

**Alumni Engagement Working Group Recommendations:
December 2012**

Alumni Engagement Conclusions:

The feedback from the open forums and working group members suggest the challenges regarding low annual giving rates are more a result of SDSU's "state supported" history than being born from a lack of appreciation for the education. Accordingly the consensus is that this challenge is best tackled with education, messaging and systematic implementation of "asking" mechanisms. It is imperative that SDSU keep current with emerging technologies which facilitate giving and that we utilize social media to market and encourage giving. Finally, the current efforts and messaging regarding "Every Aztec, Any Amount, Every Year", including the goal of increasing the percentage of annual alumni giving from 2.5% to 7.5% in three years, should continue full bore.

In order to continue to create the development of networks to support the Aztec family, stronger mentorship and internship programs are needed--along with a more engaged alumni base. SDSU Career Services and the Alumni Association have the appropriate framework for these endeavors but a stronger partnership needs to be forged.

Recommendations:

Continue to strengthen collaborations across campus to build Aztec pride amongst current students to foster life-long loyalty; thus building the pipeline of future alumni involvement. Continue to encourage the "Aztec for Life" mantra, building a culture of philanthropy and tradition.

Create an infrastructure to accommodate alumni volunteerism at SDSU. This needs to include student/alumni mentorship and particularly stronger virtual mentorship, peer to peer fundraising, participation on university committees/advisory boards/award selection committee/special event speakers and more. The rationale is that this is a critical step towards establishing the "virtuous cycle" of improving SDSU and the quality of education via alumni engagement and alumni giving, resulting in a higher quality student experience.

The methodology required to affect significant improvement of alumni engagement involves establishing a campus-wide clearinghouse for alumni volunteer opportunities. Currently there are volunteer based programs in each college, division and auxiliary. A partnership between Student Affairs and University Relations & Development specifically the Alumni Association is essential. The most extensive student mentorship program is in Career Services in Student Affairs. Their fledgling on-line mentorship program is a key element of our recommendation. This program needs an infusion of resources if we truly intend to ramp up our alumni volunteerism opportunities from hundreds to thousands.

In addition, we recommend the importance of tracking current students' involvements/institutional affinities (academic, extra and co-curricular, study abroad, awards etc.), to better engage alumni. In the future, this will help us understand the alumni's sense of identity and can focus our engagement, fundraising and development efforts.

We recommend the establishment of a position dedicated to campus coordination of alumni volunteerism. This position would become a single entry point for all alumni volunteers. The volunteer coordinator would have relationships with key campus constituents who utilize volunteers and would become a true resource for alumni and the community to help students succeed. It will focus on utilizing student interest data and other known alumni data to establish comprehensive virtual volunteerism primarily, but not limited to, virtual mentorship. An advisory board would be created to support the strategies for engaging volunteers. This advisory group would have strong representation from Student Affairs, the colleges, alumni and community. A centralized point person for alumni volunteerism will also help facilitate effective cross divisional understanding, awareness, partnerships, and knowledge.

Proposed Funding Structure:

- Year 1-3: University funded at approximately \$60K including benefits.
Alumni to supervise and support with \$5K operational budget
- Year 3-6: Alumni/University split position funding at approximately \$32.5k each/year
- Year 7 and forever: Alumni to absorb position and operational budget