

Alumni Association keeps grads involved

By Jeni Goevelinger
Freelance Reporter

Graduating seniors may look to the future as they leave the University, but Kathy Bedbury, associate executive director of the Alumni Association, assures them they will eventually look back.

"I graduated in 1986. I thought I'd never look back," Bedbury said. "You're gonna miss this place. There's no doubt about it."

Bedbury said about 10 percent of alumni join the association within the first year or two after graduation. "Our sole mission is to keep alumni connected to their alma mater," she said.

The Alumni Association was established in 1897 and has provided opportunities for alumni everywhere to remain involved with their alma mater for more than 100 years. Across the United States and around the world, more than 17,000 alumni get invitations to special campus events and discounts on local chapter activities.

The association has 11 domestic chapters and 14 international representatives. Whether alumni live in New York, Hawaii, Australia, Singapore or Eugene, there is a chapter for them.

Graduates this spring can join the Alumni Association at a discount rate. They can purchase a one-year membership for \$25 or a lifetime membership for half of the normal price of \$750 — \$375. However, the price of membership goes up if the graduate waits more than a year to become a member: \$30 for a one-year membership and \$750 for a lifetime membership. And they will increase yet even more as time passes.

Recent graduates are also the only people who get the alumni association license plate frame for free with their membership and have up to one year to join at a discount rate and receive the frame.

"There's plenty of opportunity to join," Bedbury said. "We send letters to all graduates and then a reminder a year later."

All dues go directly to the Alumni Association and the University.

The association uses the money, in part, to fund itself. It also helps students attend the University, as several chapters give scholarships to University students. This year, they gave more than \$13,000 in scholarships to incoming students.

The association also recognizes alumni by honoring outstanding members with four different awards each year: the Distinguished Alumnus Award, the Outstanding Young Alumnus Award, the Jeanne Johnson Alumni Service Awards and the Paul Olum Award.

Bedbury said the Alumni Association also plans a variety of activities for alumni in the fall, including Homecoming celebrations, reunions, fun runs, Family Weekend and golf tournaments.

For all University graduates — Alumni Association members or not — the Alumni Association provides GradMed, a temporary health insurance plan.

But membership has its privileges: any member is allowed to become a Costco Gold Star Member by presenting their Alumni Association membership card and paying \$40 a year. They can also use their membership card as a library card at any University library except the law library — a public borrower's card would normally cost \$30 for six months and \$50 for one year.

Members also receive discounts for Career Center services. And at Esslinger they receive a 30 percent discount for services.

Alumni members also receive The Alumni Insider, the association's newsletter, which is published five times a year. In every issue, an alumnus is featured as the "Duck on the Move." The newsletter also details campus events and highlights Duck sports.

Heather Cranor will graduate this June and has already joined the Alumni Association. "We put so much into this education and so few people get through," she said. "It's like a status symbol to say, 'Hey, I'm actually an alumnus.' It's a badge of pride to wear."



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