Advancement Services and Alumni Engagement: Helping Presidents Connect More Effectively with their Constituencies

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Georgia Gwinnett College - Overview

- Established in 2005 with 100+ students; Fall 2023 approximately 11,900 enrolled
- 4-year Liberal Arts undergraduate institution
- Recognized as the most ethnically diverse southern regional college for ten consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report.
- Minority Serving Institution (MSI), Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AAPISI)
Georgia Gwinnett College - Overview

- Access institution
- Public 4-year college governed by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents
- Prominent community members felt a college was needed in Gwinnett County, Georgia and worked to have it established through the State Legislature.
What’s Advancement got to do with it?

- Advancement Services – Support
  • Ways Advancement Services can support the President’s Office and other campus divisions

- Alumni Engagement – Connect
  • How alumni engagement connects the President to alumni and other constituencies
  • Using a multi-pronged approach with students, alumni and parents and families, and campus partners
Advancement Services at GGC….

- Gift Processing
- Database Management
- Prospect Research
- Prospect Management
- Donor Relations / Stewardship
- Board Relations
- Reporting
- Records Management
- Data Analysis
Cross-functional Support from Advancement Services

**Advancement**
- Prospect research & management
- Database management
- Gift accounting

**President**
- External engagement coordination
- Donor stewardship
- Board vetting
- Cross-functional coordination with other units / schools
- Mailing / Contact / Invitation lists

**Communications**
- Mailing lists
- Data verification
- Alumni and Donor stories
External Engagement Coordination

Goals

- Centralize coordination across units, schools, and the President
- Avoid unpleasant surprises
- Deliver a consistent brand message, and experience across multiple engagements
- Develop holistic engagement strategies for each person/company/organization that align to overall institutional priorities
All donor cultivation is community engagement, but not all community engagement is donor cultivation.

Close collaboration with other units working in the community
- Student Affairs, Career Services, Government Relations, etc.
- Institutes, Centers, and Faculty special projects

Processes and procedures that keep the work organized without stifling creativity
- Prospect Management Policy & Solicitation Clearance Process
- Board vetting process
- Internal training sessions for faculty on Advancement’s role, reporting process, and private grants
External Engagement Authorization & Report Forms

External Engagement Forms
- Option available for faculty, deans, etc. to report out external engagements to Advancement
- Built in Microsoft Forms and triggers an approval flow
- Allows Advancement to quickly vet and approve requests
Board Vetting Process

Goals

- Standard process for determining the best board position for each prospect
- Ensures the President retains oversight of all board development
- Board members experience a consistent onboarding experience
- Discussions occur prior to issuing board invitations
Board Continuity – Committee Structures

• When Foundation Board makes changes to committee structure, Alumni Board and Boards of Visitors make similar changes

• Alumni Board Representative and Board of Visitors Representatives sit on the corresponding Foundation Board Strategic Initiatives and Development Committees as ex-officio
Your Trusted Partner in Data Management

We don’t just track alumni & donors!

- Elected Officials
- Boards of Directors for key community organizations
- Staffing of local, state, and federal government, key organizations
- University System of GA staff, USG Presidents and Provosts

Advancement Services maintains current data for as many key external constituencies as we can. Centralized data management and maintenance is a critical step in effective cross-functional coordination.
• Much of Advancement’s work is invisible to the campus at large, outside of key offices
• Advancement Services can function as the internal ambassador for Advancement work
• Build a network of contacts who can help you figure things out when there is no policy or procedure
• Curiosity and collegiality are key
• Aggressively presume good intent
Georgia Gwinnett College
Alumni Engagement
Georgia Gwinnett College Alumni

- Total living alumni – 12,113
- Alumni average age – 31
  - 65% of alumni population
- Average gift size - $34
Georgia Gwinnett College Alumni Board
Alumni Board - Overview

• Founded in 2012 by the Office of Advancement
• Representative of student population
• 16 current members with capacity for 35 with 25% cap on alumni board members who are employed by GGC.
• Has grown into robust board in 11 years
• Modeled after GGC Leadership
• Two-year terms
• Must have graduated two years or more to be considered
• Application and interview process
• Philanthropic request: $300/year plus $200 in fundraising
Strategies for engaging alumni requires a multi-pronged approach

- Students
- Alumni
- Parents and Families
- Campus partners
Alumni Program – Student Engagement

From Day One, Building Traditions to Engage Students with GGC Alumni!

Preview Days

• Alumni Association table at GGC Preview Days
• Alumni Board members and Four Pillar Society students volunteer and talk to students
• Provide information about leadership opportunities and Grizzlyfest to prospective students.
• Talk with family members about their experience at GGC
Alumni Program – Student Engagement

Work with Admissions

• Provide presentation to all of GGC’s admissions recruiters
• Provide information about the Alumni Association, demographics, events and alumni notables.
• Provide a “look-book” of alumni for recruiters to take to schools

Shalaya Morissette ‘12
Business Administration

Shalaya Morissette (she/her) is Chief of the Minority Business and Workforce Division at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), located within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity in Washington DC.

She is a highly sought-after collaborator and co-conspirator in the clean technology space. Most recently, she hailed from the utility sector in safety and compliance. In 2022, she took on an additional role at Dearborn STEM Academy in Boston, Massachusetts as a teacher to 11th and 12th graders - delivering a curriculum for engineering with energy in mind. Previously, she held various roles in higher education, including enrollment services project manager and in global transportation as the Director of Affiliate Relations.

She is the former president of the Greater Boston chapter of the American Association of Blacks in Energy. Serving as the first African American board member of the New England Women in Energy and Environment, she has been devoted to elevating and engaging women and people of color in the energy space.

As a Georgia Gwinnett College Alumni Association board member and a committee member for Browning the Green Space, she has been engaged in the nonprofit and higher education space as a strong advocate for elevating minorities in the energy transition. Shalaya’s passion for bringing young people into the clean energy industry has also been supported with her work with Girls Inc. and WriteBoston. Shalaya received her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Georgia Gwinnett College and her Master of Education degree from Cambridge College.
Alumni Program – Student Engagement

Senior Sendoff

• Celebration for graduating seniors in April and November
  • Collaboration with campus partners
• Passport activity to encourage students to attend all sessions and tables
• Alumni-led programs relevant to graduates including Personal Finance, Adulting After Graduation and The Art of Networking
Alumni Program – Student Engagement

Grizzlyfest

- GGC’s annual homecoming celebration
- Averages 300+ attendance
- Building new traditions
  - Pep Rally
  - Grizzly Crawl
  - Lip Sync Battle
  - RSO Gauntlet
- Collaboration among all campus partners and leadership
- Community Involvement
Four Pillar Society

- Four Pillar Society is a student leadership group through Advancement and endorsed by the office of the President.
- Members also participate in and encourage GGC philanthropy efforts on and off campus.
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- Four Pillar Society members lead efforts to educate fellow students about the importance of philanthropy.
- They serve as ambassadors for Advancement and help with special events as well as tour dignitaries who come to campus.
Alumni Engagement – Welcome to the Alumni Association

Commencement

• Alumni Board members hand out Alumni Association lapel pins and Welcome to the Alumni Association cards at Commencement
  • The Alumni Board chair speaks at Commencement to welcome new alumni
    • Alumni board members are invited to President’s reception
  • GGC graduates are immediately life-time members of the Alumni Association
Alumni Program – Alumni Engagement

Building Alumni Traditions after Graduation

- Regular communication through social media channels, monthly newsletter and texts
- Closed digital community – Network GGC
- Volunteer opportunities (Mentoring, Student Events, Campus Events, etc.)
- Alumni Book Club, Mixers and Events
- Giving Back - GGC Days, Giving Tuesday, Deans’ Chili Cookoff at Grizzlyfest, Alumni Association Scholarship Campaign, and more.
Alumni Program – Parent/Family Engagement

New Student Orientation-Parent Panel

- Parent and alumni volunteer panel
- Speak to parents from the parent and alumni perspective
- Parent Panel is now a regular event during orientation
- Parents have lunch in the private dining room with Alumni staff and president/other leadership
Alumni Program – Student and Parent Engagement

Move-In Week

• Table at Move-In Week to take photos of families.

• Provide information for new students/families on campus life and Lawrenceville.

• Alumni volunteer and greet students and families.

Alumni Board volunteers

President Jann L. Joseph with families during move-in
Alumni Program - Campus Partners Engagement

Building Campus Partnership with Alumni and Student Engagement

Campus Partners
Create robust relationships with campus partners to provide more opportunities for student, alumni and parent/family engagement

- Student Services
- Career Services
- Auxiliary Services (Bookstore, Catering)
- Schools (Faculty/Staff from each of GGC’s five schools)
- Facilities
- Wellness and Recreation
- Educational Programs (HACER)
Educational Programs (HACER)

• Hispanic Achievers Committed to Excellence in Results (HACER) is a living-learning community designed to provide needed support for students on the path to graduation, while living on campus in GGC’s suite-style housing.

• HACER Futuro is an event where Hispanic families come to campus to learn about campus life – Hispanic alumni participate and speak with the families.
Strategy for Success

Engage

• Engage boards through planning and communication
• Engage students from first day until graduation and beyond
• Engage alumni with opportunities to make a difference to GGC and its students

Inspire

• Inspire board members and alumni to give their time, talent, and treasure to help raise the awareness and stature of the college in the community
• Inspire students, through alumni engagement, to develop a lifelong love of GGC and to stay engaged once they graduate.

Connect

• Connect board members with one another and the president across all boards
• Connect the alumni in the life of the college
Questions??