



NEAT Grant Project

2015-2016

Online Networking Programs

Drew Bormann

Program Intern

Table of Contents

Position Description	2
Online Networking is the Future	2
Virtual Platform Description	3
Outline for Process and Implementation	5
Anticipated Timeline	6
Online Networking Event Process Breakdown	7
Events Timeline, Layout, and Statistics	10
Marketing Plan	11
Program Budget	22
Program Conclusion	23

Position Description

As a NEAT Grant Intern, I worked with the K-State Alumni Association to establish a greater presence in virtual alumni engagement through the launch of an online networking program. The goal of the online networking program is to provide networking opportunities for our alumni through a virtual platform. We were seeking a product that could be customized for various audiences and user friendly for our alumni.

To accomplish this goal, I assisted in necessary research, gave feedback on strategic planning, spear-headed implementation and platform design, and evaluated the events. I conducted research on other University alumni programs that used the same virtual platform by gathering design suggestions, event ideas and information to start building our event promotional timeline. The strategic planning involved setting dates for various events, planning the promotional timeline and working with the necessary departments for each event. In platform design and implementation, I created the content to be displayed on the virtual platform as well as work with the communications department on marketing. After each event was held, there was a debrief discussion and evaluation of the event and what things we could improve upon for the next event.

Online Networking is the Future

The desire for an online networking program at K-State was brought to light through a desire for social media engagement. We're aware that the best method to keep young alumni engaged is by virtual connections including social media, e-mail and the Alumni Association web site. The Association had the desire to engage our alumni virtually and also help them make meaningful connections with one another. We heard of other Universities trying similar programs and wanted to implement one at K-State. Online networking allows individuals to log into the platform and take part in an event from wherever they are and on any compatible device, to network with a fellow alumnus.

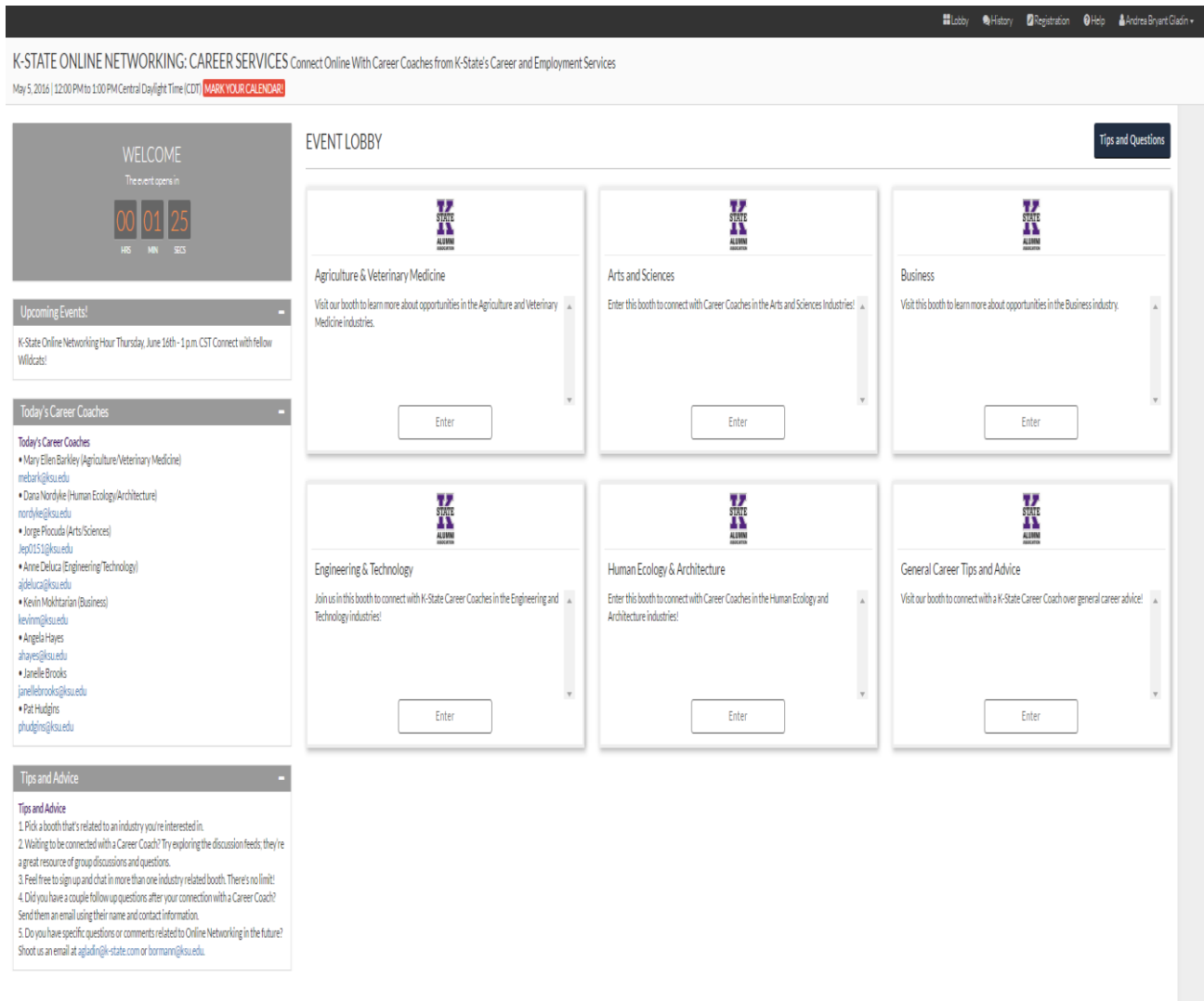
Virtual Platform Description

While searching for a virtual platform provider, we wanted the company to have a well-established client base and reputable success stories from those that have used their program. For these reasons, we decided to use a product of the company Brazen Careerist. Being a company with ample experience and a large number of satisfied clients, we felt comfortable hiring them as our virtual platform provider. Brazen's product was founded as an alumni advancement tool for Universities, making it the ideal virtual platform for K-State. The virtual platform functions as an online forum where participants can be connected in a variety of ways.

A main attribute of Brazen is that participants can be either openly or strategically paired with one other, paired with a pre-established representative, or simply participate in the open discussion feed. In an open style networking event, participants simply get the chance to network with one other in topic specific booths. For example, those that want to talk about "K-State Sports" could click on the "K-State Sports" booth to be connected with individuals to talk about the topic. In a mixed networking style event, participants would only be paired with a representative, not with one other. In this way, you can have two different groups of participants chatting with each other and still ensure that only group A participants will be paired with group B participants. For example, when holding an event between alumni and students, you can ensure each group of people will only be paired with the other group.

Other key features we liked about Brazen were its flexibility and innovation. We found the platform easy to customize for each event. We had control over the logos, photos, content, structure, style, and most everything that you imagine about the event. These options made the platform easy to personalize and capable of branding our new program. Brazen also was very open to suggestions and feedback, while they were continually trying to improve their product. A few months after we began using their product, they came out with a total platform update, making it more direct for us to customize and manipulate.

Below is a screen shot of the lobby of one of our online events. This is the standard layout for all types of events. There can be up to six different booths that participants have the options of joining. Brazen also provides multiple opportunities to display our own information, as seen in the content blocks on the left side of the page. By using a platform that is simple to use and integrating it with customizable capabilities, we've been very satisfied with how the Brazen platform has worked for our online networking events.



Outline for Process and Implementation

Through the NEAT Grant Program, the K-State Alumni Association hired me as a student intern to assist with the necessary research, planning, implementation, and evaluation steps to launch a virtual networking program. These steps were implemented in the following phases:

Phase 1

1. Create criteria for evaluating virtual networking platforms in terms of compatibility with the needs of our alumni population.
2. Research various platforms and meet with representatives to view demos and construct a list of pros and cons for each platform.
3. Choose a platform.
4. Research ways to use the platform the most effectively for our alumni. For example, decide the best ways for networking to be broken down into constituent groups by industry, geographic area, career phase, etc.
5. Visit with other Alumni Associations that are using virtual networking to discuss and benchmark best practices.

Phase 2

1. Receive training from full time staff and virtual networking platform's account manager.
2. Duties before, during, and after each event.

Before the event:

- a. Format the Alumni Association landing page by adding images and logo.
- b. Add images to the lobby and booths
- c. Add descriptions to each booth
- d. Add social media links
- e. Review registrations
- f. Provide support for those needing help with registration
- g. Cross check registration to make sure our registrants were members of the Alumni Association.

During the event:

- a. Provide support for those needing help logging in or using the tools.
- b. Monitor event report to look for participation rates and distribution across booths.

After the event:

- a. Track participants, connections made, etc.
- b. Collect and distribute feedback after each event.
- c. Provide recommendations to the Alumni Association management team, based on observations of each event.

Timeline

September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research other Alumni Associations and Universities to see what online events/programs they are currently offering.
Late September/October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train on Brazen’s platform and learn best practices.• Work with Alumni Association staff to integrate the online networking events into existing programs.• Set a schedule and marketing plan for online events to be held during the fiscal year 2015-2016.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up and begin promoting first online networking event.
Early November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold first online networking event.• Evaluate event after completion.

November - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue planning, promoting, holding and evaluating events (once per month at set date/time). • Hold at least 4-5 events for Association audiences before utilizing software for outside groups.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a final report for NEAT that summarizes the process of establishing the online networking program as well as the direction and impact for the future.

Online Networking Event Process Breakdown

The Online Networking program is offered as an Alumni Association member benefit and all participants must be active members of the Association. In this way, we’ve been able to provide a benefit for our current members and even attracted twenty-one new members to join the Association in order to take part in online events.

Since November we have created, implemented, and held eight online networking events. We’ve tried a variety of different event styles as well as targeted various groups of constituents including alumni, students and our international community. With each event, the layout of our platform and our marketing strategies varied based on our target audience.

1. General Online Networking Hours

We have created and held four General Online Networking Hours since we started the program. These events were open to all K-State alumni that are active members of the Association. We marketed them to both members and non-members through email and newsletters as well as social media and the Alumni Association web site.

The intent of these events is to connect our alumni to one other, and we grouped participants in booths based on profession. The booths were organized as follows: business, healthcare, engineering/technology, etc. We felt that similar professions would allow our alumni to easily connect to each other. In addition to having five industry specific booths in these events, we also had one booth that was labeled

“Wildcat Open Topic”. In this booth, alumni could connect over non-industry related ideas and topics. Initially we had six booths per event, yet over time we decreased the number of booths due to a decrease in event participation.

2. Student Alumni Board / Board of Directors Networking Event

In January we held an event that connected the current Student Alumni Board members with current members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Both of these groups have a strong connection with the Alumni Association and are all passionate K-State Wildcats. During this event we used a mixed networking layout, so we could ensure participants would only be paired with an individual from the opposite group. This event was held not long before a planned joint ice cream social, so it allowed both groups of participants to make connections online. Then they could follow up in person at the social. We kept the event simple with only booth to ensure that participants were focused on making connections.

3. Geographic Specific Online Networking Event

During March we created and held a geographic specific online networking event for the state of Colorado. The intent of this event was to connect our alumni in Colorado with one another as well as to connect alumni interested in working or living in Colorado with an individual from that state. We thought it would be best to deviate from industry specific booths and plan more general connection topics such as entertainment, housing, career and how to get involved with K-State. We wanted our alumni to connect over topics of interest.

4. International Online Networking Event

In April K-State held an International Week to recognize the many cultures that make up the K-State family around the world. We thought this would be an opportunity to offer our students and international alumni. We have a dedicated group of alumni in Australia that have been wanting to get more involved with the Association, so we asked them to serve as representatives (booth leaders) for this event. We targeted students that were interested in learning more about international

careers, travel and living abroad. We utilized a mixed networking platform for this event, ensuring that only students would be paired with our international alumni. The booths were centered around central international topics such as international careers, international travel and international living. Through close coordination with the Associate Director of Diversity Programs at the Alumni Association, we were able to create and hold the event for our students and alumni.

5. Career Services Online Networking Event

In May we coordinated a Career Services Online Networking event that was solely centered on the discussion of career opportunities and help and advice in various industries. For this event, we coordinated with the Assistant Director of Alumni Career Services at the Alumni Association and recruited eight career coaches to run specific industry related booths in the networking event. These booths included business, engineering/technology, agriculture/veterinary science, arts/science, human ecology/architecture and a general tips and advice booth. We felt that these topics are of most interest to our participants. Due to the larger amount of planning and staff necessary for this event, we wanted to ensure we were reaching as many people as possible. For this reason we offered the event opportunity to both students and alumni.

Those are the five different types of events and their layouts that we recreated, implemented, and held during the 2015-2016 school year. We tried to use the Brazen platform in a variety of ways, and each event allowed us to learn new and better ways to hold our next one.

Events Timeline, Layout, and Statistics

Date Held	Name	Event Layout	Statistics
11/18/2015	<i>General Networking Hour</i>	Open Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91 Registered • 40 <u>Attended</u>
12/16/2015	<i>General Networking Hour</i>	Open Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 Registered • 21 <u>Attended</u>

01/18/2016	<i>SAB & Board of Directors Networking Hour</i>	Mixed Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 Registered • 25 <u>Attended</u>
03/16/2016	<i>General Networking Hour</i>	Open Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 Registered • 20 <u>Attended</u>
03/22/2016	<i>Colorado Specific General Networking</i>	Open Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Registered • 12 <u>Attended</u>
04/05/2016	<i>International Networking Hour</i>	Mixed Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 Registered • 10 <u>Attended</u>
05/05/2016	<i>Career Services</i>	Mixed Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 Registered • 36 <u>Attended</u>
6/16/2016	<i>General Networking Hour</i>	Open Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 Registered • 18 <u>Attended</u>

Each event that was held had a specific purpose and was unique in its own way. Although we held multiple general networking events, we gathered a list of ideas of how we could improve from a previous event and made changes accordingly. Often times the most flexible aspect of the online networking events were the booth structures. Depending on the target audience and what we wanted them to gain from their experience, we tried to provide the best opportunity for that connection. While there are many possibilities to offer other types of events, we held these particular events because we thought they would be most useful and helpful to our alumni and students.

Marketing Plans

Online networking can be simple in theory, yet it is relatively complicated to explain to users. This presents the challenge of how to market the program to our participants, as well as communicate how the Brazen program works. Brazen was great about providing product descriptive material that we could add to our promotions, including how to register for the event, how to sign-in and other important details. When marketing the online networking events, we tried to employ various and diverse

channels of communication in order to reach as many people as possible. During the year, we found it increasingly difficult to grow our participation and registration numbers so we continually sought new and better channels to reach our alumni.

In an effort to make it easier to explain how online networking works, we created a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ's). We displayed this page on the Alumni Association web site and provided it as a resource to many questions. Please see below for a list of the FAQ's.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How do I sign up for the event?
 - Visit www.k-state.com/onlinenetworking for the link to sign up for the first event.
2. Do I need a LinkedIn account to participate?
 - No, it is not necessary for you to have a LinkedIn account to participate. Registering with a LinkedIn account allows you to consolidate your username and password, making it easier to remember your credentials and allowing you to sync your new profile with your LinkedIn profile.
3. How do I chat with someone?
 - In order to chat you must set your global event status to "Available", enter a booth and click the green chat button. Once you click the green chat button, you will be placed in line to chat. When another participant becomes available, a chat invitation will appear. When both participants accept, a one on one chat will automatically begin.
4. What do I do when I connect/chat with someone?
 - Start chatting right away! Introduce yourself, then ask some conversation starters such as:
 - What did you study at K-State?
 - What do you do professionally?
 - What are you looking to provide or gain from this event?
 - Can I ask for your advice on _____?
 - What's your favorite memory on campus?
 - If you could do one thing differently in your career, what would it be?
 - What's the best piece of advice you received during your college career?
5. Can I choose who I chat with?

- Chats are paired randomly based on booths. During the networking event, click on the booths that you want to network in and wait to be paired with another individual from one of those booths. You can have up to two chats going at one time.
6. Can I choose how many people I can chat with?
 - Once you enter your first chat, you can set your preferences for simultaneous chats on the left hand side of the chat screen. If you decide to opt for simultaneous chats, you will automatically be paired with the next available individual.
 7. Can I extend my chat time?
 - The chat times will have a firm limit of 8-10 minutes depending on the event. After the time has expired you will begin a new chat or placed in the event lobby to wait until another participant is available.
 8. Can other people see my transcripts?
 - After you have completed the event, you will have the option to go back and view your chatting transcripts with each individual. These transcripts will be private between you and the other participant, and you will be able to access them for up to 6 months following the online event.
 9. When will the next event be held?
 - Stayed tuned into your email and www.k-state.com/onlinenetworking for information about future events.
 10. How can I share my opinion about the event?
 - We would love to hear your feedback about the event. You will receive a short survey over e-mail after the event. You can also e-mail AGladin@K-State.com if you have any further comments or questions.

During the year we took an opportunity to update and reformat our promotional materials. Branding is an important part of any alumni program, and we wanted to establish online networking with a good brand from the very beginning. Promotions and branding were found to be the best methods to increase attendance and participation rates. Below is a summary of a promotional timeline as well as marketing examples that we used for our events. It provides details on which communication channel was used and how successful it was in reaching participants. As you'll see, we used multiple and various forms of outreach for each event, depending on the target audience and the intent of the event.

Event 1 (11/18/2015) General Networking Hour

Member E-mail

- *10/21/2015 – (4 weeks out)*
 - 33,707 e-mails sent
 - 11,246 e-mails opened
 - 536 e-mails bounced
 - 54 unsubscribed
 - 79 clicked on the online networking link

Since we started the online networking program, we've tried to constantly improve our emails. Here is an example of an e-mail we sent to promote a General Networking Hour. This email is catered towards a member, and a different variation of the e-mail went to nonmembers. The goal of this email is to give the reader the necessary information in the least amount of words possible. We wanted to keep it brief and interesting.



K-State Online Networking 1-2 p.m. CDT Thursday, June 16

Dear Nathan,

Another opportunity to make K-State connections is just around the corner! The next online networking event will be 1-2 p.m. (CDT) Thursday, June 16.

These online events are open exclusively to K-State Alumni Association members, whether you're looking for a job, changing careers or just want to expand your professional network. Find out how Wildcats can help you. Even one connection can make a difference. Don't miss out!

- Sign in from wherever you are and from your preferred device
- Speed network with fellow K-State alumni and friends
- Chats are typed and last 8-10 minutes
- Industry-specific booths (chat rooms)

REGISTER NOW
1-2 P.M. CDT THURSDAY, JUNE 16

How do online networking events work?

- Register: Create your account and fill out the event registration form. You'll receive a confirmation email from our partner Brazen.
- Join us: On the event date and time, login and join the live session from anywhere!
- Chat: You'll be matched with other attendees for one-on-one, timed, typed chats. No camera or microphone is necessary.
- Follow-up: All connections made during the event are saved in your account so you can easily follow up and build your network.



Non Member E-mail

- *10/29/2015 – (3 weeks out)*
 - 61,454 e-mails sent
 - 10,770 e-mails opened
 - 2,602 bounced
 - 301 unsubscribed
 - 20 clicked on the online networking link

Alumni Association Facebook Page Posts

- *11/09/2015 – (9 days out)*
 - 10:10 am
 - 5 likes
- *11/11/2015 – (1 week out)*
 - 2:59 pm
 - 18 likes
- *11/15/2015 – (3 days out)*
 - 10:00 am
 - 11 likes
- *11/18/2015 (Day of event)*
 - 10:00 am
 - 2 likes

Here is an example of a standard online networking Facebook promotion. We posted this type of graphic on a regular basis.

The graphic is a purple rectangular banner. In the top left corner is the K-State Alumni Association logo, which includes a stylized 'K' and 'S' and the text 'ALUMNI ASSOCIATION YOUR LINK FOR LIFE'. To the right of the logo is the hashtag '#MemberMonday' in white. Below the logo and hashtag is a row of four small square images showing people working on laptops. The main text in the center is 'K-State Online Networking Career Services' in white, with 'Career Services' in a larger, bold font. Below this is the text 'Noon-1 p.m. CST Thursday, May 5'. At the bottom of the banner, there is a white text box with the text 'Get advice from K-State career experts during our next online networking event.'

Alumni Association Twitter Page Posts

- *10/22/2015 – (4 weeks out)*
 - 5:00 pm
 - 4 likes
- *10/28/2015 – (3 weeks out)*
 - 8:00 am
 - 2 retweets, 2 likes
- *11/03/2015 – (2 weeks out)*
 - 10:00 am
 - 1 retweet, 2 likes
- *11/09/2015 – (9 days out)*
 - 10:00 am
- *11/12/2015 – (6 days out)*
 - 6:00 am
 - 2 retweets, 3 likes
- *11/15/2015 (3 days out)*
 - 10:00 am
 - 1 like
- *11/18/2015 – (day of event)*
 - 6:16 am
 - 1 retweet

November @ K-State (Monthly e-newsletter)

- Article
 - 20 clicks through
- Ad
 - 61 clicks through

Alumni Association Website

LinkedIn Posts

- Timeline Post #1
 - 3 likes
 - 1 comment
- Timeline Post #2
 - 4 likes
- Timeline Post #3
 - 0 likes

Event 2 (12/16/2015) General Networking Hour

E-mail sent to individuals that opened the e-mail promoting the 1st online networking event

- 12/11/2015 – (5 days out)
 - 5,872 e-mails sent
 - 4,196 e-mails opened
 - 9 e-mails bounced
 - 19 unsubscribed
 - 44 clicked on the online networking link

E-mail sent to individuals that participated in the first online networking event

- 12/11/2015 – (5 days out)
 - 29 e-mails sent
 - 17 e-mails opened
 - 0 e-mails bounced
 - 1 unsubscribed
 - 9 clicked on the online networking link

E-mail sent to individuals that registered for the first event but didn't participate

- 12/11/2015 – (5 days out)
 - 25 e-mails sent
 - 12 e-mails opened
 - 0 e-mails bounced
 - 0 unsubscribed
 - 1 Clicked on the online networking link

Alumni Association Facebook Posts

- None

Alumni Association Twitter Posts

- 12/03/2015 – (13 days out)
 - 2:52 PM
 - 3 Retweets
 - 1 Like
- 12/10/2015 – (6 days out)
 - 10:00 AM

- 12/14/2015 – (2 days out)
 - 9:19 AM
 - 1 Retweet
 - 1 Like

LinkedIn Posts

- Timeline Advertisement #1
- Timeline Advertisement #2

Event 3 (1/20/16) General Networking Hour

E-mail sent to individuals that opened a previous online networking e-mail

- 1/07/16 – (13 days out)
 - 5,824 e-mails sent
 - 4,343 e-mails opened
 - 12 e-mails bounced
 - 16 unsubscribes
 - 24 clicked through to the online networking link

E-mail sent to individuals that registered for the December online networking event

- 1/07/16 – (13 days out)
 - 49 e-mails sent
 - 31 e-mails opened
 - 0 e-mails bounced
 - 0 unsubscribes
 - 3 clicked on the online networking link

Alumni Association Facebook Posts

- 01/08/2016 – (12 days out)
 - 10:00 AM
 - 8 Likes
- 01/14/2016 – (6 days out)
 - 5:00 PM
 - 8 Likes

Alumni Association Twitter Posts

- 01/08/2016 – (12 days out)
 - 10:00 AM
- 01/11/2016 – (9 days out)

- 5:00 PM
- 1/13/2016 – (7 days out)
 - 5:00 PM
 - 3 retweets
 - 1 like

January @K-State (Monthly E-Newsletter)

- Advertisement
 - 56 Clicks

LinkedIn Posts

- Timeline Advertisement #1 (2 weeks out)
 - 1 like

Event 4 (3/16/2016) General Networking Hour

E-mail sent to Members

- 3/05/16 (11 days out)
 - 27,580 e-mails sent
 - 7,775 e-mails opened
 - 15 unsubscribed

E-mail sent to Non-Members

- 3/05/16 (11 days out)
 - 57994 e-mails sent
 - 6186 e-mails opened
 - 75 unsubscribed
 - 9 clicked through to the online networking link

E-mail sent to previous online networking event participants

- 3/04/16 (12 days out)
 - 52 e-mails sent
 - 29 e-mails opened
 - 0 unsubscribed
 - 1 clicked through to the online networking link

Reminder E-mail sent to Members

- 3/11/16 (5 days out)
 - 25008 e-mails sent
 - 6336 e-mails opened

- 21 unsubscribed
- 41 clicked through to online networking link

Alumni Association Facebook Posts

- Post 1 (03/04/16) – 12 Days out
 - 7 Likes
- Post 2 (03/10/16) – 6 Days out
 - 3 Likes
 - 1 Share

Alumni Association Twitter Posts

- Post 1 (03/9/16) – 7 Days out
 - 2 Favorites
 - 3 Retweets
- Post 2 (03/13/16) – 3 Days out
 - 2 Favorites
 - 2 Retweets
- Post 3 (03/14/16) – 2 Days out

Cat Scoop promotion (Regional specific weekly e-newsletter)

- Paragraph in the Cat Scoop that went to Dallas/Fort Worth area alumni.

Event 5 (3/22/2016) Colorado Specific

E-mail sent to members living in Colorado

- 3/09/2016 (13 days out)
 - 1,142 e-mails sent
 - 429 e-mails opened
 - 9 e-mails bounced
 - 0 unsubscribed
 - 6 clicked through to the online networking link

E-mail sent to nonmembers living in Colorado

- 03/09/2016 (13 days out)
 - 2564 e-mails sent
 - 504 e-mails opened
 - 47 e-mails bounced
 - 8 unsubscribed
 - 3 clicked through to the online networking link

Alumni Association Facebook Posts

- 0 posts specific to this event

Alumni Association Twitter Posts

- 0 posts specific to this event

K-State Web site

- Listed under the “Upcoming Events” section of the Online Networking web page.

Event 6 (04/05/16) Australia and Student Networking

E-mail 1 sent to K-State alumni members in Australia

- 3/18/16 (18 Days out)
 - 48 e-mails sent
 - 5 e-mails opened
 - 4 e-mails bounced
 - 4 clicked through to the online networking Link

Email 2 sent to K-State Alumni Members in Australia REMINDER

- 3/29/16 (7 Days out)
 - 50 e-mails sent
 - 6 e-mails opened
 - 5 e-mails bounced
 - 1 clicked through to the online networking link

Program Budget

In addition to purchasing the online networking platform Brazen, the only costs for the online networking program have been the wages paid to the intern (162.5 hours at \$8 per hour) and a small expense to print 500 promotional fliers.

Wages Paid for NEAT Grant Intern	\$1300
Promotional Flyer Printing	\$72.10
TOTAL	\$1372.10

The below flyer was designed and printed to hand out at alumni events across the state and nation.

NEW!

**K-STATE
ONLINE NETWORKING**

*Network with fellow K-Staters and
make new contacts - all online!*

... How it works ...

- Chat from anywhere
- Network with fellow K-Staters
- Simple, text-based chats
- Chat transcript included
- An hour or less - it's up to you!
- Make several new connections quickly
- FREE and exclusive to members of the K-State Alumni Association

For more details or to sign up, visit
www.K-State.com/OnlineNetworking

K STATE **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**
YOUR LINK FOR LIFE

Program Conclusion

Online networking has proved to be a very versatile and valuable tool that we can offer to our alumni. We've held multiple different types of events including general networking, geographic specific, international focused and career services. Each event offered something new for our participants and we attempted to cater our events toward various audiences. We gauged our success on the number of participants as well as the post event evaluations. According to Brazen, the University bench-mark for schools our size is an attendance rate of 52%-55%. During the total of 7 events held, the average was 57%. In addition, we had 191 total attendees with over 266 conversations. With that in mind, some events were more successful than others.

General Networking Hour events started out strong, yet seemed to decrease in numbers with each event we offered. To combat this, we tried new promotional materials and focused on fine-tuning our platform and marketing plan. In addition, we gradually cut down on the number of booths available to consolidate participants in fewer locations. Our first general online networking had six booths, while our most recent general networking events had four. This ensured that participants were getting more conversations and connections out of the event. Along with minimizing our booth numbers, we activated Brazen multi-chat features that allowed participants to chat with two people at once. This helped ease our low numbers and added more value to the general networking events.

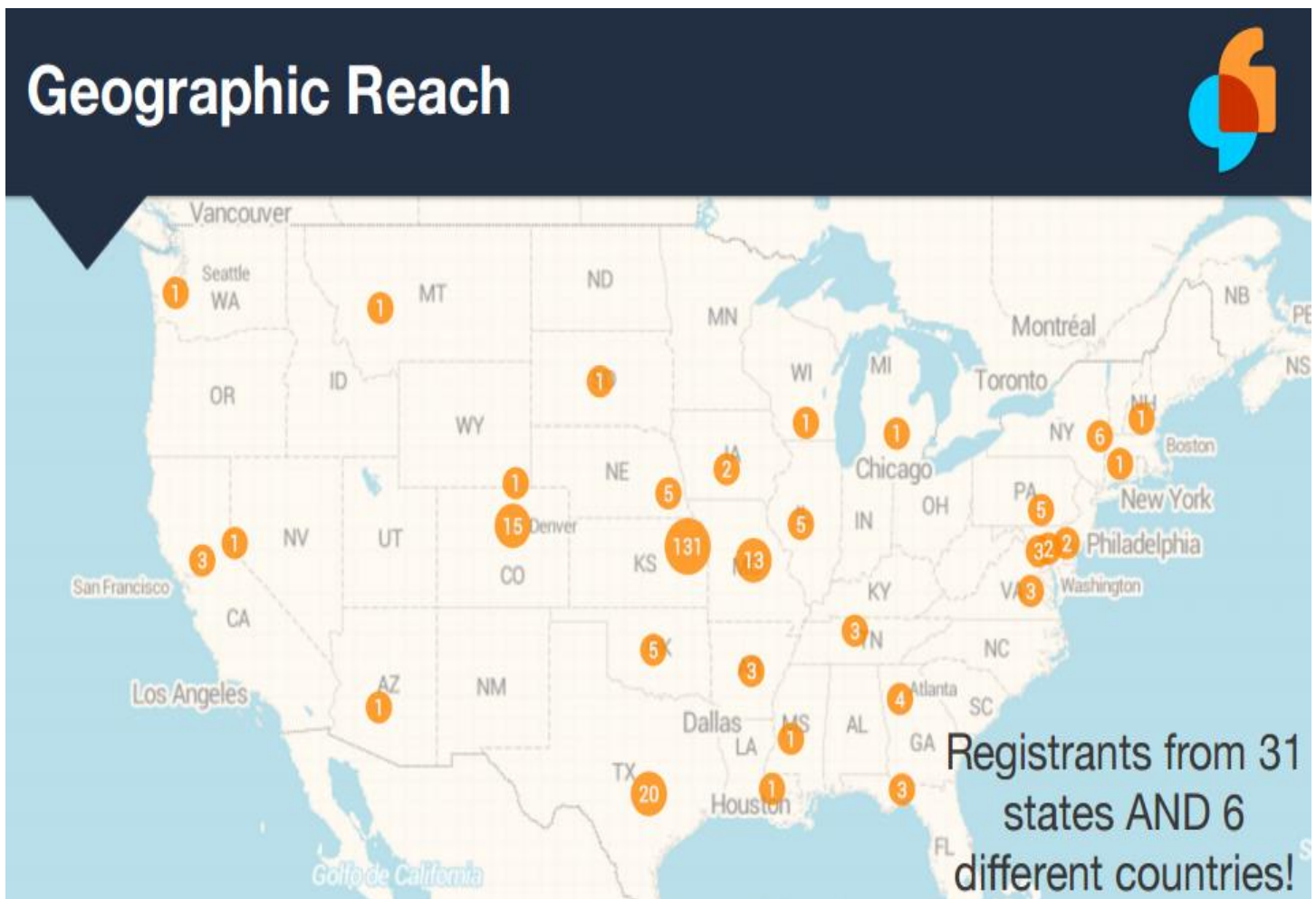
The SAB-Board of Directors networking event was a large success as our first mixed networking event. Students and alumni from both groups enjoyed the experience connecting with one another, and they took full advantage of the opportunity to network. We received very positive feedback that the event was useful in connecting the two groups.

Geographic Specific events proved to be complex to plan and execute. We started by reaching out to a designated alumnus who was interested in helping us implement this program in his state. He served as a liaison for the alumni club in the area and shared their opinions on the booth structures and marketing plan. We catered this event towards our alumni who were already residents of Colorado. Although the attendance numbers for this event were lower that we were anticipating, we received positive feedback from our alumni after the event.

The International Networking event was held to connect current students that are interested in international careers with our current international alumni. It was set up as a mixed networking event where we matched K-State students with our alumni in Australia. The event went well, and we were able to assist multiple students make international connections.

The Career Services event was by far one of the more complex events to plan and execute. It took considerable coordination with our Career Coaches at Career Employment Services at K-State. Through careful organization and focused marketing, the event turned into a success. We had great attendance and everything ran smoothly.

Having held multiple types of online networking events, we've been able to see the versatility and value a program like this can offer. With each event we've coordinated, we've been able to improve our platform and marketing plans for the next event. This cycle of testing events and improving our next ones has given us a feel for what online networking has to offer to our participants. The networking program has impacted and benefitted our alumni from all over the country. Below is a map that demonstrates the outreach of the online networking program this year.



In conclusion, online networking is a valuable resource for Alumni Associations and their constituents. It's a relatively simple way to connect individuals from around the world. Since we started offering the program, we've had 21 alumni join the Alumni Association to take part in an online networking event as a member benefit. This demonstrates that our alumni see the value in this endeavor as well. Although it may take some time to build a successful program, the opportunities to host online events for alumni are numerous.