

The Efficacy of Creating an Alumni Association

Our school will be celebrating its centenary milestone in 2024. The school started its operation in 1924 but did not start a high school until 1969. The first high school graduating class of nine students represented the Class of 1973. The graduating classes of the 1970s were small, comprised of perhaps ten to twenty students who are now starting to retire from their professional lives. Many alumni believe it is a good time to start building an alumni association to benefit the future of the school, students, and community. The Alumni Association Launching Committee was organized to create a formal alumni association - a dedicated like-minded alumni team working with the school to connect alumni, students, faculty, and our community. It will take many years of hard work to establish a robust functioning alumni association. As the Chinese proverb said, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'. So let's begin now!

What is the benefit of having an alumni association? Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. One of the most critical challenges that enhance one's achievements is building a network of friends, partners, and teams. Relationship building happens when the mutual understanding between or among individuals is increased. This could happen between two people in a workplace, school, or an entire team. On the job, this mutual understanding doesn't just make the day better, it is also vital for success. An alumni association builds bridges between our alumni community around the world and students to enhance the lives of both groups.

Independent schools struggle to maintain strong relationships with alumni because they only manage to connect to students after graduation—which is too late. The alumni engagement process begins when the student matriculates into the school. More than ever, independent school leaders have an opportunity to create programming beginning in the earliest grades to build engaging experiences and maintain a student-institution relationship across the student lifecycle and beyond graduation.

For any independent school, maintaining positive, personal connections with alumni is mission-critical. Alumni are key stakeholders because their lives speak to the value of independent school education and because they animate a school's values in the world. Alumni are, in a very real sense, the keepers of the mission, and their support of the school can be inspiring because they want to advance what is best about the institution.

Like board members, alumni offer their schools time, talent, and treasure. They help support admissions, connect students and fellow alumni with internships and job opportunities, volunteer as fundraisers, and donate to annual and capital campaigns. Empowering alumni to be ambassadors for the school out in the world is a job everyone in the institution does—the Head of School, faculty, coaches, Admissions Officers, fundraisers, and current students. It is vital to acknowledge that an alumni association connects the school to and beyond its former students. Moreover, it can extend the school's visibility to environments, communities, and sectors where our alumni have built networks, whether they be nonprofit organizations, independent schools, universities, companies, or other institutions. An alumni association can be a hub of activity for connecting all stakeholders, to bring balance and harmony which the word 'Chowa' epitomizes

In sum, building meaningful relationships with students and alumni is important for the strategic growth and advancement of independent international schools and their programs. Though alumni typically move away from the campus to pursue international careers, they can stay in touch and build a global professional network. Current students at YIS could benefit from the post-secondary mentorship opportunities and improved job placement rates that engaged alumni bring. Especially important is the ability of independent schools with robust alumni engagement programming to be able to partner with alumni to meet financial goals for scholarships and other campus developments.

We are looking for class representative volunteers who can communicate, influence and rally their classmates to future activities connecting students, alumni, faculty, and community around the world. Please send your name or recommendations, graduating class year, and preferred contact email address to the Alumni Association Launching Committee representatives if you are interested in becoming a class representative to:

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