



CHAPTER BEST PRACTICES

Planning Speaker Events

Purpose

To bring Virginia Tech alumni together for social interaction and to raise money to support the chapter's scholarship fund for incoming Virginia Tech students (where applicable).

Initial Planning Considerations

- Create an annual plan: enables you to plan the year well in advance and avoid having a large number of events competing with your speaker event.
- Work with your liaison to review your chapter demographics: Where are the alumni located in your area? What are their ages or interests?
- Capitalize on local attractions: What local events are happening in your area already? Are there interesting local industries that could provide speakers or interest alumni?
- Keep in mind that chapter postcard mailer submissions must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the RSVP date!

Keys to Success

- Select an audience-building Virginia Tech speaker (see our [suggested list](#) of faculty speakers). **Always work with your chapter liaison to arrange a speaker.**
- Select a venue for the event that is convenient for Virginia Tech alumni and can provide appropriate services such as food, A/V equipment, size, cost, etc. Ideas include:
 - Restaurant
 - Classroom in school or church
 - Community center
 - Someone's home

- Work with other chapter volunteers to share the work load and provide them with the ability to make decisions as needed. Duties to be shared by officers may include:
 - Raffles, prizes, auctions, etc.
 - Food details (appetizers, desserts, etc.)
 - Event site and budget
 - RSVP date, if necessary

Marketing Suggestions

- Use the email templates and postcard mailers available through the Alumni Association (find out more on the [Chapter Resources website](#)). Have details ready when submitting request: date, time, place, contact, etc.
- Consider using a variety of media in addition to the alumni office services to promote event:
 - Chapter website
 - Facebook/Twitter/Instagram
 - Local newspaper news release
 - Local radio stations

Food and Beverage Suggestions

- Decide if food and beverages will be served and how much the chapter will need to charge for overhead and scholarship fundraising proceeds.
- Refreshments: provide drink tickets with registration, or offer cash bar & specials.
- Food: catered BBQ, boxed lunches, buffet dinner, heavy hors d'oeuvres, potluck, etc.

Evaluation

Plan for a post-event wrap-up meeting with your volunteers to discuss what worked well and what needs improvement. Collect all materials to be shared with team for next year's event.