

Alumni Engagement Plan

(Institutional Self-study, Criterion Five, p. 96)

Objective

The mission of the IIT Alumni Association and the Alumni Relations (AR) office is to act as a catalyst to foster lifelong connections within the global IIT community. A vibrant alumni relations program is one in which alumni are engaged with their alma mater and supporting the university to the extent of their ability through both their time and personal resources. This can include working with our admissions team to help bring a new student to attend IIT, hiring a student or alumnus, becoming involved with IIT as a volunteer or student mentor, and making annual contributions.

Strategy

The AR plan has three components: communication/programming, volunteer management, and administration.

1. Communication / Programming

Goal One: Launch the “Share the Path” Alumni Campaign

To be officially launched in FY07, the Share the Path (STP) campaign will provide messaging and programmatic structure for the Alumni Relations 2010 Plan.

Represented visually through photographs that link alumni and current students, this campaign’s message to alumni is two-fold: 1) while the campus may have changed, what you value most about your IIT experience has not—these are still kids who worked very hard to get here, the education is as tough as you remember, and they are focused on success in their chosen profession; 2) today’s students respect the success of our alumni community and are anxious for opportunities to interact with you. Each STP communication tells this story and calls to action alumni to involve themselves—as a mentor or volunteer.

Alumni relations programming will be built to support the STP message: each alumni event will include students; we will aggressively launch a mentoring program; and, we will seek to recruit alumni in volunteer roles. These initiatives are examined further.

Goal Two: Maximize our Electronic Communications Abilities

In 2007, IIT will aggressively seek to grow our ability to communicate with alumni through the internet and e-mail. The benefits of working electronically—both in our ability to inexpensively reach a broad audience, the capacity to create communications that are more tailored to individual interests, and the immediacy of electronic communications compared to traditional forms of communications, lead us to believe this is a critical growth area. We have made significant capital investment in electronic communications tools offered through Raiser's Edge—including a new electronic alumni directory that should go online in summer 2006. We have been seeking multiple opportunities to find e-mail addresses and have invested in a screening service to increase our e-mail base by at least 10%.

Goal Three: Activate Alumni Chapters, Divisions, and Interest Groups

We will actively increase our presence in the communities where alumni live and work. Our regional chapters—from Los Angeles to Boston to Naperville—will increase the number of events they hold on an annual basis and will thematically focus on supporting the Share the Path campaign. The role of the regional chapters is to host the current students from the area, host a welcome for parents of new students, host an IIT administrator annually, and advise our staff on the development alumni programming meaningful to that region. Currently, chapters are forming in San Diego, CA, Boston, MA, Washington, DC, Naperville, IL, and Detroit, MI. We expect to form 5-10 chapters over the next three years.

We will use interest groups (e.g., athletic booster clubs, women engineers, Camras scholars) and divisional events (e.g., the AIChE conference, the SAE conference) to create more “customized” events for our alumni that meet their professional and personal interests. These events will be held on campus (e.g., departmental open houses) or at professional conferences.

Goal Four: Improve Attendance at Two Signature IIT Events—Alumnifest and the IIT Alumni Awards Ceremony

The two signature events for IIT each year are the IIT Alumni Awards Ceremony and our reunion program, *Alumnifest*. To meet the goal of bringing alumni and students together for these two signature events, the timing for both has been changed. In the spring of 2006, IIT held the awards ceremony for the first time ever in conjunction with IPRO day on campus. Over 180 alumni and their guests attended the event in the same building wherein over 60 teams of IIT students presented the results of a semester long interdisciplinary project. The *Alumnifest* moved dates from the summer (when there are no students on campus) to IIT's homecoming weekend in early October. Programming will again be developed that allows alumni to interact with students in a variety of formats.

2. Volunteer Management

Goal One: Activate the Alumni Association Board

The Alumni Association Board has been reconstituted and new leadership has been selected. It is chaired by Adrian Nemcek ('70), with Bud Wendorf ('71) acting as vice chair. A group of 10-18 alumni who serve in leadership positions in their businesses will

be invited to join this board. The role of the board will be to provide strategic input into the alumni relations plan.

Goal Two: Launch the “Volunteers Matter” Volunteer Drive

Working closely with the academic leadership of the university we will look for volunteer opportunities for alumni with the advisory boards, boards of overseers, IPRO program, in student life and a variety of other campus initiatives. This will be an integral piece of the STP communications strategy.

The alumni relations program has also invested in software that will track volunteer activity and opportunities. In addition, we will work more closely with the career development center on mentoring and recruiting efforts for our current students.

3. Administration

While we continue to look for a director of alumni relations, we have built a terrific team. The staffing has been increased from three to four full-time staff, and is augmented by the IA events, communication, and management teams. In the interim, Associate Vice President Greg Barrett has served as our director. A meaningful increase in the AR operating budget has also been made. This will allow for more frequent communication, for students/staff to travel to alumni locations, and to plan alumni programming.

A significant part of our administrative effort is linked to verifying and maintaining accurate data. In FY05, nearly one third of our alumni addresses were invalid. We have now recovered nearly 80% of the lost addresses. Our challenge today is to maintain this database, while working to increase the information we have—e-mail addresses, employer information, and seasonal addresses will all help us communicate with greater regularity and effectiveness with our alumni.

Measuring Success

We will evaluate our success in a number of ways:

1. Attendance at alumni events
2. Number of interactions with alumni –verbal, written, web
3. Number of new students introduced to IIT through alumni
4. Number of alumni volunteers on campus
5. Percent of alumni supporting IIT
6. Percent of “bad” addresses for alumni
7. Annual survey measuring the impact of our activities on alumni attitudes