## <u>Creating Diverse Alumni Events</u>

Events that have a wide appeal will target more alumni in your area and ensure your club thrives:
- Age (newer grads/young families/older alumni)
- Interests (sports/culture/business/family)
- Physical Abilities (appeal to all – softball team, downhill bike ride, walking tour)


**Reasons Why People Come to Alumni Events:**
- Social Contacts – Particularly for younger alumni and new arrivals to the area
- Fun With Like-Minded People
- Intellectual Stimulation With Like-Minded People
- Business Connections
- Unique Opportunities – People will come out for things they may not otherwise be able to do


**Offer something they may not get elsewhere:**

- Reception or dinner with a guest speaker
- Breakfast, lunch or dinner roundtable (3 recruiters for new grads, tax reform, self-employed)
- "Behind the Scene" tours - access to areas or times not open to the general public. Zoos (Spring babies), aquariums at feeding time, backstage at the theater, botanical gardens, museums, stadiums, interesting factories
- Themed restaurant tour (i.e. Gourmet restaurant tour, Best Of Chinatown)
- Winery/Brewery tour & tastings
- Some events may only accommodate 10-15 people (Cooking demonstration, Poetry & Wine, Drink & Draw)—having a few of these is okay
- Welcome to the Neighborhood – Is there a logical theme for your area? (Baltimore Crab Feast, Boston Clam Bake, San Francisco Trolley Tour, D.C. Tour of the White House)
- Sport & Social Clubs – Form teams to play in local sport leagues (kickball, softball, bocce), also New Moms, book and film clubs.

**Breadth** = broader reach!  We're not necessarily looking for the same people at each event.

However, if people don't *ever* return, especially to similar events they previously attended, are you:
- Including everyone in conversation at the events (ask key volunteers to make a point of this)?
- Boring them by offering the same type of event (i.e. happy hours)?
- Losing momentum with long gaps between events & communication?
- Repeating unsuccessful events because they're easy?


**Things to Think About When Planning an Event**

Why does your club plan events?
For whom do you plan events?
Who aren't you reaching with your programming?
What is your brainstorming process?
Who else could be involved in the process?
What are the needs of some notable percentages (20% or more) of your active alumni?

**Answering Different Needs:**
Is there a notable percentage of your alumni that is looking for better jobs? Would they appreciate a speed networking and roundtable series? Is there a notable percentage in need of unique family time? Are there several who are avid outdoors types?  Are there alumni who would appreciate unique cultural events?

The answer to all of the above is a resounding, *"Yes!"* The biggest mistake clubs make is providing events that only appeal to one or two demographics (i.e. happy hours and sports-focused events). We *strongly* encourage you to plan events that hit each demographic throughout the year. Putting a twist on them will ensure they're more compelling than a similar event people could attend on their own (i.e. a back-of-the-house tour of a theater followed by dinner & a play).


## Brainstorming

The best way to brainstorm is to ban discussion of any logistics during the session, just collect ideas – *all ideas.* No idea is off limits because it may spawn the perfect idea (i.e. the idea of a golf outing, which would appeal to one demographic, could turn into wine & cheese at a miniature golf course, which would appeal to a broader demographic, and *both* may work if you have a lot of golfers).

**Below are questions that can help generate brainstorming ideas for alumni events:**

List 10 – 20 interesting places to have a Wine & Cheese event (i.e. a toy or sports museum, a haunted house, a beach, a marina, an office rooftop, a park gazebo, a barn, etc.).

List 10 things your city/state is known for. Creating events that showcase these is great for Welcome to the Neighborhood parties for newly returning UD grads.

List 10 top news stories from the last 5 years in your area. Can any one of them somehow be turned into an event? (Location, speaker, theme, lessons learned, etc.)

List 10 best attended events in your area. What makes them so appealing?

List 10 prominent alumni in your area.  What insight or resources could they offer fellow alumni?

List 10 alumni with interesting jobs in your area (i.e. head grounds keeper at the MLB ball park, curator at a museum, newspaper photographer). What insight or resources could they offer fellow alumni?

**Ask "What If" questions to round out the event:**
- What If I was looking to network. Does this event provide quality interaction time?
- What If I was an alumnus's spouse? What would interest me about this event?
- What If this was combined with another event? Would that make it more fun and compelling?
- What If I knew no one here, how would I feel? What could help me feel more comfortable? (activity-focused events are great for shy people!)
- What If I didn't drink? Would I enjoy this event?
- What If I was a child? How would I put on this event?
- What If I had already done this activity (visited a museum)? What would make it more compelling?

## Google Searches:

Use specific search terms: "Things to do in CITY_NAME culture" "Best Happy Hours in CITY_NAME"

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g53449-Activities-Pittsburgh_Pennsylvania.html

Fun Things to Do in CITY_NAME / Fun Things to Do in CITY_NAME for Young Families / things to do with kids in CITY_NAME

http://family.go.com/travel/things-to-do/illinois/chicago/

## Events by Genre:

Food, Wine, & Beer: LocalWineEvents.com

LinkedIn Events for business networking ideas

Children/Family-Friendly Events: Family.go.com, Redtri.com – Children's events

Cultural Events: events.nationalgeographic.com/events/calendar,

## Travel Sites:

Tourism Bureaus: Google CITY_NAME Tourism, Visit CITY_NAME, Greater CITY_NAME Tourism Bureau

Travel sites often list area events and attractions!