

TIPS FOR WAKECOMMUNITIES

Overview

The Communities Committee of the Wake Forest University Alumni Council supports the network of Wake Forest Communities around the country by providing strategic advice for improving community effectiveness. This document outlines the recommendations of the Committee for formation and rejuvenation of WAKECommunities, particularly in small and mid-size markets.

Community Structure and Functionality

- **Dual leadership** works well, either with two co-presidents or a “senior” president and a “young alumni” president, to provide a second leader for support and cooperation.
- Invite and welcome **parents** to events – they are often just as enthusiastic as alumni.
- Collect names and contact info at each event to **build a record** of people who actively participate.
- Try to establish a **core group** of 5-6 people who can be counted on to attend events, and coordinate proposed events with these people to ensure they are interested and available.
- Establish a Community **information repository** (such as Google drive) so new Community leaders can easily access it.
- Use **social media** (such as Facebook and LinkedIn groups) to distribute event information, in addition to University generated emails.

Event Planning

- Pro Humanitate events should be a centerpiece of every Community since they are so closely tied to the Wake Forest mission and attract participants from all generations. Try to plan at least **two service events** per year.
- Successful events often include a “**behind the scenes**” component or something not available to the general public. Review your list of local alumni to find people whose jobs or other contacts might provide interesting access opportunities.
- Encourage event attendance with “**plus one**” **initiative** – ask each participant to bring at least one other Wake Forester who was not otherwise planning to attend.
- Events do not always need to be designed to appeal to the entire Community population. Interest-based events, career-focused events, business lunches in the downtown area or even small dinners can be especially valuable when **targeted to a particular audience**. The new alumni contact system can transmit invitations to specific groups within the Community population. Talk to your Alumni Office contact for more details.

- Set appropriate attendance expectations for events and **measure success by impact for participants** (not just numbers).

Additional Resources

- Apply for annual Innovation Fund grants to support larger events.
- Reach out to other Community leaders and Community Committee members to ask questions about how to plan events.
- Use LinkedIn advanced search tools to find alumni in your area in certain fields for planning targeted events.