

# Strategies for Successfully Engaging Students



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# Engaging Students: Taking Stock



- Background: where we're coming from...
- Audience poll: where are you?
- Goals: where we want to be!

## Engaging Students: Why Bother?



- Adds value: for students AND alumni
- Fosters the “life cycle”
- Contributes to a “culture of alumni” on campus
  - Easier said than done:
    - Common challenges
    - Specific challenges

## Engaging Students: Why Bother?



- Enhances your resources for alumni programming
- Fulfills mandates
  - Provincial: NSSE, “the student experience”
  - University: student success
- Engaged students -> engaged alumni

## Engaging Students: What Doesn't Work?



- Doing nothing
- Waiting 'til Convocation
- Student / Alumni Programs
- Dumping money into student sponsorships
- Half-hearted approaches:
  - Brochure-and-run strategies
  - Tabling
- Silos

## Engaging Students: What Works?



- Meaningful connections
- Partnerships
  - Peer marketing
- Bundling/branding
- Defined and planned program
- The right mix:
  - Widespread appeal
  - Targeted programs/activities

## Engaging Students: What Really Works?



- Student / Alumni programs
- *Alumni-Student Connection* grants
- Ask-an-Alum column in the Student Newspaper
- “Annual Spend”

## Engaging Students: What Really Works?



- Student Thank-a-thons for Annual Fund
- Building an “arc” for student engagement
- Graduation events
- Partnerships with Student Services
- Research

## Engaging Students: Where To Start?



- Examine the culture
- Packaging: what are you already doing?
- Eliminate barriers and disconnect points
  - Identify things that hinder the relationship
- Focus on leadership
  - Student leaders
  - Alumni leaders

## Engaging Students: Where To Start?



- Research
- Create a plan and set goals
- Partner with students
- Resource properly
- Track and measure your success

## Moving forward...



- Questions?
- Download: [www.yorku.ca/alumni/CCAEE2008](http://www.yorku.ca/alumni/CCAEE2008)
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