Putting Together an Alumni Volunteer Handbook

All volunteers should be familiar with:

- What sets your institution apart (location, curriculum, special services and opportunities – off-campus study, cross registration, dual degree programs)
- Answers to frequently asked questions (application deadlines, typical score and GPA range, what students do on weekends, whether students can study business [often asked of liberal arts colleges in the current climate])
- The names and contact information for current admission and financial aid officers.
- Create a training (policy and procedure) program for alumni volunteers

College Fairs:

Explanation of the volunteer’s role at college fairs

- Setting up the table
- Interaction with students
- List of items college fair packet will contain (e.g., name tag; fair report form; addressed, stamped return envelope [some schools now do all this via email or website, so this would not be necessary]; inquiry cards [again, some schools now use scanners for this]; preview literature; viewbooks; desk copy of catalog; banner; pens; talking point of FAQ and updates they should be aware of, etc.)
- Post fair procedures for returning inquiry cards and fair report form (electronic or mail).

Interview Guidelines:

Training:

Colleges vary in how they train their alumni interviewers. Some do not train their interviewers at all; others train them on-site, at various locations around the country; others train them on campus during alumni events; still others have turned to training interviewers via the web, with training modules embedded into their alumni volunteer website. The alumni volunteer website is last has become increasingly popular in the last few years. Any training should include the strong recommendation that the interview should take place in a public venue – e.g., a coffee shop or library.

Training should include:

- Is the interview evaluative or informational in nature?
- Suggested questions you may want the interviewer to ask and information you would like the interviewer to try to glean.
- Many schools provide interviewers with a write-up form for their convenience. These are either submitted to the admission office via post, email, or the web.
Note: A terrific listing of reflective, open-ended questions – great for students going through the process and interviewers alike – can be found at http://cyberguidance.net/college/evaluate_yourself.htm.

Communication:
Again, there is considerable variety in how interview requests are handled.

- Some colleges give the name of a local interviewer to the student and expect the student to follow through.
- Some colleges give the name of the student to a regional alumni chair, who assigns the interview to a local alumni interviewer and reports back to the office.
- Some colleges give the name of the student directly to a local alumni interviewer, with the expectation that the interviewer will connect with and interview the student within a specified time period (commonly three weeks).

Post Interview Communication:
- Write-ups are returned via mail, email, or web, depending upon individual school procedure, within a set timeframe.
- It matters to matter. Some colleges may wish to have interviewers send a note to the student, letting them know they enjoyed their visit. Any thank-you notes from the student should also be sent to the college to be noted or filed in the student’s record.

Congratulatory Calls and Emails:
Many schools enlist their alumni volunteers to call and congratulate local accepted students, offering to answer any questions they may have (again, these volunteers should be provided with a sheet of frequently asked questions and their answers). If your institution offers open houses for accepted students, the congratulatory call should encourage the student to attend.

Reporting:
Whichever office oversees alumni admission volunteers (either Alumni Affairs or Admission) should plan to keep records on college fair and interview assignments, as well as volunteer performance (did the volunteer complete the assignment satisfactorily) and report out on same as required.