebook page as a method for reaching out to local alumni. This is an ideal tool in reaching alumni in a quick timeframe. Meeting and event announcements can be posted to the site, with links to registering for events. Again, as the Facebook pages reflect on the university, all posted photographs, should reflect the mission, vision, and values of the university.

Mailings

Postcards announcing alumni events will be sent to all alumni in a chapter/region. Save-the-date postcards may be mailed for larger events, followed by a postcard with final event details. To mail the postcards on a timely basis, all event details should be communicated to the alumni office no later than eight weeks before the event.

Alumni Website – The alumni website contains information on all events, registration for events, reunion information, an online alumni directory, chapter pages with contact information for chapter leadership, NAAB pages with member contact information, and quick links for everything from the bookstore, alumni rings and Bona gear, to getting a copy of your transcripts. Visit www.sbu.edu/alumni

Telephone Calls

While telephone calls can be time consuming, they create a personal touch and are a way of exchanging ideas and information with alumni members. The alumni office is also able to provide ROBO reminder calls before chapter events.

Alumni Contact Information

The information services office continually works to update and maintain the most accurate alumni contact information possible. Chapter leaders are encouraged to collect any address updates from alumni who attend events and forward the updates to the alumni office.

Branding

The university logo, slogans, and trademarks represent, in part, the St. Bonaventure University brand. As such, each chapter is expected to be respectful in their use and ensure adherence to all university guidelines. The university name, logo, etc. are to be used to promote the university and its related activities. Use of the university name, logo, etc. for personal gain, profit, or commercial activity unrelated to the University is prohibited. The University logo must always be used intact and may never be altered in shape or orientation.

Final thoughts and Review

Do's and Don'ts

The following are some of the most important do's and don'ts for chapter leaders to remember:

DO:

- Do have regular meetings of the chapter's leadership.
- Do have a planned activity schedule. Announce it to your chapter early in the year. Check community calendars for conflicts.
- Do have interesting, varied, and well-planned programs.

- Do delegate the chapter's activity to volunteers.
- Do inform the alumni office of all chapter activity well in advance.
- Do have regular recruitment of leaders who are capable and willing to help.
- Do contact the alumni office with all of your questions and concerns.
- Do maintain close communication with the alumni office.
- Do adhere to the meeting and event planning guidelines listed in the handbook.
- Do keep good records.

DON'Ts:

- Don't nominate leaders without their advance knowledge and consent.
- Don't plan too many meetings or events in one year.
- Don't plan activities during holidays or times of year that tend to strain personal schedules (i.e. Christmas, graduations, etc.)
- Don't sign any contracts! All must be approved and signed by the university.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the core activities expected from each chapter?

The alumni office and the (NAAB) have outlined specific roles and responsibilities for each chapter and its volunteers. These are only guidelines and tips that chapters can use to expand their activities in many important ways.

To provide a basic framework for organizing and focusing chapter activities, the NAAB recommends that each chapter:

- Build a leadership committee of three to five alumni including a president, vice-president, and secretary/treasurer. This leadership group should include alumni from various years
- Develop a calendar of meetings and events at each year's organizational meeting.
- Maintain consistent communication with the alumni office notifying them of all calendar developments and leadership changes.
- Organize diverse activities according to each chapter's expectations to meet the needs of a varied alumni population.
- Work hard to bring a purpose to each activity and to encourage strong alumni involvement.
- Report results after each event and at year end.

How much support will be provided to chapters?

The NAAB, through the alumni office, is eager to provide ongoing support to keep chapters informed and involved. The alumni office staff is available by telephone, and email to answer questions and provide direction as needed. In addition, staff will strive to meet periodically with individual chapters.

Specifically, the alumni office will provide the following areas of support to each chapter:

- Limited financial support to help support chapter activities
- A roster of St. Bonaventure alumni living in the area. (No group email addresses).
- Advice and counsel on steps to start a chapter.
- Guidance on developing effective programming.
- Assistance in marketing each event via email, website, social media, and alumni publications.
- Supplies for events and meetings (name tags, signs, literature, etc.).

How do I measure the success of an event?

Success is not always measured in numbers. Strive for "quality", not "quantity". Success depends on your

objectives; what are you trying to achieve? Did you achieve that? Here are a few measures of successful alumni programming:

- Alumni attending an event for the first time
- New addresses and email addresses collected
- Alumni comments about the event
- New career networks that were established
- Ability to attract target group (young alumni, seniors, attorneys, business owners, teachers, etc.)
- Number of alumni who signed up to be career mentors, or SHARE volunteers.

Who funds the alumni events?

Usually guests pay a per-person cost. The University may also underwrite some costs including mailing and deposits.

Who handles event RSVPs, payments, and nametags?

The alumni office takes event registration and payments via online registration through the website, as well as over the phone or through the mail. Checks should be made payable to St. Bonaventure University. Nametags are also supplied by the office.

What is the privacy policy of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association?

Alumni contact information may be used for university-related purposes only. Use of contact information for any commercial, public, political, unlawful mailing or unlawful use is strictly prohibited.

Whom do I contact to submit chapter calendars, news, and special developments?

You may submit all information to the alumni office via email, phone call, or USPS mail. Contact information is as follows:

Office of Alumni Services
 P.O. Box L
 St. Bonaventure NY 14778
 716-375-2302
 alumni@sbu.edu

St. Bonaventure University Alumni Chapter Annual Report

Name of Chapter: _____

Chapter Leader: _____

Date: _____

Number of Alumni in Chapter: _____

Number of Events in Chapter: _____

Update and contact info: _____

Please list the events of the chapter for the year (include date & number of attendees):

What was the most successful/ least successful event and why?

Any additional comments or summary you would like to provide about the chapter:

