

Sul Ross State University Alumni  
Association

# Regional Chapter Handbook



# Sul Ross State University Alumni Association Regional Chapter HANDBOOK



## **Office of Alumni Relations**

## **Sul Ross State University Alumni Association**

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## Alumni Association Purpose

The Alumni Association's goal is to advance the rich, proud heritage of Sul Ross State University by nurturing life-long relationships with its alumni. We strive to keep alumni informed and connected to the University by providing them with regular news, social and professional networking activities, and opportunities for service.

## A Message from the Alumni Relations Director



Dear Chapter Volunteer,

Thank you for your willingness to fulfill a leadership role in an Alumni Association regional chapter. Regional chapters are especially important because they establish a presence for Sul Ross State University across the state and country. As alumni, we can influence the future of our Alma mater and continue to strengthen its reputation.

Sul Ross State University would not be what it is today without the support of its talented and generous alumni. We realize your time is valuable and the information contained in this handbook is intended to make your chapter activities easier to manage. As you move forward, please invite other alumni to assist with planning events and programs. This will help you, as well as get others involved in a meaningful way.

The Alumni Association is here to support your good work, so please keep in touch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Aida Luevanos'.

Aida Luevanos  
B.B.A. 2012

## Section I

# General Chapter Information

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The office of Alumni Relations thanks you for expressing interest in becoming more engaged with Sul Ross State University. This guide is meant to assist you in understanding alumni chapters, provide general guidelines for what events and programs are typically supported, and discuss resources that are available from the Alumni Association. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us at [alumni@sulross.edu](mailto:alumni@sulross.edu) or 432-837-8697.

## Regional Alumni Chapters — General Overview

Chapters provide Sul Ross alumni with opportunities to connect and network with other alumni wherever they live.

- Chapters permit alumni to connect both socially and professionally.
- Chapters inform alumni about happenings at the University.
- Chapters can provide an array of social, educational and career-oriented programs.
- Chapters represent SRSU and enhance its prestige on local, state and national levels.
- Chapters encourage SRSU volunteer opportunities that allow alumni to positively impact the University without returning to campus.
- Affinity Chapters may also serve as a common link for alumni who have an affiliation to a particular group or club at the University.

# Chapter Criteria

The Sul Ross Alumni Association has created a regional chapter program as a means for those alumni to stay connected and engaged with the University regardless of where they live. The office of Alumni Relations has established general guidelines to determine whether an area is likely able to support an alumni chapter.

If you represent a smaller area with an active group of Sul Ross alumni, you can make a strong case for recognition and support based on your commitment to meet most of these guidelines.

- The chapter should be formed to promote the interests of Sul Ross State University, its alumni and the Alumni Association.
- There should be at least 150 Sul Ross alumni within 60 miles of the chapter location.
- The chapter will organize at least one event/program per year.
- The chapter must be led by identified chapter leaders or a leadership committee.
- Chapter leaders must be alumni of Sul Ross State University. Some programs and events may be open to students, parents, friends, etc., but the chapter leaders must be alumni.
- The chapter should strive to develop programming that supports the mission of the University, and the Alumni Association, as well as adhere to the goal of engaging as many alumni as possible.



## Section II

# Starting and Organizing a Regional Chapter

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Considering how your chapter will be organized is an important first step, and the Alumni office can help you get started. An alumni chapter can be successful in many different ways, and identity and activities may vary across chapters. Ultimately, each chapter can make a difference in how alumni are connected and engaged with the University.

## Starting a Chapter

### Step One

- Please read this handbook thoroughly. It answers a good deal of frequently asked questions and contains helpful information as you consider your role as a chapter leader.
- Contact the Alumni Relations office for information on:
  - The number of alumni in your region/area.
  - Perspective and counsel on starting a chapter.
  - Considering an initial program or event.

### Step Two

- Locate a core group of passionate fellow alumni who might be willing to serve as chapter leaders. Consider a small brainstorming session with these key alumni to measure the interest in forming a chapter.
- Remember: one person should not do it all!

## Step Three

- Identify individuals who will likely be serving as chapter leaders. Usually at least two leaders are required. Larger areas should identify a committee to help lead the chapter.
- Plan a first event to announce the establishment of the chapter. This initial event may be a networking gathering or reception at a reasonable cost that will be used to recruit new alumni volunteers and to bring Sul Ross alumni together to connect with each other and the University. Some objectives of this first meeting may be to select chapter leaders, discuss a program/event strategy, brainstorm on how chapter activities can engage area alumni, etc.

## Step Four

- Notify the Alumni Relations office of actions taken at the first meeting and provide a list of the leaders and other attendees. Provide any relevant information, such as minutes, meeting notes or next steps.
- Request formal chapter recognition from the Alumni Relations office. The Alumni Relations Office will consult with the Alumni Association Board of Directors in regards to chapter approval.

## Chapter Leader/Committee Responsibilities

- Agree to be the alumni contact for your region. You can create a separate e-mail account for this purpose. Using a format similar to this (SRSUSanAntonioChapter@gmail.com) may be helpful.
- Agree to have your name and e-mail address posted on the Alumni Association webpage(s) for the Chapter.
- Establish a social media presence for your chapter. Set up a Facebook page to help others connect, and to enhance chapter effectiveness.
- Determine alumni events to be offered in the region and use proper planning in executing events and programs. The Alumni Affairs office can help; this handbook has forms and processes to help you plan effectively.
- Provide regular updates and event/program wrap-up information to the Alumni Relations office that may be emailed to regional alumni and included on the chapter website.
- Spread the word and encourage alumni in your area to attend the planned events.
- Encourage participation by other alumni to create a natural succession of leaders and participants as members join and leave the group.
- Help identify other chapter needs and work with Alumni Relations to address them.



# Services Provided by the Alumni Association to Regional Chapters

- Provide demographic data and specialized alumni rosters for the regional area. The alumni database can provide lists based on a number of variables. *Note:* The Alumni Office will continuously identify area alumni and encourage them to provide contact information directly to the chapter.
- Promote regional chapter activity through all alumni communications.
- Send News & Information on behalf of the Chapter: In most cases, e-mail messaging is preferred, but for unique or significant events, a printed and mailed piece can be provided. The Alumni Relations office can also assist in the design of e-news for the chapter.
- Assist with Chapter Webpages: The Sul Ross State University Alumni Association website serves as a repository for alumni information. Alumni Relations will assist chapters to establish their own webpages, jointly managed by chapter leaders and Alumni Relations.
- Provide a specialized logo: Alumni Relations will provide a chapter logo for use on your communications.
- Accept reservations and payments for chapter events/programs via an online registration system. Alumni Relations can also accept registrations/payments by phone and mail for the chapter's events. An Alumni Relations account will be specifically established for your chapter's event revenues.
- Send Alumni Relations office staff to chapter events, as needed and appropriate. Staff will also be available by phone to help with event ideas and planning.
- Provide supplies for events such as signage/banners, raffle items or giveaways, nametags, and printed materials.
- Provide financial support for approved events and programs.
  - The Office of Alumni Affairs is able to allocate limited funds for approved chapter events. Chapter Coordinators are asked, prior to the upcoming fiscal year, to estimate the number and cost of events for their respective chapter.
  - The Office of Alumni Relations may support up to two events per year for each chapter. Requests for funding must be received at least three months in advance.
  - As a general rule, the Alumni Association sponsors events designed for "friend-raising" rather than fundraising. As such, events are typically designed to break-even. Should any event raise money above the costs of the event, revenue will be returned to the Alumni Association for future use by the sponsoring Chapter. The Alumni Association is interested in making as many financial resources available to Chapters as possible.

# General & Financial Policies for Chapters

- Chapters must be approved by Alumni Relations and will be supported according to these policies and guidelines.
- Chapters must be largely volunteer-driven. The driving force for any chapter is a group of passionate alumni volunteers, although support and resources are available from the Alumni Association. If volunteer leaders are not promoting regular activity, support from the Alumni office may be withdrawn.
- The Office of Alumni Relations maintains and updates the alumni database and online community on behalf of the University. Any alumni information provided is the property of Sul Ross State University and may not be sold or used for any purpose other than official University business. General solicitation mailings to alumni are not permitted.
- Chapters are to support approved alumni events/activities, such as networking, recruiting, and in some cases fundraising on behalf of SRSU. Chapters that aim to support new or other causes must gain written approval from Alumni Relations.
- All chapter communications (e.g., event invitations, announcements, e-news, etc.) may be subject to approval by Alumni Relations. Facebook and other social networking sites that are used by alumni to advocate a chapter or event should maintain an acceptable level of professionalism.
- Chapters may not create and maintain their own websites. Chapters will be provided webpages, jointly maintained by chapter leadership and Alumni Relations.
- Sul Ross State University recognizes that alumni have a right to express their opinions in media communications. However, personal opinions should not give the impression that they are representing or otherwise making statements on behalf of the University or Alumni Association.
- Neither University funds nor information may be used or distributed to support or endorse political activities.
- Alumni may not speak on behalf of the Alumni Association without the consent of the director of alumni Relations and President of Alumni Association.
- Only designated and approved Sul Ross staff are authorized to sign contracts for chapter events.
- Chapter dues are not permitted. Chapters are not permitted to maintain financial accounts external to the University.
- Any ventures to raise funds for a specific purpose must be approved by the Alumni Relations Office.

# Requesting Financial Support for Chapter Activities

The office of Alumni Relations may allocate funds for approved alumni events. Requests for funding should be received in writing at least three months prior to a proposed event to allow time for budget approval, planning, printing, etc. Funding for chapter events and programs is limited. To request funds and begin the planning process for any event or program, please submit a completed Chapter event Request Form.

- Typical event costs include printing, postage/mailing, food expenses, venue costs/ticketing, and other miscellaneous event expenses. Funding support will be approved by the Alumni Relations on an individual basis.
- In most cases, chapters will be expected to charge alumni a nominal fee to attend events to offset expenses. Events should “break even” when possible. The Alumni Relations Office will set up online registration and payment sites for the Chapter.
- Only Sul Ross State University approved staff members are authorized to sign contracts prior to an event. Chapter leaders cannot sign a binding contract on behalf of the Alumni Association.
- Itemized receipts are required for reimbursement and as proof of payment of pre-approved event expenses.
- Chapter leaders are not expected to personally pay for any expenses related to a chapter event. However, pre-approved out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the chapter leaders will be reimbursed if proper receipts are submitted.
- The University tax-exempt, not-for-profit status only covers goods and services purchased in Texas.

## Section III

# Regional Chapter Activities



Hosting an event or special alumni program is a popular method of connecting alumni with each other and with the University. A successful event/program can enhance alumni engagement in a chapter by encouraging networking, volunteerism and social interaction.

## Chapter Event Planning

One of the most important components in hosting a successful event is personal outreach -- encouraging other alumni to help plan or to just attend. Feel free to phone or e-mail old acquaintances and classmates to get them involved. Talk to alumni to determine what kinds of events are desired or may be popular, or organize a committee to help with event planning. Remember that events are meant to be a method of engaging alumni in your area, a diverse group with varied interests. Please plan diverse programs to accommodate the needs of your audience.

Events should have a definite purpose and appeal to alumni. Planning should occur as far in advance as possible, typically eight weeks prior. You should also complete a **Chapter Event Request Form** (attached at the end of this section) to obtain approval from the Alumni office.

- **Date:** Select your event date well in advance. Your date must be approved by the Alumni Relations office to avoid conflicts with other events. Weekends and weekdays vary in success from area to area.
- **Time:** Weeknight events should allow commuters time to return home or should be early enough and in a central location to allow alumni to stop in before going home. Depending on the type of event, choosing between weekends (sports events, picnics) and weekdays (after-work networking events, lectures, etc.) will help you maximize attendance.
- **Venue:** The ability to choose an appealing and appropriate venue can singlehandedly ensure either success or failure. The venue could be a new place or a unique spot that people might not think to go on their own. It should be centrally located with ample parking.

- **Cost:** Admission costs should be as reasonable as possible. Price will affect attendance, because alumni who attend will be charged a nominal amount. In most cases, look for the event costs to offset the anticipated expenses. Requests for costs to be partially subsidized should be noted on the Chapter Event Request Form.
- **Mailing/E-mails/Advertising:** The Alumni Relations office will help prepare and mail invitations and correspondence. E-mail reminders, generated by the office, can be sent to target alumni before an event occurs. The Alumni Relations office can also post events on the Alumni Association website, social media sites, and other publications.
- **Supplies/Gifts:** The office will provide supplies that you may need for an event. This may include nametags, registration sheets, brochures, gifts for alumni, banners, and other event-related items.
- **Photographs:** The Alumni Association encourages leaders to take photographs at network events and submit the best pictures along with captions for publications and social media sites.

## Timeline for Event Execution

### Eight weeks prior to event date:

- Determine event plans and submit completed **Chapter Event Request Form**.
- Consider “Save the Date” message.

### Six weeks prior to event date:

- Venue, caterer, tickets, etc., are secured.
- Event is approved by the Alumni Relations office.
- Begin social media marketing/messaging.

### Four weeks prior to event date:

- Alumni receive invitations to event (e-mail/print).
- RSVP/payment module launched.

### Two weeks prior to event date:

- Full event audit/review with Alumni Relations. Check RSVPs, review contracts, volunteer/staff roles, etc.

### One week prior event date:

- RSVP Deadline
- Final review with Alumni Relations office, venue, volunteers.

**During the event:**

- Arrive 30-60 minutes early depending on needed set-up and preparation time. Meet staff members or other volunteers and review duties.
- Handle all registration and personally greet/welcome guests. Gather business cards at the door.
- Interact with guests and recruit new volunteers.
- Post real-time social media updates . . . and have fun!

**After the event:**

- Provide event notes, registration/sign-in sheets, pictures, etc. to the Alumni Relations office. Execute all planned follow-up.
- Post pictures and notifications to Facebook site.
- Use feedback from the recently completed event to start making plans for the next chapter activity.



# Program Examples

## **Networking Mixer**

One great way to kick off the start of a chapter is to host a reception at a local restaurant, pub or other venue to allow alumni from your area to meet up and network. At an event of this sort, alumni can interact informally. Events like this are great for recruiting new volunteers and leaders. Consider having a drawing to collect business cards, and provide this information to the Alumni Relations office.

## **Young Alumni Event**

Younger alumni tend to have specific ways of interacting and communicating, and also tend to have specific needs to consider. Events that feature business networking or professional development tend to be popular programs for younger alumni.

## **Receptions/Picnics**

If you live in an area that sends a significant number of students to Sul Ross, a picnic or hosted reception for new admits or freshmen and their parents may be a great idea. The students get an opportunity to meet some of their classmates and the parents have a chance to meet other families. Attending alumni also offer an honest and unique perspective that students and parents alike will appreciate.

## **University Speakers/Presenters or Notable Alumni**

The Alumni Relations office can arrange to have a speaker (administrator, dean, faculty member) from the University to present an update to your group on what is happening on campus, or on developments in your area. Alumni Relations can also help identify notable alumni in your area to be the focus for an event.

## **Athletics-Related events**

Hosting an event in conjunction with a Sul Ross athletics event is a great way to connect alumni in a fun, social, and Sully-themed environment.

## **Other Sporting events**

Hosting an event around a local sports outing can be a good way to bring alumni together for an activity the whole family can enjoy.

## **Museum, Theater and Family-friendly venues**

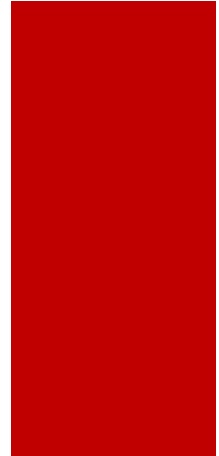
Special Events can attract interested, busy alumni who are challenged to find the time to make arrangements themselves. Gatherings following events encourage further interaction among alumni.

## APPENDICES

# Forms

## Contact Information

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## Chapter Event/Program Request Form

In order to ensure that the Alumni Office has adequate time to prepare the event details and funding options, it is recommended that eight weeks' notice be given on all event/program requests. Please note that decisions on proposed events/programs are subject to approval from the Alumni Relations office.

**Chapter:**

**Date:**

**Event Contacts/Chapter Leaders:**

**Event Name:**

**Event Type:**

**Possible Dates:**

**Event Time:**

**Possible Locations:**

**Estimated Attendance:**

### EVENT DESCRIPTION

#### Overview

#### Purpose / Goals / Target Audience

#### Theme

#### Key Alumni/Constituents involved (to include/invite/consult)

*Continued*

## **ANTICIPATED EXPENSES**

**Facility Rental/Deposit:**

**Equipment Rental:**

**Catering (Food and beverages):**

**Other:**

**TOTAL COSTS:**

## **ANTICIPATED REVENUES**

**Regular Admission Price:**

**Number of People Expected:**

**Other:**

**TOTAL REVENUES:**

<b>TOTAL EVENT COST – TOTAL EVENT REVENUE =</b>
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## **REQUESTED RESOURCES**

**E-mail invitations:**

**Mailed invitations:**

**Gifts/Giveaways:**

**Staffing:**

**Funds:**

**Other:**

An Alumni Relations staff member will work with you to review your request. Thank you!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Office of Alumni Relations & Sul Ross State University Alumni Association  
Box C-187 ~ Alpine, TX 79832

Phone: 432-837-8697

E-mail: [alumni@sulross.edu](mailto:alumni@sulross.edu)

Website: [www.sulross.edu](http://www.sulross.edu) (facebook, twitter, linked-in addresses to be added)

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