

# Engaging Alumni

Alumni represent a valuable asset for any graduate program. They serve as a great resource for helping students see themselves in different types of careers. Knowing where your graduates are employed and how they are using their graduate training in rehabilitation counseling provides evidence for the strength of your program.

While your institution's alumni association has many resources, can your program leverage some engagement tips and strategies to provide career resources for current students?

## Program Alumni Web Page

Consider adding a program alumni page to your departmental information. With the graduate's permission, this page could include the graduate's name and year of graduation. You could include the job title for their first and current jobs.

## Email Address

Collect a non-university or college email address from each student before they graduate.

## Employment Email Address

Ask students for their work email address at the time of graduation. Follow up again in six months to update this information.

## Suggestions for LinkedIn

- How does your institution stay in touch with alumni?
  - Are there ways your program can build on the institution's alumni outreach efforts?
  - Encourage your students to join LinkedIn, especially if your program and/or institution have a group.
- Tips for your students on creating a LinkedIn profile
  - **Visual**
    - ◆ Upload a great profile picture: Look professional; make sure it's a recent photo and that you take up about 60% of the area.
    - ◆ Add a background/banner photo: Stand out from the many that don't include a background. It should represent who you are. Not necessarily what you practice.

## ▪ **Content**

- ◆ Write a descriptive headline: Make it about you, keyword-rich, and not necessarily your job title.
- ◆ Build your summary: Write your story in a compelling way. Make sure it includes quantifiable facts and a series of situation, action, and result.
- ◆ Add relevant experience: Include both in-school and out-of-school skills.
- ◆ List education: Make sure to include all relevant degrees, certifications, and licenses.
- ◆ Include noteworthy volunteer experience: Round out who you really are.
- ◆ Select and feature about 5 relevant skills: You're looking for quality over quantity.
- ◆ Tout your services: Help others understand what you can provide; this will help in searches.

## ▪ **Activity**

- ◆ Grow your network: Search and connect with others.
- ◆ Endorse others and manage your endorsements: Showcase credibility and feature the endorsements that are most relevant to you.
- ◆ Request recommendations: Encourage personal testimonials.
- ◆ Feature thought-leadership: Utilize the publications section to link to content you've developed.
- ◆ Be active: Share relevant content with your network. Add comments to your shares.

## Networking

- Remind students to attend networking events throughout the academic year.
- Ask alumni to speak with current students about their careers (in person or using Skype or Zoom).
- Connect students with the alumni networks of people in the field.
- Based on feedback from alumni, create a collection of entry-level job descriptions.
- Partner with your institution's alumni association when you have guest speakers on campus (or making virtual visits).