KEEPING CONNECTED:

A guide for
SFU Alumni Representatives and Alumni Groups

Alumni Relations
Simon Fraser University

October 2011
KEEPING CONNECTED:
A Guide for
Alumni Representatives and Alumni Groups

INTRODUCTION

At Simon Fraser University we value our connection with alumni. The mission of the Alumni Association and the Alumni Relations Office is to promote engaging and mutually beneficial relationships between the university and its alumni. No matter where you live, we are committed to providing opportunities for you to keep connected to SFU, and to other alumni. We accomplish this through regional visits by SFU’s senior administrators, and by supporting alumni group activities.

SFU graduates in Canada and around the world help keep the alumni spirit strong through participation as Alumni Representatives and in Alumni Groups. These dedicated volunteers organize social events, professional development opportunities, and other activities for alumni. They assist with student recruitment efforts. They serve as ambassadors for SFU in their respective communities. And they help strengthen the communication and connection between the university and our alumni.

Please read this guide to find out how you can help. We appreciate your interest and look forward to working with you to develop strong alumni connections in your area.

THE BENEFITS OF KEEPING CONNECTED WITH SFU AND WITH EACH OTHER

- ongoing contact with SFU and the alumni community
- social and intellectual enrichment
- expanded networks for professional growth and development
- meeting others who share a common base of experience
- connections with SFU students, staff, faculty and leaders
- continued involvement in the welfare and future of SFU
OPPORTUNITIES FOR KEEPING CONNECTED

President’s Regional Visits

Organized by the Alumni Relations Office, the President’s regional visits are regularly scheduled events by the President of the university (or other senior administrators) to sites where there are a significant number of SFU alumni.

SFU’s Alumni Relations Office, in conjunction with the Office of Ceremonies and Events, organizes the events for these regional visits. Alumni in the area will receive a printed or emailed invitation directly from the university. The staff handles all replies and event logistics, and in most cases, a staff member accompanies the President to the event.

Alumni Representatives and/or Groups may be asked to assist with these events.

Alumni Representatives

Alumni Representatives are volunteers who serve as local contacts and ambassadors for SFU in specific geographic regions or on behalf of certain programs or special interest groups.

Alumni Representatives are key to SFU’s commitment to staying connected with graduates at home and around the world. Representatives may be asked to assist with SFU-initiated events (such as a President’s reception), or with student recruitment efforts. They may also organize gatherings for alumni they represent.

Alumni Groups

Organized by Alumni Representatives and other volunteers, Alumni Groups provide an opportunity for alumni to connect with each other more frequently than once a year.

Alumni groups are an informal alternative to traditional alumni chapters (program- or interest-based) and alumni branches (region-based). Alumni Representatives and other volunteers, working together informally rather than as an elected executive committee, promote ongoing interaction between graduates. Based on interest and demographics, alumni groups may organize social events, professional development opportunities, or other engaging activities.
ESTABLISHING AN ALUMNI GROUP

Step 1

Please contact the Alumni Relations Office to discuss your ideas. The Office will provide you with information about the number of alumni who reside in your region or who have degrees in your program area. The next step is to establish yourself (or someone else) as the Alumni Representative for your group.

Step 2

A good way to start an Alumni Group is to invite your fellow graduates to an informal gathering. Once you have decided on a date, time and location, the Alumni Relations Office will send a letter or email to your fellow alumni introducing the new Alumni Representative and group, and inviting them to the gathering. The Alumni Representative will act as a contact person for the event.

Step 3

From those that attend the first event, you will be able to build a group of volunteers who will take responsibility to plan more activities in the future. Alumni Groups are encouraged to organize events that are inclusive, informal and financially sustainable

A list of SFU’s Alumni Representatives and Groups can be found at: http://www.sfu.ca/alumni/groups
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF SFU ALUMNI REPRESENTATIVES AND ALUMNI GROUPS

• Serve as a resource for SFU, and for alumni, exchange and co-op students who may be new to the area or require general advice.
• Assist with events initiated by SFU including providing suggestions for venues, formats and speakers, acting as the local contact for replies, and providing on-site assistance (such as staffing the reception desk).
• If possible, organize at least one informal gathering a year, particularly in regions where there is no SFU visit scheduled. (While there is no obligation for Representatives to organize activities, an annual event is recommended in order to keep alumni connected.) Schedule these alumni-initiated activities in consultation with the Alumni Relations Office.
• Participate in SFU’s student recruitment activities, if required.
• Act as representatives of SFU; as such, personal conduct and alumni-organized events must be appropriate to the reputation of the University.
• Encourage alumni to submit their current contact information to the Alumni Relations Office via the website or by email.
• Review local media for mentions of SFU and notable alumni, and keep the Alumni Relations Office informed of this coverage.
• If applicable, provide a year-end report to the Alumni Relations Office including a list of alumni involved in your area and an account of the year’s activities (eg, events, attendance numbers and photographs).

Please Note:

• Names and email addresses of all Alumni Representatives are posted on the SFU Alumni website and in various SFU publications as a resource for other alumni. Representatives are asked to keep the Alumni Relations Office informed of any changes to their contact information.
• Alumni Representatives are encouraged to use an SFU Alumni Email Forwarding address. See: http://www.sfu.ca/alumni/emailforwarding
• Alumni Representatives and Groups may have access to information such as name and address lists of SFU alumni in the region. This information must be kept confidential in accordance with the Province of British Columbia’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Representatives will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement when receiving any SFU alumni information. This information is to be used for alumni activity purposes only, must not be copied or forwarded electronically, must not be shared with other people or businesses, and must be disposed of confidentially (eg, by shredding).
PROCESS FOR BECOMING
AN SFU ALUMNI REPRESENTATIVE

Qualifications

- a degree, diploma or certificate from Simon Fraser University
- a strong commitment to keeping alumni connected with each other and with SFU
- adequate time to fulfill the roles and responsibilities
- excellent organizational ability
- strong communication and interpersonal skills
- functional language of local area of representation, if applicable

Application

If you are interested in being an SFU Alumni Representative, please contact the Alumni Relations Office. We will provide you with information about the number of alumni who are residing in your region or who have degrees in your program area. If we are unable to meet with you personally, please email us the following:

- A brief biography of yourself (100-150 words) outlining your educational background, work history, and any volunteer experience. Also, an electronic photo would be appreciated. This information is for the Alumni Relations Office file only.
- A ‘statement of interest’ (1-2 sentences) about why you would like to act as an Alumni Representative for SFU and/or develop an SFU Alumni Group.
- The name and contact information (email address & telephone number) of two references, including one that works at SFU, if possible.
- Your current contact information (postal & email addresses and phone numbers).
- Your permission to post your name and email address on the Alumni website and other SFU publications.
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT THROUGH THE
ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE

The Alumni Relations Office will:

- maintain a contact list of current Alumni Representatives and Groups on the website
- provide advice on program and event organization
- manage email lists and send email invitations on behalf of Representatives or Groups
- promote Alumni activities on the Alumni website and through the e-newsletter
- provide updated name and address lists when requested for specific purposes
  (Please allow 10 working days minimum for your request.)
- provide SFU prize for business card draw
- assist in reserving selected facilities at SFU Burnaby, SFU Vancouver and SFU Surrey
- loan alumni banners for events (where feasible)
- provide alumni benefits and services brochures (where applicable)
- arrange for a member of the Alumni Relations Office staff and/or the Alumni Association Board of Directors to speak briefly at your event (where feasible)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE
SFU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

All graduates of SFU are members of the SFU Alumni Association, and the Alumni Association is the “parent” organization of all SFU Alumni Groups. From revenues generated by affinity partnerships (eg, credit cards and insurance), the SFU Alumni Association has established a fund to support alumni activities and projects. While Alumni Groups are expected to be financially self-supporting, and events and activities should be cost-recovery, limited financial support may available through the Alumni Association.

Further information on financial support can be found at:
http://www.sfu.ca/alumni/alumni-association/funding-application.html
IDEAS FOR SFU ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

• special guest speakers
• professional development workshops (eg career management)
• networking receptions
• welcome parties for new alumni
• send-off orientations/parties for new students bound for SFU
• mentoring new graduates
• sponsoring co-op placements
• developing scholarships
• regularly-scheduled gatherings (eg pub nights, dinners/lunches)
• group attendance at athletic or cultural events (eg football games, gallery openings, theatre, etc)
• get-togethers for sport and/or social activities (eg, hiking, biking, skiing, boating, picnics, barbeques, sightseeing tours, wine-tastings, pot luck dinners)
• team involvement in community events (eg Terry Fox Run, golf tournaments)
• theme parties (eg Canada Day, Thanksgiving, Halloween)
• assisting with university-sponsored activities such as student recruitment, receptions, visits from SFU administration, faculty or staff

Please note:

• Joint activities with alumni of other BC or Canadian universities are highly recommended, particularly in areas where there are a small number of SFU alumni.
CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING SFU ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

This comprehensive checklist may assist you in planning a variety of alumni activities. However, most activities are informal and require only the steps that appear in **bold**.

- Informally poll alumni to see what kind of activities would be of interest to them
- **Contact Alumni Relations Office staff to discuss your idea**
- Request a current name, address and email list (if required)
- Identify small group of alumni to assist you with organizing the activity
- **Designate a key contact person (for replies, and to answer any questions)**
- Establish date and time for activity
- Identify suitable venue and make reservations
- **Determine deadline and method for replies (email, phone, online)**
- Determine program for event (e.g. MC, speaker)
- Develop budget
- Confirm speaker (if required)
- Make arrangements with caterers
- Order audio-visual equipment.
- Determine non-alumni guest list, if any (e.g. VIPs, special guests, speaker)
- **Prepare event invitation/notice and email to Alumni Relations Office for distribution to alumni and for posting on the website and in the e-newsletter**
- Track replies and finalize list of attendees
- Prepare name tags for attendees
- Prepare place cards if formal seating arrangement is required
- Liaise with venue to finalize numbers, a/v, signage, flowers, etc.
- Gift and/or thank-you card for speaker
- Prize for business card/lucky prize draw
- Arrange check-in details (who’s staffing reception desk, collecting business cards, promotional handouts)
- **Enjoy event/activity!**
- **Prepare post-event summary: list of attendees; brief report (e.g. highlights, pictures) and send to Alumni Relations Office, along with any alumni information updates (such as business cards)**
CONTACTS

Alumni Relations
Alumni Association
Simon Fraser University
Diamond Alumni Centre
8888 University Drive
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6
Canada

telephone: +1.778.782.4723
1.800.998.4723 (toll-free in Canada & the US)
fax: +1.778.782.6776
website: www.sfu.ca/alumni
e-mail: alumni@sfu.ca

• **SFU staff contact for Alumni Representatives and Groups:**

  **John Grant**
  
  telephone: +1.778.782.3994
  
  e-mail: john_grant@sfu.ca

For a complete list of Alumni staff, please see:
http://www.sfu.ca/alumni/contact-us.html