

Central European University Alumni Volunteer Engagement Strategy

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Background

Alumni volunteers make a substantial contribution to the life and future of CEU by donating their time and talent. In AY 2018-19, 257 alumni volunteers supported the university's recruitment efforts, served as local chapter leader/contact person or helped students' and alumni career development. Historically, close to 600 volunteers have donated their time and skills to CEU so far.

In addition to volunteering, another important way of engaging with the university is through donating to CEU fundraising campaigns. CEU has some of the most engaged, loyal alumni in the world. Since 2001 thousands have supported the future of their University via the Alumni Campaign. [The Alumni Donor Societies](#) were created to celebrate their leadership and pave the way to better recognize their contributions.

Realizing the need for similar stewardship and recognition of alumni volunteers, the Alumni Volunteer Engagement Strategy aims to optimize the engagement of alumni talent and skills in supporting the university priorities, including student recruitment, career support, community engagement, and fundraising.

The Alumni Relations Office (ARO) coordinates the alumni volunteer engagement efforts together with Career Services (CSO) and Student Recruitment (STRO) offices, and has designed the Alumni Volunteer Engagement Strategy in consultation with those offices. The strategy is aligned with institutional priorities, especially the OneCEU concept, which aims to strengthen community ties across the university.

The strategy aims to:

- Consolidate and streamline the alumni volunteer engagement by creating a **clear structure of roles and responsibilities**.
- Define a **framework for efficient recruitment, engagement, stewardship and recognition** of volunteers across CEU, assuring that alumni have a meaningful and rewarding experience supporting their alma mater.
- **Elevate the visibility and status of volunteers** within the CEU community by communicating more clearly the value of the time and talent that alumni volunteers contribute to CEU, as well as highlight the benefits of volunteering and the skills alumni can gain through the experience.

The Alumni Volunteer Engagement Strategy will be publically rolled out and shared with the CEU community in the summer of 2019, following consultations and focus group discussions during the Alumni Leadership Forum.

Volunteer Roles

There are plenty of ways to stay involved with CEU and its dynamic, global community. Alumni volunteers engage with CEU in three main areas: local alumni groups, career development, and student recruitment.

ALUMNI CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

CEU has more than 80 [alumni chapters](#) on five continents. Chapters are a great way to stay connected with classmates and friends through special events, reunions, recruitment activities and more. Chapters play a crucial role in engaging their local alumni through social meet-ups, fundraisers, recruitment activities, networking events and more.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Alumni volunteers are crucial in assisting the career development of CEU students and alumni. Volunteers make a real difference by sharing fellowship or job vacancies, developing internship opportunities, giving career talks or holding employer information sessions for students. Dozens of alumni from around the world helped the CEU Careers team online and in person last year alone.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Alumni are CEU's best ambassadors to help recruit talented students from around the world. Volunteers can get involved at any time, by speaking to prospective students, participating in social media campaigns, representing CEU at one of the many student recruitment fairs held around the world, or organizing Pre-Departure Orientations for incoming students.

Each available volunteer role will have a detailed job description that will be shared on the new alumni volunteering portal to be rolled out in the fall of 2019. Alumni can apply for existing volunteer opportunities [through the following form](#).

Volunteer Recognition

In order to facilitate volunteer recognition, a two-tier system that recognizes **levels and frequency of engagement** is introduced. This is meant to create clear and objective metrics of alumni engagement to properly recognize and reward volunteers.

Involvement	Career Development	Student Recruitment	Alumni Chapters
Level 1: Volunteer Pro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares at least 3 vacancies with the staff or on social media Organizes one career workshop or info-session, invited by CSO Participates as panel speaker invited by CSO Introduces own employer and career opportunities to students by organizing a presentation on- or off-campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers min. 2 external partners to CEU/AY Actively engages with prospective students in the UniBuddy project Participates in min. 1 social media campaign/AY Shares recruitment materials about CEU and its programs min. 3 times/AY 	<p>Active as a chapter contact throughout the AY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posts on social media at least 3 times/AY Addresses at least 3 queries from students or alumni/AY (Co)organizes one alumni gathering /AY
Level 2: Volunteer Champion	<p>Engages in at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly shares vacancies with the staff or on social media Organizes career workshops or info-sessions, invited by CSO Participates as panel speaker invited by CSO Introduces own employer and 	<p>Engages in at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in min. 1 education fair/AY Organizes min. 1 presentation in their home country/AY Hosts a PDO/AY 	<p>Active as a chapter leader throughout the AY (at least two of the following):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly engages on social media Organizes at least two alumni gatherings/AY Solicits donations for

	<p>career opportunities to students by organizing a presentation on- or off-campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages as career mentor, actively assisting at least one student or fellow alum • Connects CSO with own employer to partner on CEU-specific or CEU-preferred internship or job opportunities 		<p>CEU in-person or online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps select Alumni Scholarship Recipients if applicable • Attends Alumni Leadership Forum
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A **Volunteer Pro** fulfills at least one Level 1 criterion for one team. A **Volunteer Champion** fulfills either at least two Level 2 criteria for one team or multiple criteria across teams. For example, an active chapter contact who is also a career volunteer at any level is eligible to become a Volunteer Champion for that academic year.

To maintain a level status, a volunteer has to remain active and fulfill the criteria for that particular level during an academic year. Existing volunteers will be reviewed and categorized retroactively, based on their activity within the current academic year. Volunteer Champions who no longer fulfill the criteria will get a one-year grace period.

Tracking and Recording Volunteer Engagement

CEU staff will be responsible for accurately and timely recording all volunteer engagement.

Realizing that very often volunteering happens organically, without involvement of CEU staff, volunteers are encouraged to come forward and share such instances with CEU.

Outreach & Recruitment

Alumni volunteering opportunities are promoted through the following channels:

- **Volunteer Hub on the Alumni Relations website** – all available volunteering opportunities, detailed volunteer Terms of References with links to application forms and other resources
- **Recruitment, Careers websites** – specific calls for recruitment/careers support opportunities.
- **E-News** – regular calls for volunteers, sharing specific volunteering opportunities.
- **Social media** - main and local FB groups, LI, Twitter.
- **Online info sessions** – host online info sessions twice a year, synchronized with E-News call for volunteers.
- **Events** – use events to promote volunteering and recruit volunteers.
- **Volunteer testimonials** – video testimonials from existing volunteers.
- **Personal contacts** – reach out to alumni who have shown interest in volunteering.

Special emphasis is put on engaging former Alumni Scholarship Recipients (ASR) in volunteering. ASRs are invited to special Alumni Leadership Forum (ALF) sessions where they can meet current volunteers and learn more about their involvement.

Alumni volunteer opportunities are also promoted at the ARO info table during graduation week, with a possibility for graduates to sign up for certain roles.

Stewardship & Recognition

The Alumni Leadership Forum is the main annual stewardship event which brings volunteers together on CEU campus for two days of workshops and training sessions. The program has been expanded in 2017, with more interactive elements (e.g. panels) and encouraged active participation of various stakeholders, including alumni, ASRs and relevant staff.

Alumni volunteers not only benefit directly through their personal engagement, but also receive the following perks and recognitions.

All volunteers receive:

- Volunteer E-Badges, updated annually and available for all levels of engagement
- Honor Rolls listing on the Alumni Relations, Career Services and Student Recruitment websites

Volunteer Pros receive:

- 'Volunteer Spotlight' article on Alumni Relations website
- Invites to exclusive CEU and CEU-related events
- Commemorative certification for volunteer service
- CEU-branded or promotional items for speakers at career events

Volunteer Champions receive:

- Ticket discounts for Alumni Reunion Gala
- President's Reception invites
- Alumni Leadership Forum invites, public recognition
- CEU Alumni Impact Awards shortlisting
- LinkedIn recommendations
- Access to select workshops, training

Promoting Volunteering, Strengthening the Community

A lot of CEU alumni are involved with the work of NGOs and charities on community projects. To capitalize on that and promote volunteering CEU will introduce a **Global Day of Volunteering**, a series of activities happening simultaneously around the globe in which local alumni chapters choose a community project to support. This will serve multiple purposes. Firstly, it is meant to bring together the chapter around a good cause, give visibility to CEU alumni and promote volunteer spirit. Furthermore, the event can be used as a recruitment tool, inviting prospective students to join and experience firsthand the CEU community spirit.

To better promote the culture and understanding of volunteering among CEU alumni, the Global Day of Volunteering will also be used as a platform to educate and raise awareness about volunteering. Many alumni do not realize or recognize their engagement with CEU as

volunteering, and ARO and relevant teams will strive to create resources and conversations around that.

The Role of CEU

ARO has the overall responsibility for alumni volunteer engagement but works closely with appointed alumni volunteer liaison from Recruitment and Careers on specific program elements. Alumni volunteer support includes:

- General CEU Alumni Volunteers Orientation for new recruits (recorded webinar available online)
- Area specific trainings (local chapters, recruitment, careers) provided by relevant teams
- Alumni Leadership Forum – series of trainings, including for ASRs

Resources

- Alumni Volunteer Toolkit (coming soon)
- [Alumni Volunteer Hub](#) – a dedicated web page for all alumni volunteer resources