

Bates

Office of Alumni Engagement

Regional Alumni Networks and Regional Volunteer Guide

PURPOSE

Bates Alumni should feel connected to Bates and to one another wherever they are. Regional Networks are planning committees of alumni volunteers who work together with the Bates Office of Alumni Engagement to foster the local Bates community in regions throughout the U.S.

Bates Alumni Regional Networks support dynamic programming for Bates alumni, parents, students, and friends across the country. Networks offer a variety of events throughout the year to help participants meet, connect, and learn from one another on a personal and professional level.

In providing enhanced personal and professional connections, as well as opportunities for lifelong learning, regional networks allow for increased alumni volunteerism and support of the college.

EXPECTATIONS OF REGIONAL NETWORKS & REGIONAL VOLUNTEERS

Membership

All members of the Bates community are welcome to join. Regional Network Committee members are self-selecting and take on different organizational roles. Members are expected to take on the responsibilities as outlined in the *Regional Volunteer Responsibilities* section of this guide.

Committee Leadership

Each Bates Regional Network will have a Committee Chair for a recommended term of 3 years. The Chair should be prepared to organize and schedule network meetings, prepare meeting agendas, and act as the main liaison with Bates Office of Alumni Engagement staff. It is highly recommended to appoint a co-chair to share responsibility.

Regional Volunteer Responsibilities

- Attend Regional Network meetings
- Volunteer as “Event Lead” for regional events, as your personal schedule allows
 - Event Leads shape programming, liaise with the Bates staff to assist with logistical decisions such as venue selection, and act as point of contact with speakers, venues, etc.
- Volunteer as “Event Promoter”: share events on social media, and via personal email and outreach

- Volunteer for “Day-of” event roles (e.g. greeting speakers/guests, handing out name tags, etc)
- Attend Regional Events throughout the year
- Encourage members of your personal and professional networks, particularly those who are fellow Bates alumni, to attend events
- Promote events on social media, and via personal email and outreach
- Recruit Bates contacts to join Regional Network

MEETING LOGISTICS & SCHEDULE

Pre-planning and idea generation are important responsibilities for the Regional Networks. Groups should aim to meet frequently in order to share ideas and to stay abreast of college-sponsored activities within the region.

Frequency: Recommend meeting 3-4 times per year, with additional conference calls and meetings as needed in order to plan events and programs.

Location: For in person meetings, members will take turns hosting at member offices, or, a public location as determined by the committee. Conference calls will be conducted via Zoom meeting.

Agenda: An agenda will be circulated prior to the meeting. Meeting minutes will be taken by a member of the volunteer committee and circulated within one week of the meeting.

REGIONAL EVENT GUIDELINES

Bates Networks should take into consideration the following guiding principles when planning regional programming.

Event “Levels”

There are three "levels" of regional alumni events:

1. *Level 1* - Bates sponsors and organizes the event, provides staff, and Alumni Engagement staff will promote the event via email and social media channels.
2. *Level 2* - Bates provides some of the event budget but may not be able to provide event staffing. Alumni Engagement staff will promote the event via email and social media channels.
3. *Level 3* - Bates does not provide a budget or staff attendance, but will provide other resources such as contact lists for invitees, RSVP pages, and promotion of the event via email and social media channels.

Following Level 2 & Level 3 events, regional volunteers should send attendee lists and photos to their staff liaison. Bates staff will share photos on Bates alumni social media channels.

Event Planning

- 1-2 volunteers will act as “**Event Leads**” for each event. Event Leads will liaise with the Bates staff to shape programming, coordinate logistical decisions such as venue selection, and act as point of contact with speakers, venues, etc.

- Larger events will have a “**Host Committee**” of selected alumni from a broad range of constituencies to help with outreach to potential attendees. The primary responsibilities of Host Committee members is to contact Bates alumni and encourage them to attend the event.

Best Practices

1. Start publicizing the event at least six weeks before; this will give you time to finalize logistics and enough time to promote the event.
 - a. Charging For Events -- It is no longer fiscally possible or responsible for the college to completely underwrite the costs for alumni events. As we consider charging alumni for events, here are some things to think about: Is there an alum or parent who is willing to underwrite some of the event costs as a donation to the college, allowing for reduced fees for guests?
 - b. Data indicates that guests take their responsibility to follow through on attending an event more seriously if they have paid to attend. It is a good strategy to use to avoid attrition.
 - c. The more value an activity offers for money, the less likely will the cost be seen as a deterrent.
2. Do not pay out of pocket for anything or sign contracts on behalf of the college. Request an invoice and contract in writing and put Bates Alumni Staff in contact with service providers for payments
3. Things to consider when choosing a date:
 - a. Day of the week
 - b. National, Regional, Religious Holidays
 - c. Bates College Calendar of Events
 - d. Local school calendar (vacations and holidays)
4. Things to consider when choosing a location:
 - a. Is it easy to travel to (especially by public transportation)? Is there parking?
 - b. Are the entrance & bathrooms wheelchair accessible?
 - c. Is the location an inclusive space?
 - d. Is there a dress code? Include this information via invitation and promotions.
 - e. Does the menu accommodate vegetarian/vegan/ gluten-free, etc. diets?
5. Once an event/program is completed, work with Bates College staff on options for post-event surveys so that you can get feedback from attendees.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO REGIONAL NETWORKS

The Office of Alumni Engagement is committed to serving regional groups and the volunteers who make regional activities possible. Staff liaisons are available to provide information, assistance, and guidance including:

- Coordinating Regional Network meetings.
- Providing confidential lists of Bates community members and contact information.
- Creating and managing online registrations for events.
- Designing digital content to promote events.
- Producing nametags and attendee lists for events.
- Designing, editing, and coordinating regional event emails and post-event surveys.

Regional Events: <https://www.bates.edu/alumni/all-events/>

Bates Bridge: <https://bridge.bates.edu/>

GETTING STARTED

1. Have an idea of what type of event/program you would like to host.
2. Reach out to the Bates Staff contact assigned to your region (see below).
3. Learn from the success of other regions!

Sample of Annual Regional Programming -- D.C. Network

The D.C. Network is an established regional network and a great example of building community. There are typically 3-4 events in D.C. each year – the target audience knows what to expect.

- Fall: Welcome to the City (focus on young alums)
- Late Fall/early Spring: Panel discussion (with visitors from campus or local alumni)
- Spring: Trivia Night
- Summer: National Game
- Summer/Fall: Outdoor Hike

REGIONAL BATES STAFF CONTACTS

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D.C. Bates Network

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Chicago Bates Network

Denver Bates Network

Hartford Bates Network

Portland (Maine) Bates Network

Seattle Bates Network

If you would like to start an Alumni Network in your region, contact Stephanie Dumont at sdumont@bates.edu.