Creating Successful Alumni Career Panels

It is always a pleasure to host alumni on campus, and an alumni career panel can illustrate career paths, skills and choices with a unique Brandesian perspective. This type of program requires significant lead time, because ideally you will be inviting alumni to participate four weeks in advance. If you are planning a one-hour event, consider securing of 3-4 panelists so that they each have time to speak and answer questions.

- Speak with faculty in your department to learn what fields alumni in your department frequently pursue after graduation.
- Speak with students in your department to learn what fields currently interest them and when they are available to attend a program.
- Use Hiatt’s major page to begin to identify alumni paths in the world of work and jobs often attractive to your students.
- Once you’ve identified the top fields of interest to your major, use Spotlight on Careers to learn more about these fields and gather appropriate job titles to use in your alumni research.
- Set clear goals regarding the program, including what students hope to learn and what questions students want alumni to answer.
- Complete Hiatt’s networking requirements so that you may access alumni through Hiatt’s LinkedIn group.
- Draft an invitation template to invite your alumni of choice.
- Search Brandeis alumni on LinkedIn who meet the field criteria you have set.
- Identify the top 12 alumni you would wish to invite.
- Connect with your Hiatt liaison to ask any questions you have, review your alumni invitation draft, and to discuss her/him the “who, what, where, when” of your program so that Hiatt can help you market it and set-up an RSVP for you through B.hired.
- Make the practical and logistical arrangements, including setting date and time, reserving space, and creating marketing language (remember to share these details with your Hiatt liaison).
- Consider who will be facilitating the panel; you could choose to take this role yourself, or ask a faculty member in your department.
- Invite your top 3-4 alumni to attend and include your program goals in the invitation; should you be turned-down, be ready to invite the next alum on your list.
- Follow-up with the alumni with logistical information, parking passes, questions you would like them to address and any other information you would like them to know about the program and student expectations; ask them for their biographies so that you may prepare a proper introduction of the alum for the panel facilitator; prepare thank you notes for the alumni and procure a small thank you gift for them (Hiatt and the Alumni Office can often help with gifts).
- Create an event sign-in sheet and evaluation.
- Welcome the alumni; ask students to sign in and complete an evaluation prior to leaving.
- Thank the alumni at the event and share with them their thank you note and gift.