



Regional Club Program: Event Tips and Techniques

Effective club programming is essential to the success of every regional alumni club. Programs and events work best when they are well-timed, planned, and communicated far in advance. Programs should target a specific audience, but remain inclusive of most alumni interests. Each club's leadership team is essential in planning and managing the annual calendar. Many different volunteers can and should work together on events and activities.

A successful club is the result of long-term programming and the following important areas of consideration are essential for that success. The following are a few tips to make your annual calendar useful and easy to follow:

- **Timeline** – The Leadership Team should plan, publish, and communicate a calendar of events early. If possible, 3-6 month calendars are helpful for promotion purposes.
- **Variety** – In order to attract the most alumni possible, plan a diversified calendar of events that will be appealing to a variety of interests, ages, and budgets. Include social, professional, educational, and family events in your annual plan.
- **Annual or Traditional Event** – Consider establishing a local traditional event such as watching the Duke vs. UNC basketball game, a holiday event, summer BBQ, or other activity.
- **Check Dates** – Check local, Fuqua, Duke and religious calendars for obvious conflicts.
- **Plan realistically** – It is better to have one successful event on which you can build than it is to have six poorly attended events. Scheduling events by season makes this easier.

SAMPLE ANNUAL CALENDAR

- **Summer (June/July):** Consider hosting a *social event* to include students that will be in various cities around the world for summer internships. This is a great way to expose students to the club program and provides a fun way for students and alumni to connect.
- **Fall (Sept/Oct):** *Content driven event* and “new” alumni welcome. During the fall recent graduates have arrived in cities and begun to settle in to new jobs.
- **Winter (Dec/Jan):** As a year ends and a new one begins it is the perfect excuse to host a *social* gathering. Consider a simple holiday mixer or New Year gathering at a popular venue in your area.
- **Spring (March/April):** *Content* focused program.

EVENT IDEAS

Once the timing of events has been determined, the nature of each event should be defined. The following list represents a variety of events and activities that have proven successful in the past. Each description covers suggestions for event management.

Breakfasts, Luncheons or Early Evening Receptions with a Speaker

This is an increasingly popular format, offering the opportunity for a daytime event of lower cost that is appealing. Events planned for breakfast or lunch time limit the conflicts that people might have with work and family. Consider inviting a prominent local alumnus, an industry expert, or a faculty member to speak. Events of this structure can be planned to last about 1.5 to 2 hours.

Sample event agenda:

- 30 minutes – Networking and Welcome
- 1 hour – Presentation/Interactive Programming
- 30 minutes – Q&A and Networking

Barbecues, Picnics, Softball Games

These family-oriented events are popular among alumni of all ages and offer a great way to start a local tradition. Most central locations have fields available for low or no cost. Challenging another local alumni club to a game is a great way to expand the social and networking aspect of this event.

Happy Hours

These events are typically informal and low cost, but can be as formal as a planned harbor cruise or other outdoor venue. In areas with a high concentration of young alumni, happy hours and other social events can be popular.

Televised Sports

Go Blue Devils! Basketball season is a very popular time for events. Game parties in private homes or local sports bars are a great way for Duke fans to enjoy each other and relive those Cameron moments! These events can range from no cost to medium cost depending on the venue and expected attendance. Sports bars will usually cut a deal if you can guarantee a minimum number of attendants. Area alumni from the opposing school can be included - which makes for a very lively party.

Holiday/Winter Traditions

Many clubs have found an annual winter party a great anchor to their existing calendar of events. These are best planned in early December or late January. Focus on venue, order less expensive food and arrange for a limited bar.

Major/Minor Sporting Event

A great family event! Many major or minor sports team have great deals for large groups. Make it a family event with a barbeque event just prior to the game. This is also a great intern/newcomer

event. Minor league events are usually more cost efficient, but some of the major ball fields offer events at low cost as well.

Partnering with Duke Club events

In smaller regions, joining forces with the local Duke club is the most effective method of staying connected to Duke University. The Alumni Relations Team is always available to assist you in contacting these organizations. Information can also be found at the Duke Alumni website, www.dukealumni.com. Just follow the links to the club program where you will find a comprehensive map of clubs throughout the world. Contact the president of the club directly and discuss partnering.

Community Services Activities

Making a difference in your local community can be a great way to interact and have fun with fellow alumni, while increasing the visibility of Fuqua and Duke in your area. Consider partnering with an organization such as Habitat for Humanity or a local soup kitchen. Most non-profits have specific needs that allow for groups to come in and volunteer together.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR EVENT PLANNING

- Advance advertising is critical to an events success. To increase attendance, plan early to allow your club to promote your event twice.
- Don't be afraid to charge for events.
- Take advantage of popular events and venues in your geographic area.
- Consider multiple methods for event promotion – email, e-vite, phone call, etc.
- Following events, request feedback from attendees to help with future programming. Also, consider sharing photos and post-event highlights with the entire club list to let folks know what they missed and encourage their attendance in the future.