

**GIVECAMPUS**

# Alumni Event Best Practices

A comprehensive ideabook for advancement shops big and small



[go.givecampus.com](https://go.givecampus.com)

# Introduction

Events are the cornerstone of alumni engagement. They offer a unique opportunity for graduates to reconnect, network, and build relationships with each other and with your institution.

Homecoming, reunions, happy hours, and other gatherings help to foster a sense of community and loyalty among grads and are a valuable way to nurture lifelong support.



## Survey Says

The top three alumni engagement strategies are reunions/events (59%), annual giving campaigns (50%), and targeted digital communications (43%).

Source: [CCS Fundraising 2024 Philanthropy Pulse report](#)

In this guide, you'll find tips and best practices for managing alumni events of all sizes and complexity, along with relevant survey findings compiled by industry bellwethers like the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and CCCS Fundraising, to name a few.

You'll also get a behind-the-scenes peek into what your colleagues at peer institutions are doing to boost participation, deliver outstanding alumni experiences, and build meaningful relationships that stand the test of time.

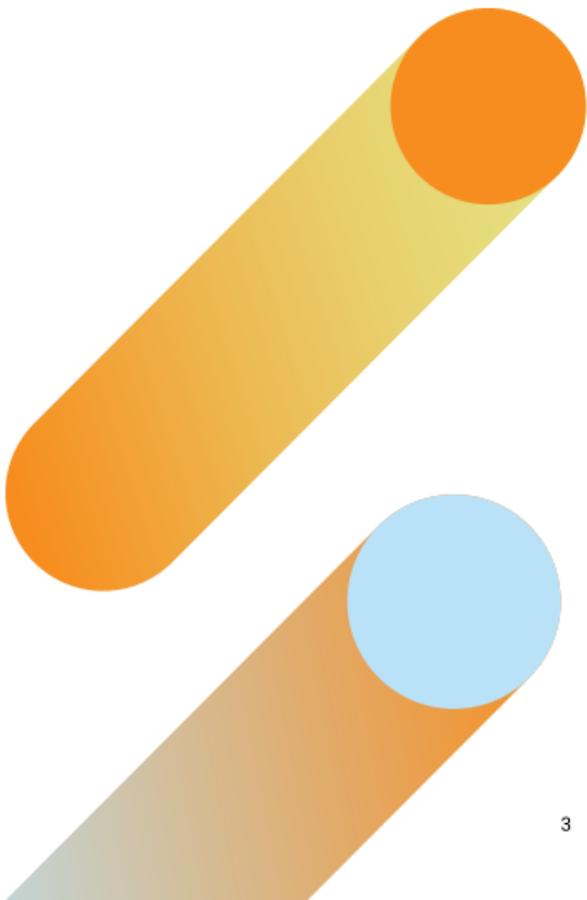
## **Inside this guide:**

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## 1. Make it Easy to Register

Whether you're hosting an intimate regional meet-up for 20 alums or a milestone centennial event expected to draw tens of thousands, the rules are the same. Your online event registration and ticketing experience must be seamless, intuitive, and tailored to make RSVPing both easy and engaging for your guests.

As digital consumers, we've all come to expect a fast and frictionless checkout experience. That's true whether you're buying a sweater, booking a Lyft, or registering for a reunion. So, making it easy to RSVP is—forgive the pun—the price of admission.





[SIGN UP](#)
[LOGIN](#)

## Howard University Homecoming 2024

Overview
Schedule



Spread the word about this event!

Share
Post
Share

Copy to Share

36876 Guests  
Attending

[View All](#)

**When** October 18, 2024 at 1  
October 20, 2024 at 1

**Where** Howard University

**Price** Varies

Event registrations closed October

**ALUMNI NETWORKING EVENT**

PIKO MECHANICAL
November 7th, 2024  
Open 8pm



International Contact Director of Alumni Relations (Piko Mech)
512-314-5118
#1630221606102

<b>When</b>	November 7, 2024 6:00pm - 8:00pm EST
<b>Where</b>	Piko Mechanical 8528 Riverdale Dr Dublin, Ohio 43017
<b>Price</b>	Free

Event registrations close November 8th at 12:00 PM EST

**Register Now!**

The Schrey Sales Centre will be traveling your way on Nov. 7th we will be having an alumni event at Piko Mechanical in Dublin at 6 p.m. with complimentary food and beverages. You'll have an opportunity to network with our students and other alumni!

Please feel free to register if you think you can attend. You also can invite other Ohio University alumni you know in the area or bring a friend!

If you have any questions about the event, contact Firoza Meek, Schrey Sales Centre Director of Alumni Relations, at [fmeeke@ohio.edu](mailto:fmeeke@ohio.edu). If you need help with event registration, contact Achievement Events at [eevents@ohio.edu](mailto:eevents@ohio.edu).

Whether you're hosting a small regional networking event or a once-in-a-centennial homecoming extravaganza, the registration process should be easy and intuitive.



## PRO TIP

### Keep it simple

Your event page should have a compelling hero image and a clean, easy-to-navigate layout that renders just as beautifully on mobile as it does on desktop.

This example from **St. John's University** for a regional alumni trivia night checks all the boxes for registration and ticketing best practices, including prominently displayed CTA buttons for signing up, making an optional gift, and sharing on social media.

Who wouldn't want to register for cocktails and trivia at the Glampisphere in San Diego? The sun is shining, the fountain is flowing, and there's a seat at the table for you. Whether you're viewing on mobile or your laptop, you're just a click away from snagging a ticket.



Cocktails and Trivia with St. John's University Alumni



**When** December 13, 2024  
7:00pm - 9:00pm PST

**Where** Glampisphere  
4673 30th Street, Patio G  
San Diego, California 92116

**Price** \$20.00 per person

Event registrations close December 6th at 05:00 PM PST

[Join Us](#)

[Send a Donation!](#)

Event name

Countdown clock



SIGN UP

LOGIN

## Cocktails and Trivia with St. John's University Alumni

Days : Hours : Minutes : Seconds  
36 : 10 : 40 : 52



Inviting hero image

When December 13, 2024  
7:00pm - 9:00pm PST

Where Glampisphere  
4673 30th Street, Patio D  
San Diego, California 92116

Price \$20.00 per person

Event details at a glance

Clear CTA buttons

Event registrations close December 8th at 05:00 PM PST

Join Us

Send a Donation!

Spread the word about this event!



Copy to Share

Easy social share buttons

Join your fellow St. John's alumni in San Diego for Trivia and Cocktails at the Glampisphere on December 13!

Enjoy this unique space's outdoor sunken living room while competing for exclusive St. John's merchandise. You can participate in both pop culture and St. John's trivia individually or as a team.

Ticket price includes passed appetizers and one drink ticket. A cash bar will also be available.

This event is hosted by the Office of Alumni Relations.

Brief overview of event

## 2. Factor in Fundraising

Some things are just better together—like movies and popcorn, homecoming and football, and events and fundraising. For many GiveCampus partners, making an ask is a natural extension of the reunion and homecoming experience and actually helps to reinforce a sense of community and belonging among grads.

Beyond the obvious synergy, you'll find plenty of practical reasons throughout this guide to incorporate a fundraising component into your alumni gatherings. The key is to make the giving experience as easy and frictionless as the registration flow outlined above. It's a good idea to put giving opportunities front and center on your event registration page so guests can RSVP and make a donation while they're at it.



### Fun Fact

**14% of guests** who register for an event hosted on the GiveCampus platform **choose to make a donation** at the same time.



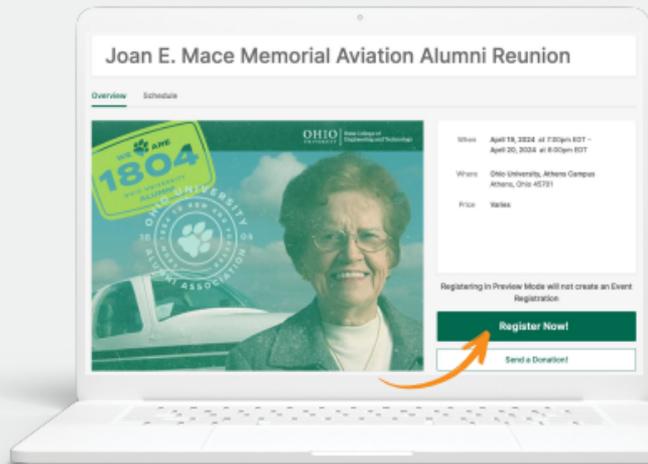
## PRO TIP

### Don't knock it until you've tried it

**Ohio University** is a public higher ed institution with more than 290,000 living grads. Their Alumni Association boasts an active community and hosts numerous monthly networking events across the country and around the globe.

Adding a fundraising call to action to their online event registration pages wasn't even on Megan Bulow's radar when Ohio University began hosting all of their many alumni events on GiveCampus. But after a nudge from leadership, the Assistant Director of Advancement Events decided to test it out. **The very first event page they published with a "Send a Donation" button generated a surprise \$500 gift from a single attendee.**

While they don't connect social fundraising campaigns and giving forms to every event, they've continued to see gifts come in on pages where they do offer registrants the opportunity to donate.



**Read more:** Discover how **Ohio University** is streamlining event workflows and improving the registrant experience.

## Accept gifts on the go

In-person engagement can drive donations at your alumni events, too. Face-to-face interactions with school leadership, faculty, and fellow alums often provide a more personal and persuasive environment for fundraising. Conveniently placed QR codes that connect attendees to event pages, giving forms, or related social fundraising campaigns can be a great way to seize the moment and the momentum.

A mobile card reader is another popular way to accept gifts at in-person gatherings, especially at homecoming weekend and athletic events. The convenience of tap-to-pay or swipe-to-pay donations make in-person giving easy for attendees and hosts alike.



Look for a secure card reader that's bluetooth enabled so you don't have to fuss with power sources and ethernet cables.

### 3. Offer Time-Bound Incentives

Offering time-bound discounts and other incentives can significantly boost attendance at alumni events by creating a sense of urgency, providing tangible value, and enhancing engagement.

Of course, early bird event registration incentives aren't just for guests, they're an event planner's best friend and the secret to building buzz, fostering FOMO, and generating early revenue. Plus, the sooner you fill seats the sooner you can nail down all the other logistics essential to hosting a memorable and successful event, like coordinating vendors, scheduling activities, and managing volunteers.





## PRO TIP

### Leverage promos for FOMO

The GiveCampus Partners Conference (GCPC) is our signature event held annually and open to all educational fundraisers. For the last several years the conference has been a hybrid event, featuring both an in-person and virtual component.

Our field marketing team began promoting GCPC 2024 to our Partner community via email and social media a full four months prior to the conference. Partner schools were granted a set number of complimentary seats for the in-person event based on their plan and subscription. They were also able to purchase tickets for additional team members at a Partners-only rate that was further discounted if they took advantage of early-bird pricing.

**Spoiler alert: The conference sold out (all 350 seats) a month and a half before the event kicked off and a week before standard pricing kicked in.**

Naturally, we used our own event registration and ticketing platform to streamline the registrant experience. Partners were able to quickly claim their complimentary passes by entering a unique promo code included in their email invitation.

Individuals could also choose to purchase early-bird tickets at substantial savings (prices were discounted by more than half the face value).

The ability to accept promo codes and support multiple ticket types made registration easy for guests and GiveCampers alike.

By Elise Echeverria · 6/12/2024



**GiveCampus**  
7,524 followers  
4mo · 🌐

🎉 **SOLD OUT!** 🎉

The 2024 **GiveCampus** Partners Conference has officially **SOLD OUT** for in-person attendance! 🎉

A huge thank you to everyone who has registered—we can't wait to see you there! For those who didn't secure a ticket, there's still an opportunity to join us virtually or add yourself to the waitlist for in-person spots that might open up.

🌐 Virtual Conference Registration: You can still experience some of the amazing sessions remotely. The best news? It's free!

Register Here: <https://bit.ly/3yPp5rK>

👉 Join the Waitlist: Cancellations happen! Add yourself to the waitlist, and we'll notify you if any spots become available.

Join Now: <https://bit.ly/3KfJ0z>

## GiveCampus Partners Conference 2024

Advancing Together

**SOLD OUT!**

*You can still join virtually!*

👍 27

1 repost



Like



Comment



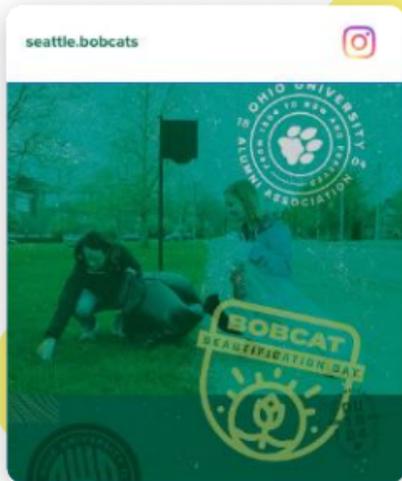
Repost

A steady stream of emails and social posts that revealed new session topics and presenters, along with the number of seats remaining, also helped to fuel early signups—a best practice bet that paid off for the field marketers who organized this event.

## 4. Get Creative

Alumni-shared experiences are a key driver of participation and attendance at reunions, homecoming, and athletic events, but there are other low-lift ways to bring your community together that stretch beyond the institutional connection.

You can expand your reach by offering alumni unique ways to bond outside traditional events. For example, hosting gatherings that support social causes or address global challenges like climate change, can help you engage new segments of the alumni population, particularly younger generations who are often more passionate about cause-based initiatives.



**Ohio University Alumni** Chapters across the nation invite their members to participate in their annual **Bobcat Beautification Day**.

Or, consider organizing events around professional development like hosting workshops on career growth or regional networking events for specific fields. These smaller gatherings can help alumni make meaningful career connections that last a lifetime, and maybe even turn into mentoring opportunities for your institution or professional collaborations and job placements down the road.

Finally, if you're not already collaborating with the folks in student affairs, you should be. They can tip you off to campus activities already in the works that may be of interest to alums. There's no shame in piggybacking on existing events. Maybe a professor is bringing in an interesting speaker to host a seminar. Ask if you can livestream it on Zoom so you can invite alumni to join virtually.

Each of these approaches can help you build genuine connections rooted in shared passions, strengthening alumni networks while broadening the event focus beyond school experiences.



## Survey Says

Nearly half (47%) of alumni non-donors say they have not been invited to any meaningful alumni events or activities, contributing to a sense of disconnection from their alma mater.

Source: [Enterprise Alumni Engagement Study, 2023](#)



## PRO TIP

### Think outside the quad

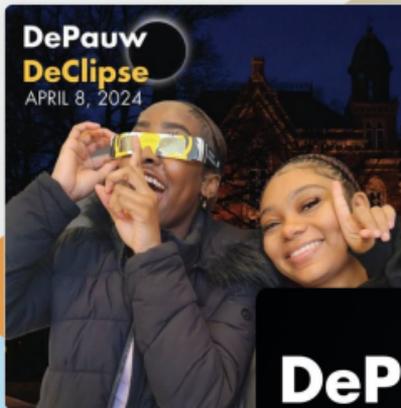
Look for exciting events happening regionally or nationally that you can build an alumni gathering around. For example, **DePauw University** in Greenville, Indiana was in the path of totality for the solar eclipse of April 8, 2024, also known as the Great North American Eclipse.

They not only invited alumni to return to campus for a post-eclipse reception, they turned the impromptu affair into a fundraising event, offering solar eclipse glasses as a fun but modest incentive (the shades cost just 50 cents a piece and people loved them).

Leveraging the GiveCampus “suggested ask amounts” feature on the giving form that they linked to from their event page they encouraged registrants to make a gift of \$20.24 to snag their pair of souvenir shades to commemorate the celestial milestone.

Much to the school’s surprise and delight, a number of attendees went above and beyond and opted to donate \$202.40. **Furthermore, the most popular gift size was \$100, making this low-lift event a truly stellar fundraising success.**

**Read more:** Discover how **DePauw University** turned one of the oldest and most celebrated rivalries in college athletics into a record-breaking fundraising event that engaged alumni from across the country.



# DePauw DeClipse

**POST-ECLIPSE RECEPTION**  
APRIL 8, 2024 AT 3:30 PM  
ROBERT G. BOTTOMS CENTER

Join us after the moment of totality for light refreshments and eclipse-themed activities. All ages welcome!



## 5. Drive Engagement

Creating memorable experiences, personalizing interactions, and making it easy for folks to network are key to driving engagement at alumni gatherings. You can get a headstart on all of these best practices well ahead of the actual event by creating opportunities for people to connect online via your event page, on social media, and through peer-to-peer outreach.

For example, publishing the guest list on your registration page can help drive attendance. Often, people like to know who else is attending before they RSVP—especially if it's a networking event or reunion. Some event registration and ticketing platforms allow you to make your guest list public. You can even include affiliation and class year (where applicable) to make it easy for prospective attendees to find former classmates and connections.

Be sure to encourage registrants to use the social share buttons on your event page, too. It's another easy, one-click way to spread the word, expand your reach, and build excitement.

Keep the momentum going by posting regular event updates, sharing photos and videos from previous events, and inviting followers and attendees to share their own pictures and memories.

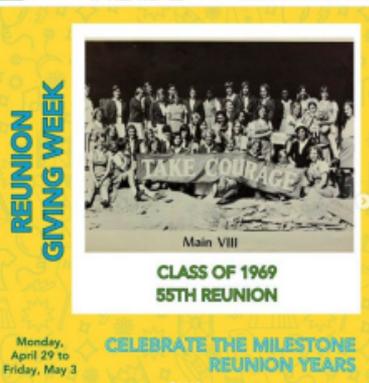
Ultimately, engagement grows when people feel included, excited, and connected, so focusing on shared experiences and meaningful interactions will ensure alumni feel involved, whether the event is for a few hours or stretches across several days.

## Alumnae Weekend 2024

Overview Schedule

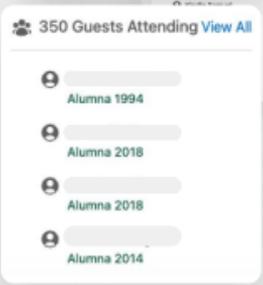


When May 3, 2024 at 9:00am EDT



Monday, April 29 to Friday, May 3

CELEBRATE THE MILESTONE REUNION YEARS



**Watch now.** Discover how the advancement team at **The Bryn Mawr School** drives reunion event engagement at their annual Alumnae Weekend.



## PRO TIP

### Evoke tiers of joy

**Blair Academy**, a coeducational, boarding and day school for high school students, linked their Reunion Weekend event page to a tiered fundraising campaign that was tied to their annual giving day. If you're new to tiered campaigns, they are a social fundraising feature that allow schools to run multiple secondary appeals under one community-wide initiative.

This is a particularly popular approach to reunion fundraising because it allows schools to drive alums to class-specific landing pages so they can see and engage with hyper-relevant content that resonates deeply, including crowd-sourced photos and Spotify playlists.

It's also a great way to encourage friendly rivalries between classes and spur engagement. Blair challenged all 15 reunion classes gathering for the 2024 weekend-long event to strive for 30 percent participation and tracked progress toward goals on their campaign page leaderboard.

## Back Together, Give Together at Reunion



377

Donors

\$1,596,429

Donated

This campaign is  
but you can still  
Academy I

### 2024 Reunion Classes

The goal is for each reunion class to reach 35% participation!  
\*Each class has a unique shared base.

Quick Search

Class	Donors	%
1984	42	47.2%
1978	53	58.5%
1964	28	32.0%
1969	36	38.1%
1960	23	27.1%
1959	17	18.5%
2019	35	38.8%
1954	7	7.8%
1999	26	29.0%
2014	23	25.1%
2004	21	23.0%
1949	3	3.3%
1984	19	21.1%
2009	19	21.1%
1979	8	8.8%

Showing 1 to 19 of 19 entries

1 2

### Projects

Search



Tiered campaigns are a great way to drive engagement and inspire friendly competition among classes. Looks like the Class of '84 nailed it (Go Gen X!).

## 6. Expand Your Reach

Class agents and alumni volunteers can be incredibly effective at driving attendance because they have a direct, trusted connection with their classmates. You can help them spread the word about events and reunions by supplying custom text, email, and social media templates that they can easily personalize to communicate at scale.

On the GiveCampus platform, alumni and constituents assigned to a volunteer are twice as likely to engage. Furthermore, volunteers can securely email or text their assignments directly from the volunteer management dashboard where they also have access to powerful advocacy tools that make sharing campaigns, matches, and challenges easy.



### Survey Says

Universities that segment their alumni email lists by graduation year, location, or interests see **open rates improve by 22%** compared to non-segmented lists.

Source: [CASE Email Marketing in Higher Education Study, 2023](#)



## PRO TIP

### Tackle peer-to-peer, year-by-year

**Bates College**, a liberal arts undergraduate college in Lewiston, Maine, has an active volunteer base of more than 550 alumni who are responsible for completing more than 7,200 fundraising tasks within the GiveCampus platform.

The Bates advancement team appoints an alumni liaison for each graduating decade, who in turn oversees one or more “class managers” for each graduating year within that decade. Those class managers are responsible for reaching out to peers from their graduating class with fundraising appeals and volunteer engagement opportunities.

They’re encouraged to communicate with content that’s tailored to appeal to their peers—whether that includes mentioning a favorite class or historic event from their era, or refining the messaging to reflect the language of their generation.



#### \$50K for the 50th Reunion

The 50th Reunion Gift Committee is doubling all 50th Reunion donations made between now and June 9th!

[Read more:](#) Discover how **Bates College** trains, mobilizes, and stewards their loyal volunteer network.

57 Donors

\$65,936 Donated

## 7. Measure Success

Collecting and analyzing attendance and engagement metrics allows you to make data-driven decisions for future events. Understanding which aspects resonate with alumni can help you replicate your successes and refine areas that fall short.

Start by tracking the number of attendees against your total invite list to determine reach and appeal. Then break down attendance by demographics (such as class year, affinity groups, and geography) to identify engaged groups and potential areas for targeted outreach.

You can also measure engagement through post-event surveys, participation in event activities, and social media interactions. Track likes, shares, comments, and hashtag usage to see what's resonating most with attendees and which platforms perform the best.

For events with a fundraising component, you'll want to track total donations, average gift size, and the number of new or returning donors to understand which activities and calls to action inspired alums to give.

Consistently tracking alumni engagement over time is key to building long-term relationships, making it easier to cultivate a supportive and active alumni community. Ultimately, metrics provide a roadmap for delivering more impactful, meaningful alumni experiences.

[Events Custom Reporting](#)

## New Custom Report

Build a report that shows exactly what you need. Start by picking your report type, then use simple filters and column choices to include the right information.

[Report Basics](#)[Filters](#)[Columns](#)

What would you like to name this report?

Custom Report name\*

What type of Events report would you like to create?

Registration Report (Coming Soon)

View events data organized by registrant with guest information consolidated.

Guest Report

View events data organized by guest with activities consolidated or separated by row.

How would you like this Guest Report formatted?

Consolidated Guest Report (Coming Soon)

One row per guest with activities in a single cell.

Activity Row Report

One row per activity, per guest.

How would you like to handle FMV and Gifts?

FMV + Gift on the same row

Display the fair market value and the gift portion of the ticket on the same row.

FMV + Gift split into separate rows

Display the fair market value and the gift portion of the ticket on separate rows.

[Save & Next](#)

With [GC Events](#), you can create, save, and re-run custom reports. Admins can easily filter by date range, events, and activities, select the columns (data types) they need for each report, and specify column ordering and aliases to support CRM uploads and formatting requirements.



## PRO TIP

### Embrace nostalgia and user-generated content

The advancement team at **The Westminster Schools**, an independent K-12 school in Atlanta, Georgia takes a unique and creative approach to major milestone events, like 50th reunions. Early planning and a healthy dose of nostalgia play a key role in the success of these once-in-a-lifetime alumni celebrations.

Over the course of the year leading up to the big day, the team invites alumni to share personal stories and photos from their time at Westminster. They then compile the submissions into a commemorative 50th Reunion Book that they mail to alums a month prior to the event.

The commemorative piece not only serves to rekindle connections between classmates, it also helps to boost engagement and donations. In fact, according to a 2024 post-event survey, **92 percent of guests said that the book inspired them to attend the reunion.**

**Read more:** Discover how **The Westminster Schools** leveraged nostalgia, segmentation, and smart technology to drive alumni participation and raise nearly half a million dollars in the process.



A month prior to the event, Westminster alums receive a reunion yearbook with images and memories crowdsourced from their classmates.

## 8. Steward Attendees

Post-event follow up is critical. Sending timely thank-you messages and surveys, and sharing highlights (including photos and videos) are the perfect way to cap off a successful alumni affair.

Build upon your event momentum by emailing thank-you notes, donor follow-ups, and feedback surveys while the experience is still top of mind for attendees. A good rule of thumb is to send thank-yous within 24 hours, event recaps within 48 hours, and feedback surveys within 72 hours or before end of week (whichever is sooner).

These follow-up communications are an extension of the event experience and can be another valuable touch point with alumni, including those pesky no-shows.



### Survey Says

Nearly one third (33%) of alumni organizations are beginning to integrate AI-powered tools to improve engagement efficiency and responsiveness.

Source: [Gartner Digital Innovation in Higher Education Report, 2024](#)

Events > 2024 Reunion & Homecoming > Guests

## 2024 Reunion & Homecoming

View Event

Preview Event

Edit Event

Search Guests

All Tickets



Create Outreach

Export

Last Name	First Name	Guest Email Address	Guest Affil	Guest Status	Checke
Kwan	Emily	emily.kwan@gmail.com	Alumni 20	Non-Attendees	No
Lazaroff	Jessica	jessica.lazaroff@givecampus.com	Alumni 2014	Attending	Yes
Blair	Amy	amy@givecampus.com	Alumni 2015	Attending	Yes
Alishauskas	Laura	Email not provided	Faculty/Staff	Attending	No
Davis	Chad	chad@givecampus.com	Friend	Attending	Yes
Darden	Kelsey	kelsey@givecampus.com	Alumni 2009	Attending	Yes

Event registration solutions like GC Events allow you to download a list of guests that includes their registration status, making it easy to segment your outreach and personalize messaging.



## PRO TIP

### Segment for success!

The **Westminster Schools** is a GC Events power user and was among the first to raise their hand when we launched [GC Outreach](#), a new capability that allows admins to send targeted emails right from within the event ticketing and registration platform.

Now the team is able to pull and filter lists based on registration status or attendance and easily email invitations, reminders, updates, and follow-up notes to registrants, guests, or both—all from one secure place.

They're also using the powerful segmentation features and AI-assisted content generation tool to quickly spin up messaging that's more personalized and targeted. **In just a few months time, the Assistant Director of Reunion Giving and Engagement noted a sizable spike in email engagement with open rates that are consistently north of 78 percent.**



#### Recipient Filters

---

**Online Gifts**

Filter for online gifts

---

**Events**

Filter for events

Select the event you'd like to filter on

2024 Reunion & Homecoming ▼

Do you want to include (only) or exclude the recipients meeting the below criteria?

Exclude

Include Only

Filter for those with specific RSVP status(es)

Select RSVP Status(es)

Attending ▼

---

Filter for those with specific check-in status(es)

---

Filter for those with specific ticket type(s)

---

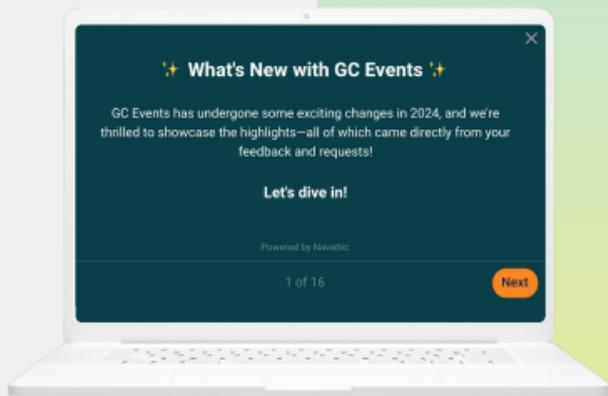
Filter for those with a specific activity

---

Filter for those with a specific number of guests

## Summary

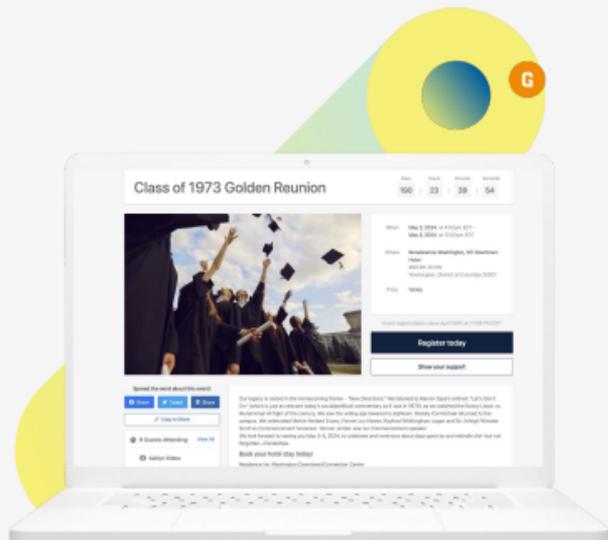
Today, hundreds of schools in the GiveCampus community are using GC Events to easily manage registration and ticketing, send targeted emails, solicit gifts, and generate reports without ever leaving the platform. If you're curious about workflows and want to get a peek under the hood, [take this self-guided tour](#) to see what's new and noteworthy on the platform.



## About GiveCampus

GiveCampus is the world's leading digital fundraising platform for education. Trusted by more than 1,300 colleges, universities, K–12 schools, and millions of donors, our mission is to advance the quality, the affordability, and the accessibility of education. We provide software, services, and expertise that help schools raise more money, from more people, at a fraction of the cost of other fundraising methods.

To see GiveCampus in action, please visit:  
[info.givecampus.com/schedule](https://info.givecampus.com/schedule)



 [info@givecampus.com](mailto:info@givecampus.com)

 [go.givecampus.com](https://go.givecampus.com)

