



MARP Conference Agenda

June 20, 2024

8:00

Check-In

Check-in on the first floor of Curtiss Hall

8:00-9:00

Networking Breakfast

Location: Banquet Rooms A-C

Synopsis: A light breakfast with coffee and tea will be provided along with designated tables for popular Alumni Relations conversation topics.

9:00-10:00

Welcome and Keynote Speaker

Location: Banquet Rooms A-C

Presenters: Brian Gawor, Certified Fund-Raising Executive for higher education institutions & Scott Ochander, co-founder and chief leadership strategist at Carnegie

Synopsis: Today's donors give strategically and respond to the promise of impact and connection. The traditional loyalty-driven model of alumni and donor engagement is no longer effective. This keynote will discuss the urgent need to adapt alumni relations and fundraising strategies to changing donor needs, emphasizing the use of emerging technology to personalize communications and outreach at scale. Scott Ochander and Brian Gawor will outline the generational shifts affecting donor behavior and present actionable strategies for harnessing demographic and psychographic data to enhance engagement.

10:00-10:50

Choose 1 of the 3 sessions to attend.

Alumni Reunion Weekend- An alternative to Homecoming

Category: Alumni Relations/Events

Location: Seminar Room D

Presenter: Amy Olind, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement at Oakland University

Synopsis: Is the traditional homecoming concept not working for your institution? Learn about how Oakland University shifted its thinking toward an entirely alumni-centric weekend and found success with renewed goals and purpose.

Forever Red: Creating Red Pride, Connecting Students with Alumni

- Category:** Alumni Relations/Events
- Location:** Seminar Room E
- Presenter:** Kate Stewart, Past President of Forever Red at Saginaw Valley State University
- Synopsis:** Established in 2011, Forever Red serves as a vital bridge between current students and alumni at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), offering a pathway toward a promising future. The program enriches student experiences through scholarships, programs, and community service initiatives.

Increasing Alumni Philanthropy and Campus Engagement

- Category:** Advancement/Fundraising
- Location:** Seminar Room F
- Presenter:** Robyn McLaughlin, Associate Alumni Director at Northwood University
- Synopsis:** As a way for our alumni to make an impact and feel connected to campus, we created Project 100. We recruited 100 alumni to become members by contributing \$100/semester and combining their donations to award \$10,000 each semester to a student-focused initiative.

11:00-11:50

Choose 1 of the 3 sessions to attend.

Alumni Networks Roundtable

- Category:** Alumni Relations/Events
- Location:** Seminar Room D
- Presenter:** Ashlyn Leavitt, Assistant Director of Events and Volunteer Management at Grand Valley State University
- Synopsis:** Join this session for an open discussion about the challenges and best practices surrounding Alumni Networks (clubs and chapters). Come prepared to share your successes and pitfalls so we can all learn from one another.

Giving Days & Gamifying Annual Giving

Category: Advancement/Fundraising

Location: Seminar Room E

Presenters: Kelly Brault, Senior Director of Annual Giving at Oakland University & Kristin Rohrbeck, Assistant Director of Annual Giving at Oakland University

Synopsis: In this interactive session, we'll discuss Giving Days and ways we motivate our donors. We'll delve into matches, top fund competitions, challenges, power hours, and more. We'll also discuss how this can be applied to faculty/staff/retiree campaigns, crowdfunding, and beyond.

Team Cohesion and Dynamics

Category: Personal Professional Development

Location: Seminar Room F

Presenters: Dr. Karl Rishe, Ed.D., Director, Senior Consultant at the telos institute

Synopsis: We have all read countless studies and know intuitively how important having a strong, trusting team can be. Team dynamics are more complex than ever after our world was turned inside out with COVID. There are no quick fixes to help the cohesion of a team to move toward challenging goals. In this session, we will examine the common practice of team dynamics, cohesion, and conflict. The session will help you build the most cohesive team possible to solve your department's increasingly complex problems by investigating Trust. If you want to understand better how to create, maintain, and repair Trust, this session is for you.

12:00-1:00

Lunch

Location: Banquet Rooms A-C

Synopsis: Relax and enjoy a conversation as we dine at midday.

1:00-1:50

Choose 1 of the 3 sessions to attend.

New Grad Communication and Engagement Strategies

Category: Alumni Relations/Events

Location: Seminar Room D

Presenters: Jordan Brown, Manager of Alumni Communications at Saginaw Valley State University, Kyle Burkhart, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement at Grand Valley State University, Ashlyn Leavitt, Assistant Director of Event Planning and Volunteer Management at Grand Valley State University, and Jennifer Rosser-Nesbit, Manager of Alumni Engagement at Saginaw Valley State University

Synopsis: Roundtable on new and valuable ways that different universities have engaged their new alumni through email, social media, events, and more. Be prepared to share your strategies, successes, and setbacks so we can all add some new engagement tools to our toolbelt.

This Meeting Could Have Been a *\$#ing Email.

Category: Personal Professional Development

Location: Seminar Room E

Presenters: Nic Taylor, Executive Director of Alumni Relations at Saginaw Valley State University

Synopsis: In the engaging session "This Meeting Could Have Been a @\$ing Email," we delve into the intricacies of effective meeting management and explore strategies to ensure every gathering is purposeful and productive. This interactive workshop will equip you with practical tips for crafting concise agendas, fostering meaningful engagement, and identifying when a meeting is truly necessary—or when an email would suffice. Prepare to exchange ideas, share a laugh over meeting mishaps from the past, and learn how to transform your office into a model of efficiency.

Understanding Alumni

Category: Alumni Relations/Events

Location: Seminar Room F

Presenters: Katie Gay, Account Executive at Blackbaud

2:00-2:50

Synopsis: Understanding what past giving strategies have been effective in Higher Education can help drive new strategies. This session will examine key alumni giving metrics and trends using several sources, such as the 2023 Blackbaud donorCentrics annual report. The topics covered will include how new donor acquisition performed across higher education in 2023, what shifts were seen in donor giving channels (direct mail, phone, and web), what percentage of alumni donors participate in Day of Giving, how well alumni donors are retained, and the value of a sustainer forward approach. Regardless of whether you are a Blackbaud client, this data can help inform small and big efforts to increase alumni engagement and giving.

Choose 1 of the 3 sessions to attend.

Alumni Events

Category: Alumni Relations/Events

Location: Seminar Room D

Presenters: Jordan Gerstenberger, Business Development at GiveCampus

Synopsis: Whether your event is on campus or is regional, that event starts at registration. Join this discussion and strategy session to further unpack how we can boost event attendance and make event registration as easy as possible. Our time will focus on ways to increase awareness of giving before, during, or after the event. Find out how your peers are fostering connections with other attendees and your school to sustain engagement. Overall, this session will underscore the vital link between engagement tactics, giving efforts, and streamlined registration in optimizing event success.

Making A Career of Alumni Relations

Category: Personal Professional Development

Location: Seminar Room E

Presenters: Brandi Behrenwald, Director of Alumni Giving and Alumni Relations at Ferris State University & Erin Sudroveh, Senior Director Alumni Engagement at Oakland University

Synopsis: Discuss the ups and downs of working with alumni and alumni-centric programs and events. Through this discussion, we will show that you can, in fact, make a career out of alumni relations!

Evolving Multi-Channel Approach to Annual Giving

Category: Advancement/Fundraising

Location: Seminar Room F

Presenters: Kelly Brault, Senior Director of Annual Giving at Oakland University and Adrienne Penney, Associate Director of Annual Giving at Oakland University

Synopsis: This interactive session will explore how we are all working to adapt our annual giving strategy with current communication channels. We'll look at whether there's a place for phone and student outreach to alumni & donors - how are we evolving and what's working? We'll also discuss how we're expanding digital outreach and communications to young audiences. We'll talk about how we utilize mail with increasing postage costs, keeping email deliverable, emerging technology like AI and how we utilize data to send the right ask in the right way and at the right time.

3:00-5:00

Networking Happy Hour Conclusion

Location: Marshall M. Fredricks Museum

Synopsis: Join us in the Marshall M. Fredricks Museum on campus for a networking happy hour to mingle with fellow conference participants and have opportunities to win prizes (You are already entered to win per your registration, and you **MUST** be present to win!). Refreshments will include beer and wine service courtesy of our sponsors, as well as an assortment of "light bites". Please make sure you stop in before you leave for the day!!!