K-State Geography Alumni Advisory Board
Revised Mission Statement

Background

The Geography Alumni Advisory Board is a broad group of alumni who are devoted to the success of the Geography Department and its students. Input from alumni has proven to be critical as universities address fundamental changes and are forced to focus on priorities to pursue research initiatives, attract funding, and attract students. The Geography Alumni Board is the 11th to be formed at KSU.

Former Arts and Sciences Dean Steve White shared with us his perspective on the key purposes of the Arts and Sciences advisory council:

- Maintain strong relationships between the University, students and their alumni;
- Cultivate friendships and relationships between alumni, faculty, and students;
- Develop fresh perspectives for brainstorming to address issues & opportunities;
- Provide job connections (full time or internships);
- Enhance image building; and
- Encourage entrepreneurship (research/academic connections to government & industry).

Many of the activities suggested for consideration by the Geography Alumni Advisory Board are related to what is listed above.

Mission Statement

Develop ongoing relationships between alumni, students and faculty in order to strengthen the strategic position of K-State Geography by providing a strong social and professional foundation for students transitioning between their academic and professional lives.

Purpose

The purposes of the Geography Alumni Advisory Board are to:

- Serve as a sounding board for the department;
- Support the department’s initiatives to University administrators;
- Determine the focus, enhance the visibility, and set priorities for the Geography Department’s alumni community;
- Encourage active involvement by the greatest number of Geography alumni; and
- Give equal focus to student career development and linkage creation in academia, NGOs, industry, and government.
Alumni Board Membership

The Board will consist of willing members of the geography alumni community with a goal of around 10 to 20 consistently involved board members. All alumni willing to take time from their schedule to be a part of Alumni Board functions are welcome at board meetings. If attendance at board meetings is expected to rise above a number that can be reasonably accommodated by the Department, the Alumni Board Chair will coordinate with the Head of the Department to either limit attendance or otherwise accommodate the interested alumni. The Alumni Board will be led by a Chair, who will be assisted by four Activity Leads. Other members and attendees at board meetings will be considered members-at-large. Alumni present at the annual meeting will select the Chair and Activity Lead positions.

Suggested Alumni Advisory Board Activities

Activity 1: Annual meeting of the Alumni Advisory Board
The Fall Alumni Board meeting is the primary activity of the Board. The Alumni Board Chair will work with the Department Head or other Department representative to establish the schedule and agenda for the annual meeting. Time will be allotted for Departmental presentations of ideas, issues, and needs and a reasonable amount of time will be set aside for Board meetings. The Board Chair will provide read-ahead material on agenda items so that face time can be more productive. On occasions where requested by students, faculty or members of the board, roundtable discussions may take place during the annual meeting day to allow students and alumni to discuss topics of interest. The Alumni Board meeting and activities will occur on the Friday of the K-State fall homecoming weekend unless otherwise scheduled by the Alumni Board Chair and Department Head.

Responsibility: Alumni Board Chair

Activity 2: Departmental Visits
Each Board member is recommended to make visits outside of the annual Alumni Board meeting to the Department to the extent possible. These visits could take the form of being a guest lecturer for a geography class, attending talks by guest speakers, holding roundtable discussions with students or faculty, or auditing a class. The primary purpose of this activity is to provide the alum a tangible connection to both their past as students and the present lives of current students.

Responsibility: All Alumni Board Members

Activity 3: Communications
The Department will maintain an alumni email listserv that can be used by the Department and by Board members to broadcast communications. This communication tool can be used to promote broader visibility of departmental functions such as the annual GTU banquet and homecoming weekend activities. The Department will also maintain an alumni page on the Geography department website. The web page will include a mechanism for joining the alumni listserv. The alumni have also developed Facebook and LinkedIn pages that should be updated with information in conjunction with the department web-page and listserv. The Board’s leader
for this activity will work with the Department to review content of the alumni web page, provide general guidance on alumni communications issues, and encourage alumni to provide contact information for the alumni listserv. The leader for this activity will provide a report at the annual Board meeting.

Responsibility: Communications Lead

**Activity 4: Annual Call for Contributions**

Annually, the Alumni Board will issue a call for contributions for scholarships and other needs of the Department. This will be accomplished using the communications channels identified for the Communications Activity. The Board will solicit input from both faculty and students on high priority funding needs, and will develop its call for contributions to define specific needs that directly support students. In some cases the alumni will be called upon to make personal appeals to specific alumni as appropriate. The leader for this activity will provide a report at the annual Board meeting.

Responsibility: Contributions Lead

**Activity 5: Career Day**

Schedule an annual “career day,” probably during the Spring Semester. The career day will provide undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to practice their interview skills. This may include a morning lecture discussing resume-writing skills, interview skills, and tips for how to benefit from career fairs. The rest of the day will be devoted to one-on-one interview opportunities. Alumni with hiring needs will be encouraged to attend. Employers who cannot attend will have the opportunity to review the resumes and interview results. All students in the Department and/or taking Geography classes will be invited to attend, with interview preference given to students actively seeking internships or full time jobs. The leader for this activity will provide a report at the annual Board meeting.

Responsibility: Career Day Lead

**Activity 6: Mixers at Conferences**

A great opportunity exists to foster alumni/student/faculty relationships by hosting mixers at conferences such as those sponsored by the AAG and ESRI. The mixers could be receptions or dinners which would provide an opportunity to network, a meeting which would provide the opportunity for students, alumni or some combination to make presentations. The leader for this activity will work with the Department to identify conference meeting opportunities, research cost issues and funding strategies, and identify an alumnus who will attend the conference(s) and be willing to help coordinate the event. Successful receptions were held at the following AAG meetings: 2006 meeting in Chicago, 2007 meeting in San Francisco, 2008 meeting in Boston, 2009 meeting in Las Vegas, 2010 meeting in Washington, D.C., and 2011 meeting in Seattle. The leader for this activity will provide a report at the annual Board meeting.

Responsibility: Conference Social Lead