

Van Andel Institute Graduate School Alumni Association (VAIGSAA) Guidelines

Mission

The mission of the Van Andel Institute Graduate School Alumni Association (VAIGSAA) is to provide support and connections for our alumni, mentoring for current students, and continued interest in the mission and impact of Van Andel Institute (VAI). VAIGSAA promotes and fosters a long-term relationship with our alumni and creates greater awareness of the overall organization of the Institute. The association provides resources and support for community collaborations, recruitment efforts, perseverance of our current students, and potential for philanthropic support of the mission.

Guidelines

I. Membership

- a. The membership of VAIGSAA consists of the following:
 - i. Graduates of Van Andel Institute Graduate School (VAIGS) receiving Ph.D. or master's degrees
 - ii. Those who attended VAIGS, but did not complete a degree
- b. Potential members who choose not to be a part of VAIGSAA may withdraw by so indicating this to the Student Affairs Specialist.
- c. VAIGS retains the right to terminate the membership of alumni in the Alumni Association for conduct inconsistent with the values and well-being of the school.

II. Structure

VAIGSAA is coordinated by the Graduate School Student Affairs Specialist and a representative from the Institute's Development Department. They maintain contact with members of VAIGSAA, make them aware of events within VAIGS, and coordinate any connection between alumni and events/individuals.

III. Objectives

- a. To provide opportunities for our alumni to represent VAIGS as speakers at Van Andel Research Institute (VARI), other institutions, community and professional events.
- b. To allow alumni to act as mentors for current students.
- c. To create awareness of the Graduate School and its Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach.
- d. To create awareness of the environments graduate students work within.

- e. To encourage long term engagement of our alumni with the mission of VAI.

IV. Alumni Association Staff Support

- a. Maintain and update alumni information
- b. Establish and maintain an alumni website
- c. Produce and distribute alumni newsletter
- d. Establish and maintain communication between alumni and VAIGS staff and students.

V. Activities, Events & Programs

Alumni may be invited to participate in or to represent VARI and VAIGS at various events in Grand Rapids and around the country, including but not limited to:

- a. Career services events
- b. Professional scientific meetings
- c. Van Andel Institute related events
- d. One-on-one student contact
- e. New student recruitment events

VI. Fundraising

The stories of alumni success can be very motivating for potential supporters and donors to the Institute and Graduate School. Alumni may be occasionally invited to share their stories through means including the following:

- a. Publications including annual reports, Highlights of Hope newsletter, website blogs, or social media.
 - i. Testimonials
 - ii. Alumni updates and announcements
- b. Cultivation event opportunities:
 - i. Speaking opportunities for alumni at donor events
 - 1. Quarterly Lunch & Learn events for Board of Governors or JBoard
 - 2. JBoard summer member mixer
 - ii. Purple Community fundraisers (e.g., alumni team at the 5K, attend the Grand Rapids Griffins and Whitecaps Purple games)
 - iii. JBoard membership (invite alumni to become JBoard Ambassadors)

- VII. These guidelines were developed in July 2016 by the VAIGS Student Affairs Specialist (Nancy Schaperkotter) and the Van Andel Education Institute/VAIGS

Development Specialist (Teresa Reid) with input from the Graduate Student Association leadership council. The guidelines were approved with minor amendments by the VAIGS Graduate Program Committee on Oct. 11, 2016.