

SPEAKER EVENT BEST PRACTICES

Purpose:

To engage Virginia Tech alumni in the local area in a social, presentation style format that promotes the university and/or local alumni relationships and raises funds for chapter scholarships where applicable.

Things to Consider:

Chapter Demographics

- Request a current roster from your chapter liaison
- Determine a central location to alumni in the area
- Ages of alumni in the area
- Areas of potential interest by college or degree programs

Think Local

- Capitalize on local attractions
- Interesting local industries that could provide speakers or interest alumni
- Local alumni with unique experiences or skills to share

Timing

- Have an annual plan to guide efforts in advance and avoid having a large number of events competing with your speaker event.
- Post card mailers must be submitted 6-8 weeks prior to the RSVP date
- Reach out to your liaison for university faculty or staff speakers at least 3 months in advance

Budget

- Is there a budget?
- Where should the budget be spent (e.g. venue, food and beverage, etc.)?
- Where can efforts be supplemented by volunteer help, sponsorships, or leveraging existing relationships?
- Is this a fundraiser? What is the goal?

NOTE: The VTAA will cover the cost of university faculty and staff speaker requests made through the chapter's liaison where applicable.

Keys to Success:

Liaison

- Include your chapter liaison in your planning as soon as possible
- Liaisons can provide speaker suggestions, timelines and other feedback and ideas
- Liaisons will reach out to university speakers to schedule and plan travel

Venue

- Ensure the venue can provide appropriate services (e.g. parking, food, A/V equipment, accommodations, etc.)
- Ensure that you communicate any services that are not available with your liaison and the speaker

Volunteers

- Determine what assistance is needed (e.g. food prep, A/V setup, greeters, etc.)
- Recruit volunteers through social media, email, and at other events leading up to the speaker
- Be clear about duties, time commitment, and allow autonomy

Marketing

- It's not an event if no one knows about it
- Utilize VTAA postcards and emails
- Send additional emails and mailings through local lists
- Leverage all social media accounts
- Work with your liaison to create a communications timeline to ensure timely messaging to key audiences effectively.

Post-event Recap

- Regroup and reassess within a week of the event
- What went well? What didn't?
- What can be changed for next year?