Volunteer Handbook

Bangor University
Development and Alumni Relations Office

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VOLUNTEERING OVERVIEW

Bangor University has over 60,000 contactable alumni with more than 3,000 new graduates joining the association every year. We have active alumni throughout the world who support the activities of the University in general and specifically Bangor's Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO).

Alumni volunteers are typically former students who have stayed connected to their alma mater and who share an interest in and concern for the growth of the University's profile as a world-class institution. They represent the broader alumni base and carry a positive and informative message to the wider community about the University and the expanding influence and achievements of Bangor's alumni.

Bangor University encourages reciprocal, lifelong relationships between the University and its alumni worldwide. Led by DARO, the aim of the alumni programme is to foster alumni interest in, and goodwill towards, Bangor University by encouraging intellectual, emotional and professional ties between alumni and their University. Volunteer-run alumni groups, including the Alumni Advisory Board, are one of the most important vehicles for achieving this aim. Volunteer-led events and activities are a means of building active relationships with a far greater number of alumni than would otherwise be possible through activities exclusively co-ordinated by DARO.

Volunteers are asked to be advocates and enthusiastic communicators of Bangor's mission and vision and show personal commitment and active involvement in activities. Volunteers have the ability and willingness to reach out to other alumni and therefore help the University in its efforts to re-connect with its alumni. For many, Bangor University has made a significant difference to their professional and personal lives and they have a real desire to bring other Bangorians together and foster goodwill towards the University.

Aims and Objectives

Bangor University volunteers represent a network of alumni around the world.

Aims of an alumni volunteer group can include the following:
1. To offer opportunities for alumni to remain connected to Bangor University and to serve the University more generally
2. To organise activities and social events for alumni (in agreement with DARO)
3. To strengthen alumni links with the academic community at Bangor
4. To provide opportunities for Bangor alumni to network and offer their skills and expertise for the benefit of the University, its students and other alumni
5. To identify potential new members or alumni who may be prepared to be more engaged with the University
6. To help DARO to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of alumni
7. To promote and enhance the reputation of the University, acting as ambassadors for the University and promoting awareness and interest in the community
8. To help support the strategic aims of Bangor University
9. To undertake outreach work, for example through assisting with student recruitment activity or the creation of student internships

Alumni groups and individuals do not have a fundraising remit for the University; whilst they can be helpful in this regard, their core purpose is 'friend-raising' and supporting the wider aims of the University and its alumni.

Structure of Volunteer Groups

Alumni groups are run by volunteers and are a means for former students to keep in touch with each other and with their alma mater, often around a specific activity, i.e. Old Boys'.

In order to be formally recognised as a group, an active committee should be in place. Most groups should have an organising committee with a minimum of three people.

Activities

Examples of alumni volunteer activities include:

- Social events: Subject / Year / Interest-group reunions
- Speaker events
- Academic: supporting current research at the University through mutually beneficial links with individual alumni and their businesses
- Professional networking events
- Student support: career talks, providing CV/Job application advice
- Prospective student outreach: attendance at careers fairs etc

Responsibilities

A Bangor University alumni volunteer group should aim to fulfil the following core responsibilities:

- To adhere to the guidelines for alumni groups as outlined below
- To welcome all alumni and their guests to the group and its activities and actively encourage new members
- To communicate with DARO, sharing details of planned events and alumni contact details
- To be financially self-sustaining
- To follow the University branding guidelines
- To follow the University's bilingual policy where applicable
- To promote a positive image Bangor University
- To abide by the UK Data Protection Act

HOW DARO CAN HELP ALUMNI GROUPS

Generally, DARO will send out communications to alumni on behalf of the alumni volunteer group and forward any replies to the group. DARO will work with the volunteer group to tailor communications their audience and format their messages accordingly.

DARO can also help by:

- Advising on potential speakers for volunteer-led events be it alumni, Bangor University academics or friends of the University
- Putting volunteers in touch with other departments within the University where their skills can be used, e.g. The Careers and Employability Service, Student Recruitment and the International Education Centre
- Promoting volunteer activity on the DARO social media pages and support new online groups that volunteers wish to set up
- Providing guidance on the University's brand guidelines
- Arranging translation for bilingual communications
- Supporting volunteer groups with general Development and Alumni Relations activity best-practice

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT: WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Having a web presence can simplify some of the work of the organising committee, in terms of communication, data management and events organisation (depending on your site). A group's web presence could take the form of a Facebook page or group, a LinkedIn group or an independently-hosted website.

At the outset, it is important to ensure that the group has a member with the expertise and time to develop and maintain an external site on whichever platform/s you choose to use. More than one group member should be able to administrate and moderate the webpages so the pages can continue to be active if a member leaves the group. External-facing groups and pages should be kept up-to-date.

DARO is unable to provide support in a technical capacity; however we can offer suggestions with regards to best practice and provide helpful resources to get you started. We are also happy to review your site upon completion, but please be aware that this would not be giving it any sort of 'official' stamp.

DARO can take no responsibility for independently-hosted alumni group websites and equally we do not monitor or approve these sites. Volunteers may run their site as they wish and DARO will only intervene in exceptional circumstances, such as if the content could be perceived as damaging the reputation of the University. It is requested that you include, in a prominent part of your site, a statement such as:
"This is an autonomous group for alumni of Bangor University and operates independently of the University. Responsibility for this website and any and all activities associated with it

are the full responsibility of the group and its organising committee. This website is not maintained, monitored, or in any way under the control of Bangor University."

Please see Bangor University's brand guidelines on using the University's logo online at: www.bangor.ac.uk/ccm/brand The logo is available from DARO in a range of electronic file formats (.gif, .jpeg, .eps) on request.

If you are using the site to collect contact information from alumni, any updates should be collated and shared with DARO. Please ensure that you include a data protection statement on your site, informing people of how their data will be stored and used. This can be provided by DARO. You should also be conscious of the risks which networking sites bring, including defamation, data protection, copyright infringement and breach of confidentiality and ensure that members are adequately protected.

Advice on online payment systems for events can also be provided by DARO if needed.

Social media

Social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn in addition to or in place of a dedicated website are a good way for volunteers to connect with other group members and to promote their activities to the wider alumni-base.

As a general rule, Facebook and Google+ are predominantly for social use – giving you message board-style facilities for your members to connect with each other, as well as the ability to promote the group's events and activities. LinkedIn has a more professional focus and so might be more appropriate for interest groups, or regional groups that have a more careers-related focus.

Closed groups require more time to administer, but you are able to verify that everyone in it is a genuine alumnus/a by asking them to provide you with their subject of study and year of graduation in order to cross-check them against the alumni database. An Open group makes the joining process instant for new members as well as requiring less administration; they're also easier for alumni to find as a general rule. As an administrator, you still have the ability to remove members who turn out to be 'fake' (or just behave badly – for example posting endlessly about job opportunities, or self-promotion of some sort).

Please remember to let DARO know with the name of your Facebook / LinkedIn groups so that we can promote your page/group as appropriate.

We request that you include the following disclaimer on your page/group to make it clear that it is not maintained, monitored or in any way under the control of the University.

"The 'Group Name' takes full responsibility for this page/ group, which is not operated by, under the authority of, or in association with, Bangor University."

POSTAL AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

DARO cannot make email or postal addresses available to volunteers, however we can send communications to alumni on your behalf. Please provide details on the alumni you wish to target (subject, year, location etc) and DARO will draw a list of contacts from the alumni database. DARO will work with you to tailor the content of your message and format it accordingly before sending it to alumni from the alumni@bangor.ac.uk mailbox. Replies will be monitored and forwarded to you.

EVENTS

A varied events programme can have broad appeal and help to not only retain existing members' interest, but also attract alumni of different ages, interests and affiliations who may not already be engaged.

Alumni events typically fall into the following categories:

Academic events: Lectures or presentations by a University academic or member of senior staff are often popular. Usually the speaker address follows or precedes a drinks and canapé reception for guests. Such events are best coordinated with the DARO team who can help identify a speaker, find a room etc.

Cultural events: Volunteers may wish to organise cultural events, such as trips to local museums, historic houses, gardens, theatres or art galleries. This would usually entail purchasing group tickets and organising a guided tour, followed by a social gathering at a nearby restaurant or bar.

Professional Networking events: Events aimed at encouraging members to find out more about the careers and experiences of fellow alumni. Networking events can be formal, with a speaker or theme, or informal over drinks. These types of events are increasingly attractive to recent graduates and younger alumni.

Social gatherings: Although all group events should encourage social interaction between members, some events may be purely social in nature. These can include drinks parties and dinners and sports events. These can be targeted at alumni from specific subjects, year groups, regions or business-based etc. Where possible, groups could meet at a venue sponsored by an alumnus/a.

EVENTS CHECKLIST

Below are some suggested steps to follow when organising an event and is intended to help support groups and provide some suggestions for good practice. The timescale for planning events will be individual to each event but it is always advisable to start your event planning as early as possible. It is recommended that invitess are given at least 6 weeks' notice for any event.

Key considerations:
• The aims of the event
• The event date, time, venue, and catering
• The lead organiser, and volunteers to help
• Arranging a speaker (if applicable)
• Working out the cost and ticket price for group members (if applicable)
• Publicity and marketing
• Additional requirements, such as AV or disabled facilities
• Preparing any badges or guest lists
• Preparing a table plan if required
• Post-event follow-up (for example, thank you notes to speakers and volunteers)

Phase 1:
• Determine the goal of the event e.g. celebrating a special occasion, enabling alumni to connect with Bangor academics etc
• Draft a timeline for key tasks and deadlines
• Prepare an event budget to keep track of spending
• Discuss possible dates and check with DARO for potential date clashes
• Research possible venues, taking into account considerations such as availability, capacity, costs, layout and transport links
• Agree a suitable venue and date
• Develop the timings for the event
• Identify and approach a suitable speaker, if required (DARO can advise on suitable speakers from within the University and from the wider alumni database)
• Determine the cost of the event for attendees if applicable
• If time permits, circulate a save the date notification

Phase 2:
• Notify the Alumni Office of the event to ensure it is publicised on the alumni website
• Promote the event on the group's website and via social media channels
• Identify and invite any relevant VIPs
• Send out invitations (email and/or postal) and set up an event registration facility (if applicable)
• Monitor replies
• Confirm, in writing, the date and venue with the speaker and key stakeholders
• For a speaker event, request details regarding the lecture title, speaker biography and possibly a short abstract to help market the event
• Arrange a photographer, if applicable (professional or volunteer)
• Check on room layout and accessibility issues
• Determine AV and other equipment needs and arrange a technician, if   needed

• Investigate catering options, including menu and drinks selection
• Book entertainment and submit deposit if needed
• Consider room decoration, such as any flowers or banners etc
• Decide on necessary display / marketing material and work with designers and printers

Phase 3:
• Finalise menu and other catering decisions
• Reserve parking at venue and check details for disabled parking
• Undertake a first draft of the running order for the event (e.g. times for arrival, set-up, registration, drinks, guest lecture, dinner, thanks from the Chair and departure)
• Send an email reminder to invitees
• Continue to collect attendee names in an excel spreadsheet or other programme
• Identify volunteers to help on the day

Phase 4:
• Send a final email reminder to members
• Close booking for the event and chase any outstanding payments
• Confirm volunteer assignments and roles
• Finalise arrangements with the speaker (if applicable)
• Finalise attendee list
• Produce name badges
• Create any signage required (registration, directional)
• Produce table plan (if applicable) and send on to venue
• Contact venue/ caterer with final numbers
• Arrange for delivery of any materials to the venue
• Finalise the running order
• Develop a post-event survey if appropriate

On the Day:
• Arrive early with other committee members/ key volunteers
• Circulate contact list with mobile numbers to all staff/ volunteers
• Meet venue contact and undertake final room checks
• Test AV equipment and meet technician, if applicable
• Meet musicians/ other entertainment, if applicable
• Organise registration area and name badges
• Put up signage and display material

After the event:
• Thank you letter to the speaker, chair and any VIP guests, if applicable
• Create final attendee list with updated contact information for the file
• Collect feedback and send event report to the Development and Alumni Relations Office

For further information or any queries, please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office on 01248 388332 or email: alumni@bangor.ac.uk