

EVENT OBJECTIVES

Successful event planning is the key to successful alumni groups. Keep in mind the overall objectives of both the SF State and your alumni group in all program planning. For many, alumni events represent the only contact they have with other SF State alumni or the University. Advanced planning and execution are important to the success of each event.

- ☑ Establish a committee and sub-committees – Event committees are necessary to properly plan and execute events. Sub-committees can be formed to organize specific activities at the event. This will spread the workload, and develop future leaders for your alumni group.
- ☑ Encourage involvement from alumni group members – The more involvement you seek from regular members, the stronger your alumni group becomes.
- ☑ Involve the Alumni Association – Advanced notice given to the Alumni Association of your upcoming event will increase your visibility and communication to alumni members.
- ☑ Event Balancing – Are your events spaced equally throughout the year? Are they appealing to your constituents? Do you have diversity and a blend of social, cultural, athletic, and fund-raising events? Do you plan your events in conjunction with the Alumni Association's events? Consider doing a brief, informal survey among your constituents to determine their specific needs and interests.

As a reminder, the Alumni Association would appreciate your cooperation in scheduling your events and activities so that they are not in direct conflict with the Association's major events.

10 EVENT BASICS

PURPOSE	Why have the event? What are you trying to accomplish? Ensure event variety and location so that no one is excluded by cost.
PERMISSION	Do you have the Alumni Association approval and necessary funds? Make sure all agreements with suppliers are in writing.
BUDGET	How much is the overall cost? Where will the funds come from? Do you expect to generate revenue? Aim to make events self-supporting by always adding tax and services charges to event admission, plus a small override to cover unexpected costs. Use a 10%-20% no-show figure in determining guarantees. Identify all the costs involved with the event, i.e. room, meal, beverage, parking, a/v equipment, etc.
COMMITTEES	Do you have a committee of group members nominated to handle the planning process for group events? Develop a master plan and assign specific tasks to committee members to spread the workload evenly. Choose people who are willing to see the project from start to finish.
TIMELINE	Not only do you need to decide when your event takes place, you need to decide on deadlines for when certain tasks will be completed, i.e. payment, invitations, etc. Utilize the available forms, checklists, and spreadsheets to organize the event. Have you determined the date, time and place of the event? Decide on these at least four months in advance! Verify with the Alumni Association that there is no conflict with other major University events.
LOGISTICS	Pay attention to details such as: room size, meal & beverage cost, a/v equipment, parking, etc. Select a meeting place conducive to the event such as University and hotel meeting rooms, private homes, picnic areas, etc. Every event has hundreds of little details. Try to plan ahead by breaking them down into components such as music, rooms, advertising, catering, etc.
INVITEES	Who and how many will you invite? Any special guests to include? Touch base with presenters and speakers early. Contact the Alumni Association for ideas or assistance.
NOTIFICATION	How will you notify guests? Formal invitations, fliers, letters, personal calls, E-mail? Set a deadline of at least four weeks prior the event to send out notification. Make sure it contains subject matter, date, time, location, attire, agenda, and contact name for questions.
ADVERTISING	What type of publicity will effectively advertise your event? Web page, campus newspaper, radio, or other media are sources to advertise your event. Public service announcements are free on TV and radio. E-mails are very effective and are low cost.
FOLLOW-UP	Keep track of people and organizations that help out as the event is planned and executed. Thank you notes to everyone involved puts a personal touch to the event and it's a good way to get them to help again. Evaluate the success of your event by soliciting feedback from committee members and event attendees and save for future events.

EVENT IDEAS

Well-organized and creative functions are at the core of every successful alumni group.

One good activity is much better than three or four poorly planned and executed functions. All programs and activities should be justifiable use of alumni group resources.

Most Important – Have Fun!

Career planning and professional networking workshops or mixers.



Fund-Raising

Annual picnic, silent auctions, golf tournaments and wine tasting are proven successful fund-raisers.



The options are endless!

Educational and Student Programs

Recognition event for outstanding alumni and/or students.

Scholarships for SF State students or reception for new grads.
Educational seminars, ie, Financial Planning, Time Management, Lecture Series, Buying a Home, Computers, etc.



Social

Hold a BBQ, informal picnic or sporting event in your area. Wine tasting reception and/or dinner before an event. Reunions, homecoming activities, community service projects, and award dinners are great opportunities to network with alumni.



KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

Annual activity calendar is planned and submitted to Alumni Association to avoid conflicts with other Association events.

A master plan used to assign specific tasks to committee members and to spread the workload evenly.

Alumni group members have specific responsibilities for the event and serve as official hosts and insures guests are made to feel welcome.

Alumni group members are notified of events at least 3-4 weeks prior to the event date. Effective advertising is performed in conjunction with event date.

Vendors are reimbursed in a timely manner and thank you notes are sent to all volunteers. An event report is filed with the Alumni Association and an event evaluation form is filled out.

*Attendance is not the sole measure of success.
The quality of the event and what is said about the University is more important.
Over time, consistently good functions will attract increasing participation.*

EVENT TIMELINE

Planning and preparation are key components when coordinating alumni programs. Successful alumni groups and constituent associations involve their general membership in a range of programs and activities; normally, two or three events per year should be offered.

In order to efficiently plan and coordinate an event it is important to establish and follow a set time-table. By keeping the Alumni Association informed of all events beforehand it will enable the Alumni Association to assist you in successfully carrying out an event.

IDEAL EVENT PLANNING SCHEDULE

June: Annual Requirements	<i>Provide event plan for the year as part of the annual alumni group requirements in June.</i>
3 Mos.	<i>Notify the SF State AA staff about the proposed program. Event committee should have most of the details of the event determined, i.e. location booked, format planned, cost established, etc.</i>
8-10 Weeks	<i>Start promoting the event. Prepare mailers, fliers or invitations. Finalize the event notice details with Group Liaison. Submit information to be printed in alumni publications. Follow deadlines to ensure publication. Request labels and label counts.</i>
6 Weeks	<i>Send notices to membership. Mailings should reach alumni at least three to four weeks before the event date. This gives time to make plans and RSVP before the deadline. If Alumni Association is coordinating mailing contact the Asst. Dir. of Regional & Volunteer Programs.</i>
3 Weeks	<i>Contact media sources.</i>
2 Weeks	<i>RSVP deadline. Finalize all meeting arrangements with vendors (room arrangements, agenda, speakers, etc.) Compile a list of alumni participants and prepare nametags.</i>
Event Day	<i>The event chairperson should arrive early to make sure all details have been properly arranged. Other board members should arrive one hour early to welcome members and guests.</i>
One Week After Event	<i>Call or send the SF State Alumni Association a report on the outcome of the event. Send thank-you notes as needed. Report and evaluate assess the success of the event to the Asst. Dir. of Regional & Volunteer Programs.</i>

