



# Strategic Alumni Planning

Pre-Departure, Re-Orientation and  
Other Programs Engaging Alumni

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# Why are alumni important?

- Resource for us to help promote U.S. education
  - Influential voices locally in helping us promote U.S. education
  - Are usually dynamic, energetic, enthusiastic and accomplished people—leaders in their communities back home
  - Deeply impressed by their exchange experience—*“my U.S. experience changed my life!”*
- Resource for providing support for other alumni (networking for jobs, social life, etc.)

# Why is a PDO important?

- One of the biggest adjustment international students face is the unexpected cultural differences in their day-to-day encounters with American people and culture.
- Giving scholars a chance to ask *any* questions about the U.S. and to meet others like them is an empowering opportunity for them!

# The Cyprus Fulbright Commission's “Orientation to America” PDO



- A pre-departure orientation for both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot scholars who are preparing to leave for their studies in the US
- 4 classes, 2.5 hours each
- Includes more *theoretical* aspects (e.g., culture, crossing cultures, culture shock and reverse culture shock) and *practical* (e.g., banking, shopping, expectations of U.S. professors, campus and social life, maintaining visa status while in the U.S., etc.)

# The Cyprus Fulbright Commission's “Orientation to America” PDO



- Offers supportive/informal environment to introduce scholars to U.S. University life and life in America more generally
- Various guests: PAO and Fulbright Chairman; Fulbright ED; Visiting American Fulbright Professor; Consular officer; alumni—lots of opportunities for questions

# Utilizing Alumni in the PDO

- I invite recent Cypriot graduates of U.S. undergraduate/graduate programs to present [usually at least 3, both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot]
- 10-15 minute talk each on a particular topic like “life on a U.S. campus,” or “academics and managing work load as an international student”.
- They usually make it very personal, focusing on important issues that they experienced as Cypriots studying in the U.S. and interacting with Americans.

# Utilizing Alumni in the PDO

- Great opportunity to “plant the seed” that they are future USG alumni and what that means!
- Newly departing students/scholars can relate to the alumni because right in front of them are Cypriots just like themselves who have just went through their U.S. educational experience and life they themselves are about to embark on.

# Engaging alumni

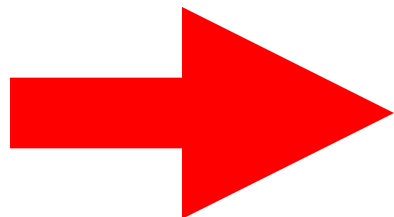
- Utilizing alumni to promote U.S. education
  - School visits
  - Panel of alumni at U.S. university fair
  - Financial aid workshops (non USG-funded alumni)
  - Skype/DVC events linking current Cypriot students in US to those thinking about study in the U.S.

# Engaging alumni

- Building an alumni community
  - Alumni Association
  - Socrates Café
  - Alumni reception hosted by U.S. Ambassador, as networking opportunity for alumni to meet and mentor new scholars
  - Promoting [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov) as excellent networking/support feature for alumni

# Our Goals

- Solidifying the ‘cohort’
- Stronger ties with alumni
- Slave labor 😊
- Setting up a better support system
- Getting more sound feedback on the programs and improving them
- Making sure the Fulbright and EdUSA programs are achieving their goal: Sharing the experience



***REOs make sense!***

# Testing the waters...

- We asked 4 alums from different Fulbright / State Dept. programs to help us out:
  - “What were your most pressing problems?”
  - “What would you have wanted out of an REO?”
- Decisions:
  - City, Venue
  - Funding (!)
  - Who to invite : only very recent returnees?
  - Speakers
  - Topics to be covered

# Re-Entry Orientation

*Do students need “re-orienting”?*

*Aren't they back home,  
where everything is familiar?*

What are some issues students face  
when they come back from 2 or  
more years in the US?

# Some issues we found were that..

- They have changed
  - Noone really understands what they experienced
  - Noone really wants to listen to them say “When I was in America...”
- Everyone else has changed,
  - They need to get caught up
  - People’s perceptions of them will change
- They are in a different stage in their life
- They come back with expectations which may not be met. *E.g. a wonderful job on the spot*

**Now that we know what the issues are ...**

**What topics should be covered  
during the REO to assist returnees,  
also keeping in mind OUR GOALS?**

***At your tables, please come up with a plan for an REO:  
3-5 session / activity titles; discuss how you would cover  
the topics  
(20 mins)***

# What we did...

- **Awareness raising activity:** I got back and I found that...
  - my family was / had....
  - my friends ....
  - my country....
- **Managing Re-entry Stress** – Alum, psychiatrist
  - **Lecture** / Stand –up show 😊
- **Planning and Managing your Career**
  - **Panel** Discussion by Fulbright Alumni
- **Leaders in Action & Mentoring** – Alum, Head hunter + Business Professor
  - **Interactive lecture**
- **Making the Most of Your Fulbright Experience**
  - Break out session: Brainstorming and Networking

# Outcomes

- 50 solid ideas
- Whittled down to 18 Projects among which were..
  - Fulbright CV bank / database
  - Mentorship for young alums and for potential applicants
  - Monthly get-togethers in the big cities
  - Doing outreach together with advisers
  - Event and community project plans
  - Promotional activity / commercial / design / competition projects
  - Many more

# What is the role of an Alumni Association? (A university's perspective)



An Alumni Association plays a vital role in carrying out the mission of the University. The leadership role of an association is to encourage and promote the following:

- Enhancement of the University's reputation
- Recruitment help with prospective students, especially those of high scholastic achievement
- Sustaining loyalty and enthusiasm among University alumni
- Keeping the University's alumni office informed of up-to-date addresses
- Forwarding information concerning prominent alumni to the University's alumni office
- Opportunities for professional development
- Community service
- Social events
- Intellectual stimulation

# Indiana University's Global Alumni Ambassador Program



An Indiana University global alumni ambassador is a volunteer willing to act as a liaison for IU in his or her particular geographical region, city, or country. The GAA's responsibilities may include any or all of the following:

- Watching for and identifying IU alumni in your geographical city, region, or country.
- Collecting names and other contact information of fellow IU alumni and sharing this information with the IU Alumni Association to keep the IU alumni database updated.
- Allowing the IUAA to share your name and contact information as a GAA with IU alumni who may be returning or moving to your geographical region.
- Permitting the IUAA to share your name and contact information as a GAA with IU's president, deans, vice presidents, faculty, staff, and IU students interested in your geographical region.
- When representing IU as a global alumni ambassador, individuals are **not required** to plan alumni activities or events, although they are certainly welcome to do so. Starting a new chapter is possible if warranted by alumni interest in the region.