

Event Planning Guide

*A Resource for
Cal Poly Alumni Association Chapters*



CAL POLY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Event Planning Guide

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III. COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOUR EVENT

Designing Event Fliers

Some fliers are handled at the chapter level while others are given to Alumni Relations to develop. Regardless of how the flier is handled, planning to include the following elements will make developing the flier more efficient.

ALWAYS INCLUDE:

- Name or purpose of event
- Who---What---When (include the year)---Where---Why
- RSVP
 - Always include a deadline – make this a little earlier than the absolute deadline to allow for late responses
 - Give a contact name for RSVPs
 - Give at least two different options for the RSVP – an e-mail address, a phone number where a message can be left, etc.
- Include directions to an event, a map, or a Web-site reference, e.g. Mapquest
- Include a phone number of the location of the event
- Include style of dress required
- Pricing: Give CPAA Member/Non-Member rates whenever possible
- What else? Give any information that will answer questions ahead of time!

Proper Terms To Use in Your Communications

- Name of the chapter:
 - Indicate the “XXX XXXX Chapter of the Cal Poly Alumni Association” – be sure not to say “The Southern California Alumni Association,” as you are an affiliate chapter under the Cal Poly Alumni Association.
- Sponsorships and gifts
 - Never guarantee that a sponsorship or gift is tax deductible. Leave that up to the individual making the gift.
 - The CPAA recommends the following terminology, using an example of the wording from a flier for a golf tournament:

“Return coupon with your check for \$XX per hole sponsorship* made payable to XX.”

“*Check with your CPA to clarify the tax deductible status of this sponsorship.”

Additional Hints

Here are some other hints to help with your planning:

- Your invitation can include a **solicitation** for donations, but you will need to allow additional time for it to be approved. Cal Poly Advancement Services, who maintains the alumni

- database, uses a solicitation committee to approve all requests for solicitations to ensure that alumni are not being solicited too often, or for the same items from different groups. **Your mailing piece has to be approved** by this committee before Advancement Services will release mailing labels to the Alumni Association.
- **Bulk mail** CAN take up to 3 weeks to deliver (seldom happens, but plan for it!)
- If you have a **speaker**, always be sure to confirm the speaker WELL in advance of the invitation being printed. Also confirm the spelling of the speaker's name, title, name of topic, etc.
- If applicable, on your printed piece, ask alumni to update their **e-mail and mailing addresses**. Consult Alumni Relations for the proper terminology to use.
- Make the best use of each mailing piece: if applicable, **use extra space to add announcements**. Alumni Relations can supply copy on membership or other events already approved by Cal Poly's Public Affairs office for dissemination.

Sending Messages Out Through the Chapter E-Mail List Serves

The Alumni Relations Office will send out e-mail announcements about your events to all alumni from your chapter area who have current address information in our database.

These chapter e-mail list serves can be used to electronically publicize event and other news about your chapter.

Here's how it works:

- When you have your event finalized, **send us the "Who," "What," "When," "Where," "Cost," and "RSVP to XXX at XXX (give at least 2 methods of contact) by (date)"** and we'll e-mail it to your region. For the location, be sure to include the full name of the location, the address, telephone number and directions, map or Web link. Please send this information to Rosey Parks (rparks@calpoly.edu) AS A WORD ATTACHMENT.
- The message can be sent WITHIN TWO DAYS of us receiving COMPLETE information (listed above) from you.
- We want to send e-mails to alumni in a timely manner. Please use the following **general timeline**:
 - The first notice should go to alumni a minimum of four weeks prior to the event, so send Alumni Relations the information above in time to do this.
 - A second notice can be sent two weeks to 5 days before the event, depending on the type of event, and your RSVP deadline. Give us a reminder to do this.

“Behind the scenes” of the Chapter E-Mail List Serves

- You send us e-mail addresses and mailing addresses on your alumni – the best way to do this is by sending us a copy of the "Event Sign-In" sheet after each event.
- The e-mails are stored in our database. These lists are refreshed daily, so we always have the most up-to-date information.
- We will send the message by e-mail based on an individual's permanent mailing address. So, if we have an e-mail, but a wrong mailing address, it may not get to those you want to receive it.
- If an individual has an e-mail address in the alumni database, and has a Cal Poly e-mail reflector, the e-mail will go to the address entered into the reflector service.
- We are required to add information on ways to “opt out” of the e-mail list at the end of each e-mail message.
- As a Chapter President, if you would like to be a "seed" on the lists to see everything that is sent out, regardless of geographical location, let Rosey know.
- The lists currently exist by geographical region only. They are being developed for interest-based chapters.
- The list serves are inexpensive and quick! So, let's use them!

Using the CPAA Web Site

The CPAA Web site presents a great opportunity for you to advertise your events. As soon as you notify Alumni Relations about your event, it will be placed on the Event Calendar on the CPAA Web site. Contact information will be listed as well. If you have a PDF version of your flier or announcement, it can also be added to the Alumni Web site. It can take up to 5 days to upload the information onto the Alumni Web site.

Other Ways To “Get the Word Out”

For other ideas on how to get publicity for your events, consult the document, “Communication Methods for Chapters.”