

ALUMNI & CHURCH RECRUITMENT

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OVERVIEW: Across higher education, undergraduate enrollment continues to be a challenge amidst the diversity of human capital, anticipating changes in the quantity of college-going seniors, dynamics of territory management, and more. Therefore, it is essential for admissions offices to both creative and collaborative in their approach to college recruitment. Alumni recruitment has been a practice in higher education while within the SCCC, it is not as common in comparison to church recruitment, which is an undeveloped practice. In 2016, the conversation about Alumni Recruitment began with the former Vice President of Enrollment Management, David Dufault-Hunter, and the Executive Director of Career and Alumni Engagement, Phil Brazell, with the hope that it would be mutually beneficial for both undergraduate enrollment and alumni engagement. Over the last two months that conversation has continued through learning at conferences, planning for more effective territory management strategies, and having several conversations about leveraging alumni throughout the admissions funnel. As a proven NACAC practice, Alumni Recruitment at Azusa Pacific University could lead to an increase in active recruiting in all three territory markets, opportunities for more strategic church recruitment, and alumni engagement across territories.

CHALLENGES: When it comes to Alumni and Church recruitment there are five primary challenges: lack of strategy (clarity, ownership, & activation), lack of resources (people, money, & time), lack of time (planning & communication), lack of data (leveraging CRM to track alumni connections), and lack of best practices (NACAC & NACCAP). All of these challenges can be overcome by researching case studies, having clear roles, developing a training process with best practices, exploring all forms of alumni recruitment and strategies, and

CASE STUDIES & EXAMPLES TO EXPLORE:

- **University of Michigan** has an intensive alumni recruitment training process that is initiated and facilitated by their regional counselors. According to Kristopher Tesoro Edd- Western Regional Recruiter, training and equipping their alumni is a part of the regional recruiter primary responsibilities so that their region can be most effectively covered by University of Michigan.
- **Santa Clara University** utilizes a google sheet as their relationship management system to track and distribute alumni contact to their admissions team to connect with to send to college fairs. According to members of the SCU Admissions Team, Eryn Olson (Assistant Director) and Eddie Kelinsky (Assistant Director & Alumni Liaison), these alumni partner with them at fairs and even attend many across the nation to cover more ground during the recruiting cycle for interviews and appointment as well.

ROLES: The Office of Alumni Engagement has the capability and capacity to source as well as screening and connection engaged alumni with various pathways for involvement and/or recruitment. While Office of Undergraduate Admissions would provide pathways for involvement, oversee the training processes for alumni recruitment, and engage with alumni in various territories.

DEVELOPING TRAINING & BEST PRACTICES: After researching the various case studies of how other universities have developed their training process, utilizing adult learning online strategies by Jane Vella to develop an online training platform with various modules that utilize elements of the admissions onboarding training process and updated university resources. Training would focus on information about the admissions cycle, best practices, building your story, expectations, college fairs, and events.

FORMS OF ALUMNI RECRUITMENT: From the beginning conversations between David and Phil, there were originally four forms of alumni recruitment that we considered and two of which were piloted during

the 2018 recruiting cycle. Those four forms of alumni recruitment were fairs, events, referrals, and interviews and church recruitment is one that has become a part of the conversation considering the alumni often attend a church and already have on foot in the door as a potential leader in their community.

1. **Fairs:** Having alumni present at fairs are a common practice in higher education and partnering with alumni to be present at fall fairs is a start to modeling and training them so that they could become engaged alumni recruiters at fairs in the Spring.
2. **Events:** Over the course of the Fall 2018 cycle, alumni participated in both winter and spring receptions on an alumni panel, which was first launched in Spring 2017 in WA at the Newport Yacht Club. There have been many alumni in these out of area regions interested in serving at any capacity at these events whether that is being on a panel, setting up, or engage with current students and families. Also, in the future local alumni, could even be available to serve in the local MOU school districts and on-campus preview events.
3. **Referrals:** Providing an online form that would function as an online IRC is another way that alumni in a day to day context to be able to provides with an intentional interaction and pass off to an admissions professional. That list could be managed and distributed to the various territory managers for active follow up calls to these targeted students. Being able to incentivize these interactions with application fee waivers and month raffles to say an occasional thank you could be rewarding for active alumni.
4. **Interviews:** Alumni could also participate in optional admissions interviews and informational meetings with prospective students, which have been known to increase the likelihood of a student demonstrating interest into the University. These interviews were first piloted in Sacramento during the Fall 2018 cycle.
5. **Church Recruitment:** Considering that alumni attend various churches in recruiting territories, they are a better connection point to be able to connect with youth pastors and church leaders. By having one foot in the local church while being a part of the APU family, they become the trusted guide in that community who could be the ultimate resource for a family. One example of this taking place is an alumnus, Alison Markley, whose church has been involved in Mexico Outreach for years and has recruited student for APU over the year. Coba Canales is another leader whose congregation is filled with APU alumni eager to serve APU in South Los Angeles in various capacities like receptions for first-generation students, financial aid, and more.

STRATEGIES: Through conferences and conversations, there have been some creative strategies that are worth exploring such as create a leadership development training process for admissions interns to be trained to eventually become admissions alumni. Also, developing online IRCs for alumni to access, planning cross collaborating outreach events with alumni, local churches, current, incoming, and prospective students, alumni panels for preview events, and more.

OUTCOMES: Some of the outcomes could an increase in inquiries, which could lead to alumni accountability with prospective students to complete applications as well as conversations that could lead to enrollment. Another outcome could be the establishment of an alumni base in every territory from engagement and regional recruitment. Also, a launched training process could be reproducible and could apply across the university as human resources university training for staff members to also become a recruiter for the university. Their buy-in for joining the recruitment process could lead to advocacy for the importance of university enrollment being a university responsibility culturally.

EVALUATION: All of this could be evaluated by created Inquiry Tracking called, "Alumni Source" to be able to see the development of a new Inquiry model score. By utilizing google form for surveys, alumni training and feedback could help improve the process as well as create a space for alumni to have great ownership in recruit in their region.