



## Alumni Reunion Planning Guide

The Alumni Relations Office encourages you to organise a reunion as a way of keeping in touch and rekindling the bonds forged in your time at UOW. The following is a comprehensive planning guide, including some of the essentials which need to be considered for a successful reunion. You can contact us at any time for help, suggestions and information. We can be reached at [alumni@uow.edu.au](mailto:alumni@uow.edu.au).

### 1. Organise a committee

In order to ease the workload that often comes with event coordination, consider organising a small group to assist with the organisation of your event. However if your event is a small informal event, this may not be necessary.

### 2. Target Audience

Consider who you wish to invite to the reunion and whether or not partners, family or friends will be included. This will assist in developing the overall concept of the reunion and will determine where you can host your event. It is often important to ensure the group invited have a common interest as this will dictate the nature/theme of your event. You may also wish to invite former lecturers or the former faculty Dean.

Ask yourself the following questions to ensure you and your committee are clear on why you are hosting a reunion.

- Are you celebrating an anniversary or special occasion? E.g. 5 or 10 years since graduation?
- Are you simply gathering alumni from a particular faculty or area of study?
- What do you hope to gain by hosting the reunion?

### 3. Event Plan

#### When

Ensure you allow yourself an appropriate lead time to organise your event. If you are planning a large reunion it is acceptable to start planning your event a year in advance.

By planning your event in advance you allow individuals time to plan ahead if attending from interstate or overseas. This also allows time for the UOW Alumni Relations team to assist you with your reunion.

When selecting a date and time it is important to consider public holidays and other events coinciding with your reunion, as well as whether your event should be on a weekday or weekend.

#### Location

When selecting the location for your event you can choose to host your event close to or at the University, for example a Return to Wollongong Reunion. However often the geographic location of the majority of alumni will determine where the reunion is held.

Ensure the venue selected is affordable and suitable for your target market, often a conservative venue is the most appropriate choice as it allows you to spend money on other aspects that will enhance your event.

When selecting a location and venue consider;

- Parking and public transport options (including disabled options)
- Accommodation available
- Facilities available at the venue e.g lectern, audio system



## Style of the function

It is important to know what type of event will suit your audience

- Formal or informal event
- Cocktail function or sit down dinner
  
- Guest speaker
- All weekend event with the inclusion of activities
- Inclusion of formalities, including MC and speeches

Once the event details have been confirmed, it is important that approaches to guest speakers be made. This needs to be done well in advance. Things to consider include:

1. What topic/s should the speaker talk about?
2. Will the speaker/s charge a fee?
3. Are they an overseas or high profile speaker who need their accommodation and transport covered?
4. Is there anyone from the University that could be approached to speak?
5. Consider past UOW lecturers. It is best to contact the relevant faculty for this information.

## Budget

When preparing your budget consider your anticipated costs. We suggest that you over-budget (only a small margin) to cover any unforeseen cost (events should breakeven). Consider your expected attendance numbers as this will determine the cost per head and ticketing price. By keeping costs to a minimum this will ensure the reunion will remain affordable for your guests.

### Income

- Ticket sales
- Other funding - support from faculties or [Alumni Development Group \(ADG\)](#). For full details on applying for funding from the ADG please refer to Section 5 of the [Alumni Network Handbook](#).

### Expenditure

- Venue
- Catering
- Entertainment
- Photographer

## Invitations

When designing your invitations include the following essential information;

- What
- Where
- When
- Time
- Dress code
- Reunion organiser's name
- RSVP date and payment required (could provide an RSVP slip to obtain their update-to-date contact details and the name of their guest).

A cost effective method for sending out invitations is via email. The UOW Alumni Relations Office will happily distribute email invitations on your behalf. Should you choose to mail your invitations we can also assist you with this (see Section 6 - Support from the UOW Alumni Relations Office).



**IMPORTANT:** The reunion organiser must keep a record of any rsvp's and contact detail changes and forward these details to the UOW Alumni Relations Office for database updating.

## 4. Tips to make your event a success

### Publicise your event

By promoting your event through the UOW Website, Alumni E-news, university publications or community news bulletins or papers you will spread the message about your event and possibly make contact with alumni who you haven't been able to trace.

### Name Badges

Provide all guests with name badges.

### Biographies/Anecdotal Stories

You may like to consider encouraging alumni to send in their biography or an anecdote about their time at the University of Wollongong prior to the reunion.

### Memorabilia Gifts

Often reunion organisers provide each of their guests with a small gift to commemorate the occasion. You may also like to consider providing an opportunity for alumni to purchase gifts. The University offers a range of merchandise available at the Unishop or online <http://unicentre.uow.edu.au/unishop/memorabilia/index.htm>.

### Reunion Gifts

As a means of marking this special anniversary or occasion you can encourage your fellow alumni to contribute towards a reunion gift (donation). You can support a range of programs promoting excellence and innovation, including innovative research, scholarships for hardworking or disadvantaged students, prizes to reward academic achievement, initiatives to support our community and activities to conserve our environment.

For further information for how to establish a reunion gift please contact the Alumni Relations team.

## 5. Timeline

### 8 - 12 months

- Contact the UOW Alumni Relations Office and inform them you wish to organise a reunion. Determine the format of the reunion and who you wish to invite.
- Establish a committee if necessary or seek assistance from volunteers
- Develop your budget, including estimated attendance numbers, expenses and income (through tickets or other funding)
- Set a date and book a venue

### 6 – 8 months

- Create a task list and mark when completed
- Book any speakers, musicians or photographers
- Contact the UOW Alumni Relations Office to organise the promotion of the reunion
- Organise nostalgic items from Archivist at the UOW Library (if required)

### 2- 4 months

- Send out invitations
- Provide UOW Alumni Relations Office with any address updates of alumni
- Record all acceptances/declines
- Assign tasks to committee members or volunteers in preparation of the reunion
- Organise memorabilia gifts



## **1 -2 months**

- Reminder emails sent to all invitees who have not responded
- Send confirmation letters to attendees (include parking details etc)
- Confirm all bookings

## **1 – 2 weeks prior**

- Provide final numbers to venue for catering
- Check the venue has all requested items, including registration table, microphone etc.
- Assign tasks to volunteers for the event e.g. registration table, placing signage
- Brief all volunteers

## **Event day**

- Confirm you have completed all last minute tasks
- Final briefing for all volunteers
  
- Ensure 'Update your details forms' are on the registration table. These can be obtained from the UOW Alumni Relations Office.

## **Follow up**

- Contact the UOW Alumni Relations Office to provide a brief update about the reunion (including photos) to be uploaded on the UOW Alumni Website.
- Send through any address or name updates

## **6. Support from the UOW Alumni Relations Office**

The following services are available from the UOW Alumni Relations team to assist you with organising a reunion;

### **Invitations**

The UOW Alumni Relations Office maintains a comprehensive database of all graduates from the University of Wollongong. Due to privacy restrictions we are unable to provide you with details of alumni, however we are able to contact alumni on your behalf. Once you have determined the criteria for who will be invited to attend your reunion (fellow graduates, former members of sports club etc) we will help you to get in touch with people by sending out email or mail invitations (costs may apply for postal invitations).

### **Promotion**

We strongly encourage you to promote your reunion through the UOW Alumni Website and E-newsletter distributed bi-monthly to more than 24,000 alumni world-wide.

### **Conference Centre**

We are able to provide access to University Conference facilities at a discounted rate, including both;

- Innovation Conference Centre
- University of Wollongong Conference and Function Centre

### **Accommodation**

Through the Alumni Benefits Program we offer UOW Alumni a discounted rate at Medina Serviced Apartments, Travelodge and Vibe Hotels. Please consider these partners when recommending accommodation to your guests.

### **Tours of UOW**

The Campus Community Tours program provides an opportunity for alumni to learn about the latest developments at UOW, but more importantly, take a trip down memory lane. Group tours



can be arranged on request and will be tailored to suit the interests and needs of the group (dependant on availability).

#### **UOW Nostalgia**

The University of Wollongong library has an extensive range of memorabilia which may be of interest to you when organising your reunion, in particular university photographs and publications (limited access available).

Should you require support as outlined above, please contact the Alumni Relations team.

### **7. How you can assist the UOW Alumni Relations Office**

#### **Planning a reunion**

Contact the office and let us know you are planning to host a reunion and provide us with the details.

#### **Update alumni details**

The UOW Alumni Relations Office maintains a database of all the graduates of UOW however often people forget to inform us of their new details including name or address changes. As a result we are no longer able to keep them informed of events and developments at UOW. Your assistance in obtaining these lost alumni is greatly appreciated.

The Alumni Relations Office can provide you with 'Update your details forms', to be placed on your registration table and be returned to the UOW Alumni Relations Office at the completion of your event.

#### **Feedback**

We appreciate hearing how your event went, so please send through some photographs and a brief update so that this can be included on the UOW Alumni website.