

FarmHouse International Fraternity

Director of
Alumni Relations Resource



Revised Fall 2005

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**FarmHouse International Fraternity
Director of Alumni Relations Resource**

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THE CHAPTER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The FarmHouse International Fraternity has established the Chapter Award of Excellence as our minimum standards program. It is designed to recognize Chapters that are operating at the performance level outlined in our By-Laws, policies, and handbooks. The criteria for the Chapter Award of Excellence are built upon basic expected performance in the various areas of chapter operations. As an officer of your Chapter, the criteria within your responsibility are identified in the box that follows.

4. Alumni Relations (6 points)

_____ *The chapter & association jointly published an alumni newsletter twice each calendar year. Newsletter sent to alumni, other chapters, FH International and university administration (1 point)*
(Attachment #4 - submit copy of each newsletter – will become entry for Outstanding Newsletter Award)

_____ *The chapter hosted an alumni event (besides Association Meetings) each academic term. (2 points)*

- 1. Event: _____ # of alumni attending: _____ Date: _____
- 2. Event: _____ # of alumni attending: _____ Date: _____

_____ *The chapter involved alumni in its educational programs and house operations (list alumni and assistance): (2 or more = 2 points, 1=1 point) (2 points)*

- _____ *guest speakers & topics* _____
- _____ *facilitator at workshops/retreats* _____
- _____ *alumni bigger brother programs* _____
- _____ *mentoring programs* _____
- _____ *major house renovations/improvements* _____
- _____ *other (explain)* _____

_____ *The chapter is submitting a 2005-06 Chapter Programming Award application for alumni relations. (1 point)*

19. Relationships with Advisors/Associations/Parents/Housemothers (4 points)

_____ *The chapter maintained at least 3 chapter advisors. (1 point)*

Chapter advisors' name	E-mail	Work phone #
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

_____ *At least one chapter advisor attended each weekly meeting and regularly offered advice and suggestions to the active chapter. (1 point)*

_____ *The chapter conducted at least one activity involving parents this calendar year. (1 point)*

Type of activity: _____ **# of parents attending:** _____ **Date:** _____

_____ *Parents are invited and encouraged to attend formal initiation ceremony. (1 point)*

I. INTRODUCTION

To gain a full understanding of the true meaning of Alumni Relations, we should perhaps take a close look at the individual concerned, the alumnus. Just what do we mean by this term? According to Webster, an alumnus is defined as “one that has attended or graduated from a particular school, college, or institution.” A closer look at the word itself indicates that the word "alumnus" derives its meaning from the Latin word “alios,” which means “to nurture,” or in effect, “to support and maintain.”

Herein lies the real meaning of the word and of Alumni Relations. *Institutions that generate alumni traditionally redirect their attention to those individuals for the “support and maintenance” of that organization.* FarmHouse Fraternity is certainly no exception. The experience of this group of members and their willingness to assist provides the continuity so important to our chapters' well-being, and the continued financial support assists immeasurably in maintaining the very important traditions, services and programs that we offer our members.

Alumni Relations is designed to assist you - the undergraduate member or the involved alumnus - in developing the kinds of programming necessary to prepare for the future. The guidelines contained herein can be assimilated or carefully chosen to form a comprehensive program aimed at insuring the support of our most certain base - our alumni.

II. THE DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Director of Alumni Relations and his committee are responsible for the chapter's relationship with alumni of the chapter and the fraternity in the area and all related programs that pertain to those bonds. Ideally, the Chairman will have a committee to support the execution of this program, and each successive chairman will then refine the committee's duties. Be certain that the chapter budgets appropriately for alumni programming and that the Alumni Chairman is responsible for this fund.

Responsibilities

- Establish a strong relationship and lines of communication with your local alumni association, chapter alumni, Association, and advisor(s).
- Contact prominent alumni in the area that will interact with a chapter.
- Have alumni events planned far in advance designed for the alumni, not the undergraduates.
- Recognize outstanding alumni for their support and dedication to you chapter
- Set written, attainable goals for the chapter's alumni relations program and track how they are met.
- Keep alumni directories/databases current.
- Issue at least two newsletters annually which consist of 1/2 Alumni News and 1/2 Chapter News.
- Supervise an Alumni Relations Committee that develops and maintains alumni programming efforts.
- Maintain a working relationship with your university/college alumni office.

III. ROLES FOR ALUMNI

One of the greatest characteristics of the FarmHouse experience is that it does not end at graduation. Once a brother graduates and becomes an alumnus, he still has an entire lifetime of experience ahead of him as a FarmHouse member.

Types

There are three broad areas where an alumnus can assist the chapter.

(1) Advising

There are a number of formal positions to advise a FarmHouse chapter for the alumnus who desires to stay actively involved. Participating in an alumni leadership position on the Association Board is a way to stay very connected with the chapter. Whether the alumnus chooses to be a financial advisor, a housing advisor, or any other advisor position, it is important to ensure that an individual's skill set is matched to a particular need.

(2) Professional Expertise

Sharing time and talent is another way in which an alumnus can add value to an undergraduate's FarmHouse experience. This can be accomplished by coordinating mentoring, networking, externships, internships, job shadowing and other related workshop opportunities on a regular basis.

(3) Educational Resource

An alumnus may choose to serve as a resource to brothers in addressing issues such as personal development, health and wellness, or spirituality. Or perhaps the alumnus desires to present a topic as part of the New Member Education Program or a brotherhood retreat.

Alumni Opportunities

As you will find out as Director of Alumni Relations, alumni involvement is a key element of success for your chapter's long-term stability and viability. Nothing is worse for an alumnus than to be asked for assistance by a chapter and then being given nothing by the chapter in the way of a position description, resources, etc. Many times this does more harm than not asking at all. Many alumni are glad to assist with the needs of the chapter provided that their role is organized, detailed and outlined in advance of being asked for assistance. Alumni can assistance with a variety of activities that will enhance the chapter's programming efforts, such as:

- Sponsorship and hosting of recruitment events
- Serving as a guest writer for the alumni newsletter
- Developing and hosting the chapter's website
- Hosting a etiquette dinner for graduating seniors
- Serve as a speaker during new/member education
- Attend Homecoming, Founders Day, Formal or events of the chapter
- Participate as an advisor or Association Board member
- Assist in the preparation of annual tax filings and budget preparation
- Serve as an alumni big brother or mentor
- Establish an email listserve containing employment opportunities for graduating seniors
- Facilitate a workshop or retreat for the chapter
- Assist in raising funds for the chapter to support programs, housing, scholarships, etc.

When planning to ask for alumni assistance, enlist other alumni in the process, prepare thoroughly, and listen for ways in which the alumnus wants to be involved. The more specific of a task that the chapter can request of an alumnus will increase the chance that the alumnus will agree to the request. For instance, if you would like for an alumnus to speak at a new member education seminar, let him know the topic, the duration, the location, and your expectations for the seminar. Do not simply ask “Can you speak to our new members?” Remember, often times there are alumni who care deeply about the chapter and its members, but have not simply been contacted to be involved with the chapter. It is your job to work with the other officers to identify areas where the chapter could benefit from the experience and knowledge of these older FarmHouse brothers.

Mentoring

Mentoring provides a powerful, tangible example of the brotherhood that can exist in a fraternity. Typically, undergraduate men in chapters feel that the alumni of the chapter are some distant entity. Often times a similar feeling is felt by individual alumni of the chapter as well. To address this burgeoning issue, alumni involvement on a personal level is necessary and a structured mentoring program is the best means to accomplish this.

As Director of Alumni Relations, it is your responsibility to create one-on-one partnerships for alumni and the active members of the chapter. Ask an alumnus to pair up with an undergraduate who may have career objectives or interests that are similar to the alumnus’ experiences. Remind him that through contacts with the younger man, he may very well build a friendship that will assist his mentee through many of the same issues and decisions that he himself experienced. In that regard, the alumnus does not require any “special” training other than to offer a listening ear and encouraging word. In fact, the alumnus is simply being asked to contribute his time and energy to the successful life of a young FarmHouse brother.

Moreover, most alumni understand that people who achieve success in their personal and professional lives often attribute much of their success to others who have played a role in their decisions. It can be personally gratifying for an alumnus to be asked to play that role in an individual’s life.

A few examples of how a mentor may interact with an undergraduate brother include:

- Selecting or changing a major
- Selection of career options
- Separation from family and friends
- Choosing appropriate classes
- General adjustment to college life
- Internships
- Networking
- Study skills and habits
- Resume preparation
- Relationship issues
- Interviewing skills
- Social issues
- Graduate school selection
- Contributions to chapter life

As enumerated previously, the benefits of being a mentor are plentiful. The involved alumnus will find personal renewal as he listens to chapter members discuss the same issues that he had as an undergraduate member of the chapter. He will also be able to share his experiences with others who are genuinely interested providing further personal gratification. With a little organization and outreach to alumni members, a chapter can develop a very successful mentoring program.

IV. THE ALUMNI RELATIONS PROGRAM

Of the many programs a fraternity chapter may implement, no program could be as far-reaching as a solid and consistent alumni relations program. The chapter that successfully institutes and maintains such a program not only demonstrates a well-rounded organization but also indicates a genuine concern for its alumni members. All too often, the dissatisfaction voiced about a chapter's alumni relations program can be traced to its failure to recognize the needs of its alumni, and to develop a program that will meet these needs.

Consider for a moment the "typical" alumnus. Removed from the chapter setting for some time, he has an intrinsic interest in the well-being of his chapter, but also has a variety of constraints upon his time and ability to become actively involved. He may have little knowledge of the chapter's current status, and has a constant yet rarely satisfied interest in the brothers with whom he was an undergraduate member. With these thoughts in mind, what sort of program can a chapter develop to maintain its relations with this individual?

As with any program, the planning and implementation of various parts that make up the whole is directly related to the program's potential for success. The steps that are outlined in this chapter will serve to indicate the steps that should be implemented.

The Alumni Directory

The chapter should always maintain a database of all pertinent alumni information. Common programs to use are Excel or Access, but depending on the amount of alumni and information a chapter is able to maintain, you may want to investigate a more advanced contact management or database program. It is imperative that the chapter maintains accurate records – for its own sake and so that this directory of information is considered valuable to and requested by the alumni.

A useful tool in promoting communication among the alumni is the Alumni Directory. A directory that includes names, addresses, class years, occupations, telephone numbers, and email addresses can be a valuable service to the alumni of the chapter. Supplying the alumni with membership directories will definitely enhance your alumni relations program.

Compile a complete mailing list of your alumni from several sources: the International Office, your university's alumni office, and other FarmHouse alumni. On mailings, request address changes from the Postal Service. You may also wish to compile email addresses, occupations, and additional information on each alumnus.

The Alumni Newsletter

Communication through effective publications is a key element of the alumni relations program, and this communication is best accomplished through the Alumni Newsletter. Newsletters should be published according to a strict timetable, and the number of issues is not nearly as important as the letter's regularity and style. A first-class newsletter is not necessarily the most expensive or the lengthiest, but is one that is attractive in appearance and informative in nature. Electronic communications are cheaper, but are more easily dismissed. If chapter funds permit, mailed newsletters can be quite effective.

A balance between alumni and chapter news is important, as is the addition of different items of interest, such as current university and international fraternity news. Include the following items in each issue of the newsletter:

- Biography forms to solicit information from the alumni on occupations, marital status, recent honors or awards, etc.
- Alumni notes, placed toward the back of the issue that should be of greatest interest to the alumni.
- Recruitment/Rush Recommendation Form, included at least once a year, to solicit recommendations prior to accepting new members.
- "Lost brothers" list to request help in locating those brothers for whom you have no current address or contact information.
- Chapter news, located in the front sections, should be limited to news of real interest to the reader.

It is difficult to ask alumni for assistance or funds if they are not aware of any problems or needs. Be up front about challenges the chapter may be facing and illustrate how alumni can help. This DOES NOT mean always ask for money.

Personal Messages

Personal messages add class to the area of publications. Congratulatory messages, thank you notes, and formal invitations have a definite impact. If your chapter has no printed stationary or cards, have some printed and use them! Respond promptly to all inquiries and letters received from alumni. Always send thank you notes in a timely fashion to donors, guests of events, and alumni who stop by the chapter to say hello.

Chapter Events

The presence of alumni attending chapter events and often visiting the chapter house is an unmistakable sign of the success of the alumni relations program.

Each chapter should decide upon at least two major alumni events per academic year. These events must be planned well in advance and are described as annual alumni activities. Three such events may be:

- Homecoming
- Founders Day
- Alumni Work Weekend

In addition to major events, alumni will be involved if they are involved in the life of the chapter. Be sure to invite alumni on a smaller scale and as appropriate to:

- Awards Banquets
- Pledge & Brother Initiations
- Retreats

Regardless of the activity chosen, the point is to reserve at least two events a year to recognize your alumni. All other work done throughout the year for this program can be negated if these functions are executed poorly. Impress upon the members the importance of attendance and participation at these events, and be certain that the functions are well-organized. Recognize that alumni have limited time and many competing priorities – making it imperative to plan the events – and notify the alumni at least two (2) months in advance.

Create a Welcome Environment

As is commonly said, you only get one chance to make a first impression. Often, chapters that neglect the appearance of their facilities, or do not present a welcoming atmosphere to alumni who may happen to stop by the chapter – often for the first time in many years. So it is important to not only be hospitable in your communications to alumni but also to their presence.

Effective Alumni Relations create a sense of value and are mutually beneficial for the undergraduate chapter AND the alumnus. The best way to do this is to encourage participation of alumni in planning events and communications.

“Do’s” to Remember:

- Ensure that your communications with alumni are *concise and clear*, communicating your objective, whether it is for imparting information, generating event attendance, contributions, etc.
- Maintain heightened levels of communication with alumni leaders, sending them additional information about the chapter and campus life – within reason.
- All communications from the chapter to the alumni should be consistent in their message.

“Don’ts” to Avoid:

- Have events appear unplanned and disorganized
- Mailings should not always be (nor) appear to be solicitations
- Speak negatively about FarmHouse or your school
- Use humor in bad taste
- Use inside Jokes
- Make contributing difficult

V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Checklist for a Successful Alumni Relations Program

- Alumni participation is increasing.
- Adequate financial support for ongoing alumni activities.
- A spirit that FarmHouse is a lifetime commitment built throughout the active chapter.
- A written 5-year plan for the alumni relations program, including active & alumni responsibilities.
- A group of alumni dedicated to the success of that plan.
- Commitment by the active chapter to Alumni Relations
- An Address List of Alumni that is 90% up-to-date.
- Newsletter published a minimum of two times per year with information on alumni and the chapter.
- All financial requests clearly identify the needs and recognize contributors.
- A plan for house ownership or needed improvements.
- Alumni are welcome and comfortable at the house.
- Alumni assist in recruitment, pledge education, and chapter operations.
- Two major alumni social events are held annually.
- Alumni recognition is given regularly through awards.
- Alumni regularly attend the International Conclave.
- Chapter has an enthusiastic alumni advisor(s).
- Contacts in person or by phone are the key to enthusiasm and involvement.

Sample Alumni Directory

Smith, John

11 University Place

Kansas City, MO 64153

E-mail:

Home: (555) 242-1212

Work:

Cell:

Graduation Year: 1999

Major: Business

Employer:

Profession:

Spouse/Children:

Notes:

Sample Invite

The Auburn Chapter of FarmHouse Fraternity

would be honored by your presence at our
Ruby Cup Celebration
on the 1st day of October, two thousand and five

Special Guest Speaker
Shawn Eagleburger, FarmHouse International staff

Master of Ceremonies
Art Vandalay, Chapter President

<i>12:00 – 1:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Luncheon Buffet at The Lodge</i>
<i>3:00 – 4:00 p.m.</i>	<i>Association Board Meeting</i>
<i>5:30 – 6:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Reception at Campus Union</i>
<i>6:00 – 9:00 p.m.</i>	<i>Celebration Dinner at The Lodge</i>

We look forward to a strong gathering of Brothers for a very special evening.

Reply Card

Brother _____ Class _____

___ Yes, I will be able to attend. Enclosed
find my check of \$ _____.

___ No, I cannot attend, but please accept the
following gift. \$ _____.

___ No, I am unable to attend.

Please return by August 31, 2005

Return Envelope

Will C. U. There
FarmHouse Chapter
123 Wysteria Lane
Auburn, AL 99999

How to Get Alumni Back

Without alumni, your anniversary, homecoming or Founder's Day will be just another chapter event. Remember this rule of thumb: Alumni are more likely to return if asked by a brother they know. Here are some suggestions that if implemented properly and in a timely manner will help to bring the alumni back for any anniversary or alumni event.

1. ***Begin advertising next year's event at this year's event.*** Make the same weekend each year the event weekend. (For example, the third weekend in April is always Founders' Day). Make the date for alumni events a tradition. Promote in every chapter newsletter and publication.
2. ***Begin advertising the day & date, time and location at least six months before the event.*** Use the chapter's newsletter or a special email announcement to all alumni informing them of the date. If you are conscious of cost and do not have access to bulk mail, use postcards, as they require less postage.
3. ***Find a graduate brother from every class year or groups of class years*** (groups of 3 years) who is willing to act as a "class agent". His responsibilities will be to write and call all brothers in his class or era and invite them to the event.
4. Send notices and invitations to brothers from other chapters who are living in the immediate area of the chapter.
5. Ask all members of the Association Board and **any other alumnus associated with the chapter to call his classmates** and invite them to the event.
6. ***Hold reunions for specific class years.*** Typically, reunions are held for graduates who have been out of school for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 35, 50 and 60 years. Find a brother from each class who is willing to be a reunion coordinator for his class year. His job responsibilities will be to write and call graduates celebrating these personal anniversaries and personally invite them to return for reunion weekend.
7. If the chapter is having an anniversary of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30...50...75...100 years, this tends to get the attention of graduates and the turnout is usually higher. Use this to your advantage and advertise this extensively. These years are wonderful times to plan for reunions of specific class years. Take advantage of any activities the school might have planned the same weekend.

Remember, every alumnus who is communicating with other graduates about the event will help to spread the word to other alumni brothers.

Terminology

It is important to learn to distinguish the various Latin terms relating to graduates.

Alumnus	Masculine, singular Example: "He is an alumnus of Purdue".
Alumni	Masculine, plural Example: "They are Nebraska alumni."
Alumna	Feminine, singular Example: "She is an alumna of Illinois."
Alumnae	Feminine, plural Example: "They are alumnae of Texas Tech."

Obligations of an Alumnus

1. To give as much time as he is able to support of the local association board and the local chapter, wherever he may be.
2. To continue to regard FarmHouse with sincerity and respect and to continue to observe its teachings, policies, and by-laws.
3. To continue to conduct himself as a gentleman at all times. As an alumnus, you are looked up to as an example of behavior and maturity.
4. To take part in worthy religious, civic, and community activities.
5. To stay current with financial responsibilities to ensure that others have the same opportunities you had as a student.
6. To live up to the ideals espoused in the Object of FarmHouse Fraternity.

Acknowledgements

Many groups and organizations have contributed to the development of these materials. Special thanks for all of their contributions to:

Kappa Sigma
Triangle
Pi Kappa Alpha
Theta Chi
Sigma Alpha Epsilon
Beta Theta Pi
Sigma Chi
Alpha Chi Omega