

A new model of alumni engagement: Facilitating graduate success and supporting employability

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Ensuring graduate employability is core business for the Australian Higher Education sector. To this end, evidence-based strategies for embedding employability have been implemented. Alumni however, have been an underutilised resource in these processes and are often left to fend for themselves in the transition from university. With 80% of graduates not maintaining connection to their institution, we are losing a wealth of information about the student experience and the challenges of navigating 'new worlds of work'. Through an OLT National Fellowship, a new model of alumni engagement is proposed. This framework remodels alumni relationships from a transactional, service to the institution interaction, to one of intentional and mutual benefit with student and graduate success as the overarching themes. To facilitate authentic alumni connection, graduates are considered to belong to the university long after graduation, and the role of institutions in supporting their journeys through times of success and transition is acknowledged.

Key principles emerging from the model include:

1. Decentralisation of alumni relationship management;
2. Evidencing the value of alumni connection to students from the transition in;
3. Engagement of alumni in employability across the student lifecycle;
4. Targeted support of alumni in the transition to the world of work; and
5. Long-term relationship facilitation through support of graduate career transitions and professional development.

This work forms the basis of continued sector wide engagement and the development of resources to support the transformation of alumni relationships, inform curriculum renewal, support employability interventions and enrich the professional lives of alumni.