



MARP 2025 Conference | Session Highlights

"AI in the Workplace: Responsible Innovation for Alumni Relations Professionals"

As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly transforms the workplace, alumni relations professionals must understand how to harness its potential responsibly while maintaining ethical standards, data security, and human-centered engagement. This session will provide a roadmap for using AI tools to enhance efficiency, personalize alumni outreach, and streamline operations while ensuring transparency, compliance, and trust.

*Presented by: Nic Taylor | Executive Director of Alumni Relations
Saginaw Valley State University*

"ALUM 101: A Case Study in Leveraging Campus Partnerships for Intergenerational Learning and Engagement"

How the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan leveraged key campus partners and alumni expertise to create a new learning experience for alumni of all ages. We'll describe the structure and objectives of the ALUM 101 program as a model for engaging alumni, detail how we collaborated with campus partners to build a program that is both scalable and impactful, and discuss key outcomes.

*Presented by: Haley Briggs, Senior Associate Director of Alumni Education
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor*

"Alumni Boards - What's Working and How to Implement Change"

When was the last time your Alumni Board was reimagined? Or is it in desperate need of a tune-up? Let's get together and talk all things Alumni Boards - the good, the bad and the ugly.

*Presented by: Brandi Behrenwald | Executive Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving
Ferris State University*



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"Central Michigan University Campus Conversations"

Campus Conversations is an engaging virtual educational series designed to spotlight innovative initiatives and programs across our colleges and departments. It creates a relaxed, informative atmosphere where CMU alumni, friends, and faculty—as well as community members from around the country and the world—can connect and stay inspired by the latest developments on campus. Conversations are hosted via Zoom at 12pm ET to accommodate participants across multiple time zones. Every session is recorded and archived on our YouTube channel, allowing those who miss the live event to catch up at their convenience while preserving these insightful discussions for future reference. Faculty and staff have embraced Campus Conversations, leveraging the platform to showcase their innovative ideas and dedicated efforts, such as research and the findings of those dedicated efforts and dollars. Their participation not only highlights creative achievements but also drives impactful outcomes for CMU students and the University as a whole. Campus Conversations have played an important role in deepening connections between Central Michigan University and its alumni. By reinforcing long-standing bonds and creating opportunities for new partnerships with alumni and donors, the series spotlights specific programs, initiatives, research projects and areas of excellence that resonate with our community.

*Presented by: Alyson Smalley, Associate Director | Alumni & Donor Engagement & Membership, Brittany Milan | Director, Alumni & Donor Engagement, Alumni Relations
Central Michigan University*



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"Fostering Student Success: Mentorship, Engagement, and Inclusive Team Culture"

Our goal is to share insights, exchange ideas, and explore best practices for supporting students in meaningful and impactful ways.

Key Discussion Points:

- Integrating students into teams and tailoring their experiences based on their interests.
- Encouraging participation in activities beyond work to enhance engagement.
- Providing hands-on opportunities through real-world projects and events.
- Team dynamics and task completion

Presented by: Brittany Milan | Director of Alumni and Donor Engagement, Mackenzie Miller | Associate Director of Alumni Engagement, Hannah Martin | Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement, Grace Buchholz | Alumni Events Assistant

Central Michigan University

"Giving Day That Moves the Mitten: Campus-Wide Engagement Strategies from Michigan and Beyond"

From Southwest Michigan at Kalamazoo College to the UP in Marquette at Northern Michigan, or from Hope College in Holland to Wayne State in the D, or along I-96 from Ann Arbor to Grand Rapids-this session explores how institutions are mobilizing students, staff, faculty, and alumni to create powerful Giving Day moments. Learn proven strategies from campuses across Michigan and the country that drive participation, build excitement, and foster a true culture of philanthropy.

*Presented by: Jordan Gerstenberger | Business Development
GiveCampus*



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"Golden Lanyard Faculty Staff Giving Recognition Program"

We created a faculty and staff giving program at Ferris State University to recognize those who go above and beyond their normal work responsibilities and are donors to the university. Faculty and staff members earn a golden lanyard and giving pin for contributing to the university and have opportunities to earn additional pins by reaching certain lifetime giving levels and participating in other giving events such as our One Day for Dawgs giving day. This was rolled out in January 2025 and has had a very positive reception with our faculty and staff.

*Presented by: Jennifer Yontz-Barger | Annual Giving Manager, Ben Withey | Advancement Communications Specialist
Ferris State University*

"Navigating Challenges in Alumni Relations"

When additional events from across campus are introduced, navigating alumni relations becomes more complex as it requires coordinating with multiple departments without feeling overwhelmed. Balancing these events with traditional alumni programming involves clear communication and strategic planning to prevent scheduling conflicts and maintain alumni interest. Working in collaboration with campus partners creates cohesive, targeted messaging and offering assistance with event project management will help them create a successful event.

*Presented by: Lynn Miller | Manager of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, Mary Hansen | Alumni Relations Assistant
Ferris State University*



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"Student Teams - What works, What doesn't, How can we be better?!"

Join us in discussing all things student team related! This round table discussion will dive into how teams have been built, what lessons have been learned, how we can improve what exists, and hopes for the future (with realistic views on how to get there!). Posters will be used for all to see to track the progress of our discussion so there's an easy "photo op" of a takeaway at the end of all that was covered.

*Presented by: Celia Murkowski | Director of Alumni Engagement & Student Programs
Eastern Michigan University*

"Talk the Talk: Office Communication Without the Awkward Silences (or Email Novels)"

Ever sent an email so long it needed chapters? Or sat through a meeting that could've been a Slack message? We've all been there. In this engaging (and laughably relatable) session, we'll dive into the do's and don'ts of workplace communication-covering everything from email etiquette and in-person interactions to mastering the art of saying just enough on Zoom.

*Presented by: Nic Taylor | Executive Director of Alumni Relations
Saginaw Valley State University*



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"The Power of Us: Building and Fostering a Highly Functional Student Team"

Discover the strategies and principles that empower student teams to reach new heights of collaboration and achievement. In this engaging presentation, we'll explore the critical elements that drive high performance, including effective communication, shared vision, leadership development, and conflict resolution. Learn how to foster a sense of belonging and accountability, create an environment of mutual trust and respect, and harness the unique strengths of each team member. Whether you're part of a student organization, academic project group, or extracurricular activity, this session will equip you with actionable tools to unlock your team's full potential.

*Presented by: Celia Murkowski | Director of Alumni Engagement & Student Programs
Eastern Michigan University*

"Your Alumni Can't (and probably won't) Come to the Phone Right Now: Rethinking Phonathon in a New Era of Engagement"

Because the old way of student calling belongs to a different era-and we're never, ever getting back together with outdated strategies. Learn how colleges and universities are modernizing student engagement through multi-channel outreach-texting, video, email, and calling cadences-all led by students. These approaches are building authentic alumni and constituent connections while delivering real results. We'll also discuss how your institutions are leveraging student workers or ambassadors today and how do we keep these students engaged after graduation as volunteers, advocates or even future advancement professionals.

*Presented by: Jordan Gerstenberger | Business Development
GiveCampus*