Cornell University Library
Alumni Outreach Task Force

Final report
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Executive Summary
The Alumni Outreach Task Force submitted a preliminary report in September 2011. This final report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Alumni Outreach Task Force for the second half of its term, from September 2011 to January of 2012.

- The new Alumni Web site is a crucial means of communicating and developing CUL’s relationship with alumni. It will be launched February 15, 2012.
- Access to alumni editions of three databases will end May 31, 2012. We recommend re-subscription.
- The Pilot to provide access to restricted Veterinary resources to gap year Vet alumni is underway.
- A dialogue about collaboration with Cornell Alumni Affairs has been initiated.

Launch of new Alumni Library Services Web Site
Thanks to the outstanding work of Library Web Development Services, especially Adam Smith, the Alumni Library Web site (http://alumni.library.cornell.edu/askalibrarian.html) has been completely redesigned. We believe it is more user friendly, more welcoming, and provides much more dynamic content. We hope this fresh look will encourage alumni to visit it more frequently and lead to stronger connections between alumni and CUL. The left side of the website features events and news. The middle section highlights resources and services the library offers.

The site is designed to maximize dynamic content but require minimum upkeep and staff intervention. Much of the content is automatically pulled from other continually updated sites such as Events, CUL’s Flickr site, etc.

Future Curator/Advocate
The new Web site will need to be maintained. The CUL Web Development team can superficially oversee the site, making cosmetic updates and changes.

However, maintaining the site requires more than changing images or updating a link. The site also needs a knowledgeable individual or group to curate content and serve as an alumni curator/advocate. The curator/advocate would actively work to keep abreast of national trends for alumni services, increase ongoing awareness of the site, monitor usage of current electronic resources, recommend new resources, databases, services, and elicit feedback from alumni and process and act on that feedback, etc. Thus an effective curator/advocate would have both collection development and outreach responsibilities. The Task Force believes possible candidates include—
CDExec, or DRC, or one of the members of one or both of those groups

- PSEC, or one of its members
- an individual selector with the additional responsibility of selecting for alumni
- an outreach librarian with an additional emphasis on alumni.
- an advisory group of various librarians convened periodically

We believe the most effective solution might be one individual who meets quarterly with Library Development and Library Communications. The individual might convene an advisory group/task force as necessary.

**Communication Plan and Policy**

Library Communications will assist in the promotion of the new Web site according to the communication plan in Appendix A.

**Renew subscription to alumni editions of three databases**

CUL currently subscribes to alumni editions of three databases—Academic Search (Alumni), Business Source (Alumni) and Hospitality & Tourism Index. The Management School paid $7950 and CUL contributed $3,296 toward the past year’s subscription which will end on May 31, 2012.

Some promotion of these resources was done campus wide at Reunion. Hotel and ILR hung posters. The Management Library produced a small promotional handout targeted at Johnson School alumni and also published an article in a key Johnson publication. After reunion, some unit libraries continued to promote alumni services via their own unit Web site (such as Vet).

But the Task Force believes many alumni are unaware of these databases. More promotion needs to be done. Promotion of the new Alumni Web site will also help publicize these databases.

The Task Force recommends that we re-subscribe to these databases at least until May 2013. The curator/advocate individual/group should continue to monitor and evaluate their usage.

**Collaboration with Alumni Affairs**

Jennifer Sawyer facilitated opening a dialogue with Chris Marshall, Associate Vice President of Cornell Alumni Affairs. The Task Force met with him via conference call and had an extremely valuable discussion. He has had experience with alumni access at his former institution, Lehigh. For Chris the equation for alumni access to databases is “return on investment.” We should think of it as a grid—what’s available; the cost; what alumni want.
He might be interested in funding databases through the central alumni organization, if they have broad appeal and not for a focused audience. Access for specialized populations (Vet, for instance) should continue to work with the director of the school alumni association.

Chris developed a survey and sent it to peer alumni institutions:

Would you mind answering the following six questions regarding providing alumni online access to your university library database(s)?:

1) Do you provide alumni with access to your university library database(s)?
   *** if you answer “no” to this first question, then you are done! ***
2) Is it provided for free to alumni, for a charge per usage, or for a benefit of paying dues (class, etc)?
3) Which library database(s) do you subscribe to for alumni?
4) How do you market this resources/benefit to alumni?
5) Do you do any segmentation of which alumni have access (such as 1 – 5 years since graduation, etc)?
6) What is the usage by alumni?

The survey results are Appendix B, but are not particularly revealing.

We recommend that the curator/advocate and Jennifer Sawyer should continue to discuss possible collaboration with Cornell Alumni Affairs.

Veterinary Library Pilot

The Pilot is underway. Erla Heyns and Bill Kara are currently negotiating limited access with publishers. Most likely, negotiations will continue through the spring.
Appendix A

Alumni Outreach Communication Plan
(2/2012)

GOAL: Create and maintain ongoing relationships with CU alumni with an eye toward extending the Library’s donor base.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the use of the alumni web site as well as number of social media followers among CU alumni

TACTICS: promote the real benefit to alumni that the databases on the alumni web site represent – promote our social media presence

MESSAGES:
- you graduate from Cornell but don’t have to leave the library behind
- we give you useful tools
- keep your connection to Cornell and to the world of knowledge through us

AUDIENCE SEGMENTS AND HOW TO REACH THEM: Within the large group of Cornell alumni, subsets of specialized audiences exist—gap year alumni, alumni of specific schools and programs, etc. From the point of view of communication channels, the two basic categories are:

1. alumni away from campus
   how to reach them:
   a. Alumni Magazine articles and ads
   b. Ezra articles
   c. Social media
   d. College specific alumni news
   e. Honeycomb (need prominent link on alumni web site)
   f. During reunion – in person, giveaways, digital signs, posters

2. seniors and finishing grad students still on campus (April – May)
   how to reach them:
   a. Cornell Daily Sun
   b. College/department/grad school newsletters and updates
   c. Giveaways in library
   d. Social media
   e. Digital signs

TIMELINE: The Web site should be live by February 15.
PROMOTION PLAN (to be executed by Assessment and Communication):

**February – March:** focus on off-campus alumni
Social media messages
Attempt to place story in Alumni Magazine, if not successful buy ad
Work with college communication directors to insert information in their respective alumni newsletters
Attempt to get coverage in Ezra

**April-May:** focus on on-campus almost-alumni
Tip to Cornell Daily Sun, if not successful pay for ad in Daily Sun
Work with college communication directors to insert information in their respective updates
Create giveaways and distribute them in the Library
Social media messages
Digital signs

**June:** Focus on reunion
Ask Library staff to remember to mention alumni site during face-to-face contact
Distribute giveaways at registration desks, in the Library and at Library events
Digital signs
Consider posters

**Beyond June:**
Consider alumni audience when posting social media messages
Appendix B

Ivy+ Library Online Access for Alumni

1. **Do you provide alumni with access to your university library database(s)?**
   - Cornell – No, with a handful of exceptions. See question #3.
   - MIT – No
   - Princeton – No
   - Brown – Yes
   - Penn – Yes. Some like Jstor can be accesses remotely, for all others alumni have to physically go to the library
   - Columbia – Yes
   - Stanford – Yes
   - Yale – Did not respond to survey
   - Harvard – Did not respond to survey
   - Dartmouth – Did not respond to survey

2. **Is it provided for free to alumni, for a charge per usage, or for a benefit of paying dues (class, etc)?**
   - Cornell – Free
   - Penn – Free if they go to the library, a plan is in the works to charge for remote usage
   - Columbia – Free (Libraries pay for it... no expense to the alumni affairs budget)
   - Stanford – EBSCO Academic is offered free to all alumni and the other 3 are benefits of being a member of the Stanford Alumni Association

3. **Which library database(s) do you subscribe to for alumni?**
   - Cornell – Project Muse is free to alumni as part of our campus subscription, so is RefWorks. We subscribe to alumni editions of EBSCO’s Academic Search (Alumni) and Business Source (Alumni). Hospitality & Tourism Index (which does not include full text) we got for no cost as part of a special negotiation because the database originated at Cornell.
   - Brown – provides alumni online access to a limited package of academic journals, but does not provide access to the larger online database
   - Penn – All if they enter library
   - Columbia – All of the ones that the students have access to. It is a long list.
   - Stanford – the following:
     - ABI/INFORM
     - EBSCO Academic
     - EBSCO Business
     - Dow Jones Factiva
4. **How do you market this resources/benefit to alumni?**
   - **Cornell** – Anecdotal reports indicate that most alumni are not aware of these resources. One of the only marketing efforts was made for Reunion. Library Communications produced cute, small notepads that were sent to all libraries for giveaway at Reunion. On the cover it listed “CUL Services for Alumni”: AS, BS, and HTI along with Refworks, Ask a Librarian, and guest borrowing privileges. The library alumni URL was included. I don’t believe other print collateral was created, nor a mass e-mail to alumni. However, various things were done for specific populations. The Hotel and ILR Libraries had posters at Reunion. The Management Library produced a small promotional handout targeted at Johnson School alumni and also published an article in a key Johnson publication. Campus unit libraries also promote alumni services differently via the web, some relying on the central CUL page and others creating their own (such as Vet’s).
   - **Penn** – We don’t market this at all right now other than listing it as one of the benefits of getting a Penn Alumni Card which alumni have to pay $20 for
   - **Columbia** – It is on our website and promotional materials
   - **Stanford** – We market the free database to alums via email newsletters, on our website, and at events. We market the other databases in membership mailings that go out several times per year.

5. **Do you do any segmentation of which alumni have access (such as 1 – 5 years since graduation, etc)?**
   - **Cornell** – No
   - **Penn** – No
   - **Columbia** – No
   - **Stanford** – No

6. **What is the usage by alumni?**
   - **Cornell** – below are statistics from 2011
     - Academic Search Alumni Edition – Total sessions = 19,285
     - Business Source Alumni Edition – Total searches run = 5,637
     - Business Source Alumni Edition – Total sessions = 2,918
     - Hospitality & Tourism Index – Total searches run = 33,766
     - Hospitality & Tourism Index – Total sessions = 12,686
   - **Penn** – don’t know exactly but it is quite low
   - **Columbia** – do not know
   - **Stanford** – we see around 70K sessions per year from all four combined