Department Networking Breakfast and Information Event
June 14, 2013

Presentation Notes

51% of MIT alumni are Graduate Student Exclusive (GSE), meaning their first degree from MIT is a graduate degree. For most, their affiliation is with their department, lab, and/or faculty. Department colleagues serve as an important connection point to help engage these alumni with the Institute.

A few ways the MIT Alumni Association works with departments:

Email Marketing and Events Support

1. Facilitating email marketing campaigns to broad audiences, like alumni of a particular school, specific department, or even finer segments
2. Assist with one-off emails and event invitations: we can help coordinate content and work with alumni volunteers in an area to advertise regional events
3. Provide registration system for alumni events and printing of name badges

Alumni Travel Program

Three staff work on creating travel programming for alumni.
Travel staff partners with clubs, departments and faculty to create special programming for MIT alumni. 500-700 alumni travel with MIT each year. Most are of retirement age and have the time and finances for trips. 15% of alumni do nothing but travel with MIT, so this is a great outlet for a particular group to become engaged and stay connected to MIT.

The travel program needs department help to identify faculty and think of topic specific programming. Custom trips built for MIT alumni have proven to lead to higher giving by alumni. Some faculty have included graduate students on their trips to help with the lectures, which provides another connection between alumni, students, faculty, the department, and the Alumni Association.

Department Gift Acknowledgment System

Departments can sign up to participate in the Donor Gift Acknowledgment System, found here: https://development.mit.edu/secure/dept-ack/index.php

On the 5th of every month, you receive 2 data reports: every gift transaction to your accounts and the mailing addresses of those donors. Templates for letters are provided. All departments, labs and centers can participate.
Questions

Q. How can I pitch ideas to the Slice of MIT Blog? http://alum.mit.edu/pages/sliceofmit/

A. The Alumni Association has four writers who contribute to “Slice.” We are always looking for fresh angles on MIT. They need to be stories that are portable to alumni around the world. Send ideas to Nancy Duvergne Smith, ndsmith@mit.edu

Q. How is the Alumni Association organized? How do we connect with MIT Reunions

A. MIT Reunions is part of the Alumni Relations teams within the Alumni Association (see organizational chart). If a department would like to participate in MIT Reunions, connect with Greg Batcheler, gpbatch@mit.edu, to facilitate the event.

Q. Can we send emails to alumni to survey them?

A. Yes, the MIT Alumni Association has a tool that can be used to create survey forms. Start by contacting Greg Batcheler, gpbatch@mit.edu, to determine the best time to send a survey and make sure it is not conflicting with other MITAA or campus surveys.

Q. Alumni feel like MIT is soliciting them all the time. How often are they asked to give?

A. There is a set schedule of solicitations for our alumni, and the Annual Fund team works to not make it feel overwhelming. An alumnus/a is no longer solicited for gifts for the fiscal year once they give. A good way to stop solicitations is to give a gift; that said, there may be some smaller or side funds that double dip for a second gift. Additionally, as the Annual Fund experiences pressure to raise unrestricted gifts for MIT, it remains mindful of the need to support restricted fundraising efforts as well. This, combined with the potential to overload the alumni audience, makes for a difficult balancing act. The good news is that on its benchmarking consortium of 40 top university annual giving programs, the Annual Fund’s typical business model (which allows for various departments, labs, and centers to solicit their own alumni) has produced best in class results among donors who have given within the past 5 years, and graduates of the last decade (approximately half of the alumni body). However, this business model also produces worst in class results among donors who have not given for 6 or more years, or who have never given. (Direct mail solicitations from all MIT entities combined produced fewer than 350 gifts from this contingent, which consists of just over half the alumni body.) Thus, in order to pilot new ideas and not further inundate our collective audiences, we must all be strategic about whom we solicit and when.
Q. How can departments help the MIT Alumni Association?

A. Provide the Alumni Association with the names of your alumni volunteers (alumnirecords@mit.edu). The more robust an alumnus/a’s record is in detailing their volunteer service to departments, the easier it is to identify visiting committee nominees and other great volunteer roles for the alum to remain engaged. Additionally, the MIT Alumni Association may be able to help you find volunteers, please ask.

A. MIT Alumni Association Communications is always looking for older alumnae to profile for Technology Review. Please send names to Nancy Duvergne Smith, ndsmith@mit.edu.

Q. Who runs Technology Review notes?

A. Alice Dragoon, alice.dragoon@technologyreview.com
A. Send any course news/class notes, or have alumni send to Linda Cardinal, linda.cardinal@technologyreview.com

Q. What about when I get bounce-back emails from @alum.mit.edu addresses?

A. The @alum.mit.edu address is an email forwarding address and may be linked to up to five emails. A bounce-back may mean that one address is bad, but not necessarily every address linked to the account.