

EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT

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Welcome!

So, you're interested in planning an alumni event! On behalf of the Alumni Association of NJIT and the Alumni Office, I am very pleased to welcome your interest and efforts!

Planning a successful alumni event is one of the most rewarding activities for any alumni volunteer. A successful event can engage even the most disconnected alumnus or alumna, and can invigorate an entire cohort of alumni, whether geographically, by company, or in many other ways.

Planning an alumni event can also be a lot of work. It involves communication, serious planning, developing and sticking to a timeline, and building a support network of fellow alumni.

Most importantly, planning alumni events takes leadership. If you're reading this, you're already someone who is standing out from the crowd – someone who cares about NJIT, about fellow alumni, and about engaging fellow alumni in a positive way. In short, you're the type of person we in the Alumni Office love to work with.

This Toolkit is intended to help support your efforts, and to set up some guidelines for how we can achieve our shared goals. It has event ideas and a general planning timeline, but as you know, every event, every volunteer, and every group works best in their own unique ways.

I am excited to work with you to plan your next event!

Sincerely,

Michael K. Smullen

Director

NJIT Alumni Relations

What is engagement?

Simply put, “engagement” is a mutually beneficial relationship. It means that an alumnus or alumna receives some benefit because of his or her NJIT degree, and provides some support to NJIT in return.

A benefit to alumni can be something as simple as attending an event, or finding other alumni in a particular area, or connecting with someone for career networking, or even receiving insurance discounts like Liberty Mutual. Support for NJIT can take many forms, from keeping contact information current, to helping to recruit new students, or support the University financially.

So, an alumnus or alumna can be said to be “engaged” if there is some benefit to everyone. However, benefits don’t all happen at once! For all alumni, NJIT will strive to provide the greatest benefits and support throughout their lifetime. If we do this in the right way and at the right times, it is our goal to make a convincing case for alumni to feel proud, and to desire on their own to support the University.

An event is one of the best ways to engage alumni!

Events are one of the best ways to engage alumni. If an event is interesting, well-planned, communicated in advance, and carefully thought through, it will draw back alumni of all ages and groups. And the first step to engage a fellow alumnus or alumna is simply to reconnect.

So remember...

Engagement is mutually beneficial!

What is a successful event?

A successful event will meet these criteria:

- Measurably meets most goals identified in planning process
- Measurably increases alumni engagement in some way
- Is measurably positive for most participants

The most important thing to consider when planning an event is:

Set your goals early, and stick to them!

A basic template for event goal setting is as follows:

What is the goal for attendance?

○ Alumni: _____

○ Total: _____

Set and stick with a budget

Increase contact information

Recruit new volunteers

Not all of these goals will apply to every event, but working with the Alumni Office, alumni volunteers should identify at least two goals for each event.

Types of events

- **Annual meeting** – Most active clubs hold at least one event every year that is an annual club board meeting.
- **Luncheon, dinner and/or receptions** – For instance, a dinner at a popular restaurant, or a holiday reception
- **Academic programs** – For instance, an NJIT faculty or alumni lecture on a hot topic or program
- **Career networking and mentoring functions** - This kind of event may or may not have a speaker addressing related issues (i.e., how headhunters work, how to write a stand-out résumé, etc.)
- **Admissions events** – For instance, admitted student gatherings or high-school fairs
- **Family-friendly events**
- **Sporting events** – For instance, NJIT away games, NJIT game watches, or local athletics events
- **Cultural programs** – Local museums, galleries, symphonies, theatrical houses and observatories
- **Culinary events** – Happy hours, wine tastings and cooking classes are great events
- **Volunteer or service events**
- **Official NJIT visit** – For instance, a visit by President Bloom, Provost Deek, a Dean or a faculty member

These are just a few of the events you can offer, but there are many more events to choose from!

Event timeline

12 Weeks Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set goals of event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attendance ○ Budget 2. Distribute responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Publicity ○ Program planning ○ Decorations ○ Budget 3. Reserve the Location, Caterer, and Bar Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contracts must be approved by University official ○ Don't forget audio/visual needs if necessary
8 Weeks Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn in written description of event including price and RSVP date to Alumni Relations so it can be published on the web site, and included in all publicity materials
6 Weeks Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Event announcements sent out by Alumni Office 2. Submit supply requests, gather everything needed 3. Review committee assignments and get status reports
3 Weeks Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirm space arrangements (tables, podiums, AV, etc) 2. Assign event duties and responsibilities 3. Start making personal phone calls to encourage attendance
1 Week Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designate a photographer – photos can be sent in to Alumni Relations to help document your success! 2. Review agenda with the event emcee if there is a program 3. Prepare all registration materials including lists and name tags 4. Provide final count to event facility
3 Days Prior to Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review all logistics with event site contact 2. Prepare all materials to be brought to event site
Day of the Event	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrive early to be sure the space is arranged properly and acquaint yourself with the facilities 2. Have a table set up with nametags, membership information, volunteer contact sheets, giveaway items (when available) and a volunteer to answer questions 3. For larger events split this table up into stations around the room to alleviate congestion at the door 4. Have a prepared agenda for the entire event
Post Mortem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the success with all volunteers involved 2. Send thank you notes if appropriate 3. Follow up with new attendees to cultivate new volunteers

Alumni Office Support

The Alumni Office is ready to support your event, with a few items to note:

- At least 3 months notice must be provided for an alumni event
- An event must include more than one alumni volunteer, unless it is University sponsored
- As much as possible, each event must stay with the planning calendar

The Alumni Office can't guarantee support for every alumni event you may wish to plan – some additional factors that we must consider are proper staff support, budget restrictions, support for strategic objectives, and communications support. However, the Alumni Office will strive to help you plan ahead for success.

Once an event is approved and agreed upon, the Alumni Office will provide:

- Budget
- Communication support
- Staffing as needed
- Contract signing
- A list of targeted alumni
- Teleconference support
- An event website with ticket registration
- Access to NJIT faculty or staff