Parent Engagement: Overview of Practices

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1. Overview

Achievement First’s core values organizationally include investing in strong partnerships with our scholars’ parents. This does not stop when our students transition to college, a time when family support and our ability to leverage strong relationships with our alumni’s families becomes increasingly high stakes.

Parents can support the transition to college and can augmentour students’ capacity in successfully navigating the bureaucracies and sometimes opaque processes like registration and financial aid. The AF Alumni Program uses several basic strategies to better equip all alumni parents to support their students through to college graduation.

2. Goals

We have set reasonable and measurable goals to define the success of the AF Alumni Program, of our matriculation work specifically, which are reflected in the College and Alumni Report Card:

* At any point in time, 85% of AFAHS alumni are enrolled in college
* 75% of alumni graduate from college in six years
* 100% of alumni submit FAFSA on time each year
* 50% of parents or families of alumni engage in alumni related workshops, events and meetings with the alumni counselor

These are shared network-wide goals that the Alumni Program at each AF high school will work toward. Individual AF high schools may elect to set additional school-specific goals.

3. Key Messages & Mindsets

Every member of the alumni support team understands and brings the following mindsets to our work in providing tiered support to alumni:

* In order to best support our alumni to and through college, we will engage their parents or key decision-making family members at strategic times to build high levels of communication and collaboration that can better support college completion

4. Core Strategies

Alumni counselors at AF high schools share the following core strategies:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evening/breakfast pre-departure workshop (“Supporting Your Alumni in College”)** | All families will be invited to a kickoff event that is planned and hosted by the AF high school’s alumni counselor. The alumni counselor will present a wealth of important information and guidance at this event and will provide families with a checklist for action items they should monitor for completion by their students or complete themselves. |
| **FAFSA monitoring and support** | AF alumni counselors track submission of FAFSA and support families through the process in order to ensure that FAFSA is accurately and successfully submitted on time each year. This support includes conducting a FAFSA workshop for parents to help them complete FAFSA. |
| **Relationships** | AF alumni counselors build strategic relationships with decision-making family members of alumni. This positions the alumni support team well when we cannot reach a student directly and/or are working to influence a student to make a specific decision or to stay in college. The alumni counselor can leverage school-based staff at the high school to collect information about key decision-makers in our alumni’s families. |

5. Roles & Responsibilities

The table below illustrates how the alumni counselor will work with parents:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Owner** | Alumni Counselors |
| **Approves** | Network Director of Alumni Programs & Partnerships |
| **Participant(s)** | Parents and student, instructional and non-instructional staff at the high school who have worked closely with the students |
| **Informed** | Principal, College Counselor, Network Director of Alumni Programs & Partnerships, Dean of College |
| **Consulted** | Principal, College Counselor, Dean of College |

6. Calendar of Key Dates

The Alumni Counselor will need to determine dates for key family events at strategic times in the year:

* Parent Breakfast
* Alumni Family Night
* FAFSA Workshop