CSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION RAM NETWORK VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT

Contact Information

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About the CSU Alumni Association

In 1884, Colorado Agricultural College celebrated and conferred degrees on its first graduates: Elizabeth (Libbie) Coy, George Glover, and Leonidas Loomis. Immediately following the ceremony, Charles Ingersoll, president of the college, invited all three graduates to lunch and discussed the creation of an alumni organization. The newly formed Alumni Association ran with a budget of $13 to plan one annual event to bring CAC alumni together.

136 years later, Colorado State University now has over 234,000 living alumni scattered around the world and hosts hundreds of events every year, both on the CSU campus and around the nation. Alumni groups started forming in the early 1900s around the nation and brought alumni together to celebrate their Aggie and Ram pride.

By the Numbers

- Over 235,000 living alumni around the world *(as of July 2020)*
- Over 132,000 reside in Colorado
- Over 13,000 Alumni Association members

MISSION

The Alumni Association is about the past, the present, and the future of Colorado State University. Our mission is to advance the university by;
- developing and strengthening lifelong relationships between alumni and the university community
- benefiting current and future alumni and friends
- serving as a catalyst for communications and involvement

CORE VALUES

Our core values inform everything we do.
- **Pride** - We demonstrate our school spirit through celebration of our strengths and successes.
- **Tradition** - We will preserve and honor the legacy of our past generations. We will build and sustain emerging events and experiences to become enduring traditions.
- **Diversity** - We embrace, respect and actively encourage every dimension of diversity in all we do.
- **Relationships** - We are committed to developing and nurturing engaging partnerships that advance learning, education, service and outreach to benefit present and future members of the CSU family.

Mission of a Ram Network

Supporting the overall mission of the CSU Alumni Association, Ram Networks act as extensions of the CSU Alumni Association to build a community of Rams in various cities around the nation. Ram Networks are volunteer organizations, created according to geographic region, committed to fostering relationships among alumni and with the University.

Purpose of Ram Networks

- Build a community of Rams within a geographic region.
- Serve as a professional/social resource for alumni in order to foster a sense of community.
- Build and celebrate pride in the University by participating in Ram Network sponsored events.
- Serve as ambassadors for educating and promoting the University to alumni through active engagement.
- Create and personally support a culture of giving to CSU.
- Help the CSU Alumni Association determine, plan, and promote programming that connects back to CSU.
- Ram Networks are made up of a leader or group of leaders that help to plan and promote events and programs throughout the year for their area Ram Network.

Role of Ram Network Leaders

- Serve as ambassadors for the CSU Alumni Association by promoting Colorado State University in their local communities and helping to plan/or promote Colorado State University sponsored programs.
- Implement inclusive, relevant and meaningful programs for alumni in the areas of social, career, athletics, community service and life-long learning. Cultivate active lifelong participation and support for Alumni Relations and the University.
- The Ram Network Leadership structure is open and inclusive and *ideally* would include a core group of not less than two and recommended to not exceed 10 volunteers who are willing to accept a leadership role.
    - To start a Ram Network, the CSU Staff member can work with one interested individual to plan and enact a recruitment strategy/event.
- Key to success is that no one person carries all the responsibilities. Duties should be dispersed among the Ram Network Leaders based on needs and individual volunteer interests.

Expectations of Ram Network Leaders

Collaborate with the CSU Alumni Association Staff member to:
- Plan a calendar of diverse and relevant programs for their Ram Network.
- Coordinate program logistics and share progress with CSU staff member.

- Promote program through social media presence and contacting local alumni.
  - See below for CSU Staff help with email communication.
- After the program, provide a list of attendees including walk-ins to CSU staff member.
- Participate in Ram Network Leadership Meetings when available (via Zoom every month).

Expectations of CSU Staff

- Promote Ram Network programs through Alumni Relations website, social media, online calendar/registration, and broadcast e-mails.
- Assist Ram Network with social media presence and provide social media guidelines.
- Provide branded materials for select programs.
- Provide alumni target audience data as appropriate.
- Provide training and guidance.
- Coordinate requests for university guests.

Start Making Connections:

Your CSU Alumni Association Staff member will provide you with a Ram Network Facebook page, general email address for the Ram Network, and business cards:

- Ram Network Facebook Page: The CSU Alumni Association will moderate the page and CSU staff will post primarily on Mondays and Wednesdays. Ram Network Leaders can and should post anytime throughout the week. See more Facebook Tips below.
- Ram Network Email Address: We ask that you utilize this email address in all Ram Network related communications, so that people looking to get involved or ask questions always know they're going to the right place.
- Ram Network Business Cards: These will be provided to you, listing the above information, so that you can easily provide your contact information.

Managing Facebook Pages

We encourage you to use your Ram Network page as a place to help build community among those who share a CSU connection in your area. These guidelines and best practices are designed to help you maximize the effectiveness of the Ram Network page while maintaining the CSU Alumni Association (hereafter referred to as "CSUAA") and University's brand.

Ram Network Social Media Guiding Principle

To connect CSU alumni to each other and the University with timely, relevant, and compelling content that informs and engages, fosters Ram pride, celebrates alumni impact, provides meaningful value, and enhances the CSU brand.

Managing a CSUAA Ram Network or Alumni Group Facebook Page

- CSU Staff members shall be listed as page administrators. CSU Staff administrators will set up the page, its profile image, and description/information and will update this information when needed.
- Each Ram Network shall designate one volunteer to coordinate the Ram Network Facebook page. Once that person is identified, a staff administrator will grant them administrator access.
- Staff administrators are the only ones authorized to edit the page and/or make changes to the page set-up, including the profile image and cover photo/video. Please send editing or change requests to the staff administrators.
- We highly encourage posts on at least a monthly basis, and encourage you to share the CSU Alumni Association's (and other official CSU pages') posts.
- Staff administrators may post to the page, edit existing posts, or remove posts.
- The Ram Network or Alumni Group Facebook page and its administrators must follow the guiding principles laid out in CSU's social media policy, found at https://socialmedia.colostate.edu/.

Where to find great content

In general, try to create and share content that fits within these "buckets": Alumni profiles or stories, CSUAA programs and services, CSU news and sports, CSU pride points, and traditions. The following sites have a wealth of stories, photos, and videos to share.

- Main CSU Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/coloradostateuniversity
- Alumni Association Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/csualumni
- CSU Athletics Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/CSURams/
- *AlumLine:* https://alumline.source.colostate.edu/
- Flickr:
  - CSU Alumni Association https://www.flickr.com/photos/csualumni/
  - CSU https://www.flickr.com/photos/coloradostateuniversity
- *Source* - CSU news: http://source.colostate.edu/
- Best practices and more: https://socialmedia.colostate.edu/
- CSU social media blog with tips and tricks: http://social.colostate.edu/

Communication Expectations

The CSU Alumni Association will provide event communication support for you, by sending email invitations to alumni in your geographic area. The more advanced notice that we receive in regards to your event, the more effectively we'll be able to help in reaching alumni in your area.

- At a minimum, the Alumni Association needs all event details 2 weeks prior to the desired invitation date, though 4 weeks is ideal.
- If enough notice is given, we may be able to provide an email invitation and an email reminder.

We encourage you to collect contact information at every event with a sign-in sheet. These lists can be used in the future as easy mail lists for upcoming events or any Ram Network announcements. Connecting on other platforms like LinkedIn has also proven to be successful for Ram Networks.

Alumni Group Best Practices

- Organize at least three alumni engagement programs per year.
- Begin planning programs 10 weeks in advance including an initial discussion with CSU Staff member.
- Take at least one photo and submit it to your CSU Staff member after the program along with a short summary of the program and the attendee list.
- Help update university records by collecting business cards and current email addresses and submitting to CSU Staff member.
- Communicate group programs through social media, keeping with the following social media guidelines:
  - Remember that you're representing Colorado State University—no inappropriate language or content.
  - Be upbeat, positive, and welcoming of all members of your group.
  - You don't have to post every day, but at least check in frequently to make sure content is fresh and relevant—and that no one is posting inappropriate content on your group.
  - Try to respond to questions or comments that come in. Send questions to CSU Staff to help you with providing information if necessary.

Examples of Ram Network Involvement

(*These can be transitioned to a virtual format)

Social

- Happy hour*
- Beer or wine tastings/tours
- Welcome party for recent graduates new to your area*
- Send-off celebration for incoming first year students who are leaving your area to attend CSU*
- Paint party with CSU specific picture*
- BBQ/picnic
- Gathering around local events (parades, concerts, art festivals etc.)

Career

- Career networking events*
- Networking with local notable alumni*
- Career seminars/panels with career industry experts and/or business and organizational leaders*
- Student Panels, Guest Speakers in classes or student organization meetings

Athletic

- Pre-game parties & tailgates

- Game-watch parties*
- Professional sports events
  - *Especially when your local professional teams play the Nuggets, Rockies, Avalanche, Rapids, Broncos, etc.*

Community Service

- Collaborate with local organizations, such as volunteering at your local Food Bank or Habitat for Humanity
- City clean-up days (parks, beaches, trails, etc.)
- Conduct a toy/clothing/food/book drive

NEVER HESITATE TO CONTACT YOUR CSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STAFF MEMBER WITH NEW IDEAS, SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR ASSISTANCE. WE'RE HERE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO YOUR RAM NETWORK, AND APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU'VE SET OUT TO DO IN YOUR AREA.