



Undergraduate Association

Committee on Alumni Relations

Connecting the past and present of MIT

Next to the faculty, MIT's alumni base is our strongest asset. Their depth and breadth of skill, experience, and understanding is unsurpassed. They have access to some of the most interesting professional challenges anywhere in the world. Moreover, a significant percentage of these alumni are interested in playing a role in the development of the current students. At present, there are several organizational initiatives designed to connect students with alumni but the process is uncoordinated and, at best, inconsistent.

I propose that the UA take an active role in developing these valuable relationships — to the benefit of the students, the alumni and the school as a whole. The following document is a plan to create a central undergraduate-driven activity that will both energize and coordinate these critical relationships. This will allow us to align students and alumni along critical lines of shared interest.

OBJECTIVES

- I. Act as a switchboard to connect undergraduates to alumni**
 - a. Interface with student groups and alumni groups to inspire, motivate, and enable students to tap into the potential of Alumni Network

- II. Identify opportunities for outreach**
 - a. Highlight existing initiatives and create new opportunities for advising and mentoring

 - c. Foster networking between students and alumni

- III. Become a central resource for student groups and undergraduates**
 - a. Lots of programs target individual affinities in an unlinked approach

 - b. Instead these unlinked groups could be bridged to reveal adjacencies and facilitate further student union for a more cohesive student body

- IV. Advocate for the undergraduate student body**
 - a. Direct interaction with the Alumni Association and Alumni Clubs to represent students

 - b. Relay information on the happenings of the alumni world inwards to students, much in the same way Ambassador provides alumni with a pulse on life as an undergraduate

 - c. Act as a lead for the Alumni Association when they host events that directly or indirectly reach out to students (ie. Parent Weekend is hosted by the Parent Association of the Alumni association, and when they host it, they lack a connection to the students and thus rely on the SLO)

EXISTING PROGRAMS

1. **Affinity Groups**

- Less than one or two events per month hosted in total
- MITSAA (South Asian), MITCAA (Crew), LAMIT (Latino), MITAAA (Arab), BGALA (LBGT), BAMIT (Black), AACRE (Real Estate), AMITA (general), seek to strengthen their connection to the Institute but rarely find the chance, presenting a mutually beneficial opportunity

2. **Ambassador**

- Provides alumni a pulse on campus activities
- Draws new prospective student representatives for Alumni Association
- Minimal direct benefit to students

3. **Company-Based Recruiting Events**

- Held frequently, common
- Often become competitive events info sessions, benefiting the companies more than the students

4. **FASIP and Application-Based Forums**

- Commitment-based
- Restrictive to particular interests

5. **Career Services Office**

- Great pre-professional advice from staff and alumni, though largely unheard of to the bulk of the student body
- Events hosted by alumni and Alumni Association via the Infinite Connection meet only a particular career and professional need

5. **Community Catalyst and Similarly-Inspired Programs**

- Structured program to randomly pair a student and an alumnus over a short-term program, but only available to a limited number of applicants
- Community Catalyst has been hosted by the SLO

PROPOSED PLAN

I. Establish a presence as the student-alumni switchboard

- a. Reach out to student groups
 - i. Individually by email
 - ii. Aggressive advertising
- b. Reach out to students
 - i. Study breaks and small-scale social events with Alumni
 - ii. Campus and dorm advertising
 - iii. Peer influence and support—a major part key to this committee will be in recruiting and engaging a very active and outgoing group of people committed to the success of the program and willing to dedicate themselves to outreach

II. Offer a variety of enriching student-alumni opportunities

- a. Pre-professional career guidance seminars
 - i. Work with interested alumni in the Boston area to host career-based seminars to share their experiences and guide our students
 - ii. Major-based events with alumni from different types of positions within a particular field (ie. a course targeting Course 2 students could have F-1 engine designers from Ford, the engineers of some of the most advanced humanoid robots from NASA, and other alumni representing some of the other diverse industry perspectives)
 - iii. Possibly even something as large-scale as a quasi-career-fair with the focus on learning and networking with a less of an emphasis on recruiting
 - iv. Funding (if needed) might even be raised by the companies ultimately tied to the participating alumni members

- b. Advising or mentoring
 - i. Online forum for guidance—several exclusive applications-based opportunities are out there for long-term alumni mentorship, but many students could benefit from a no-strings-attached basic or one-time guidance
 - ii. Less structured alumni mentor matching program without as formal a framework as FASIP or Community Catalyst—based on an individual student contact basis. We don't want to reinvent the wheel and develop a similar program to what's already out there, but we want a fall back for those students that aren't paired to a mentor and would like to be

III. Develop a central web-based umbrella resource

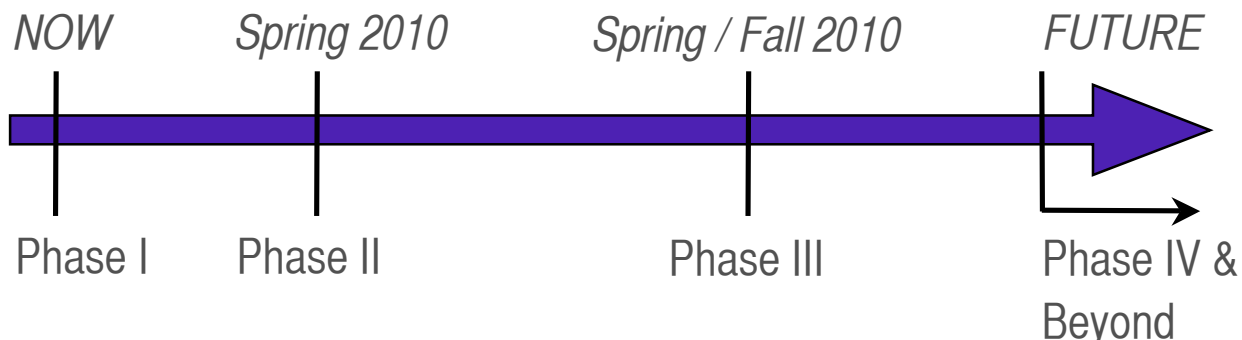
- a. Website with comprehensive information
 - i. Resources on how to approach alumni groups
 - ii. Information about the different alumni groups to help provide a context for how they can connect to respective student groups or affinities
 - iii. Ideas, guidance, tips
- b. Personal assistance offered to student groups and students in interfacing with their counterpart alumni
 - i. Through a rapport we hope to build with the Association and individual groups, we can directly connect student groups to respective associations in helping to identify combined (social) events
 - ii. The alumni office is willing to work with us to help identify a pool of alumni committed to working with students, in addition to those alumni already volunteering through the Infinite Connection

IV. Attend key alumni events and represent undergraduate interests

- a. Representation within the Alumni Association

- i. In a comparable capacity to the position of Ambassador, having a student with a pulse on the community could benefit undergraduate life
- ii. Identify areas for mutual gain and potential collaboration (ie. a need in an alumni event for students or vice-versa)
- b. Eyes and ears for the undergraduates at major Association or club meetings and events to relay back information and help gain undergraduate participation in alumni events

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS



Phase I: Logistics of Committee Formation (Fall 2009)

1. Obtain the feedback and support of members of the UA
2. Propose a UA Senate bill for the creation of the UA Committee on Alumni Relations
3. Identify a team of outgoing, active undergraduates that are committed to the success of this program
4. Cultivate the pool of alumni resources already available through the Alumni Association's Institute Career Assistance Network (ICAN) and integrate them into a basic web-based resource
5. Develop a presence on campus through aggressive advertizing and word-of-mouth publicity by committee members
6. Launch a series of informal monthly study breaks with alumni to lure students with free food and introduce to the strong potential benefit of alumni interaction

Phase II: Building Momentum (Spring 2010)

1. Work with the Alumni Association to develop a more sophisticated central website resource that directly links up to the ICAN network and the Infinite Connection

2. Offer mentoring opportunities for interested students
3. Advertise aggressively through newspapers, DomeView, and postering
4. Reach out to students and student groups individually
5. Host study breaks and potentially a dinner program with alumni
6. Begin a series of pre-professional advice seminars designed to expose students to career options

Phase III: Developing a Strong Presence (Spring / Fall 2010)

1. Work with the Alumni Association to host a massive quasi-career-fair event with the focus on learning, rather than recruiting
2. Develop traction with alumni and their respective employers to host guidance seminars that can aid in recruiting and also provide learning opportunities to undergraduates

Phase IV: Contribute a Sustained Benefit to the Undergraduate Community

1. Continue to identify opportunities to enrich student-alumni interaction
2. Act as a switchboard to help connect students and student groups to alumni and alumni groups
3. Remain a strong resource for undergraduates seeking alumni interaction
4. Act as the contact point and umbrella organization to represent the undergraduate student body in alumni matters