Old Students never die... they become Alumni



Today's students will be tomorrow's alumni. This sounds scary to those of us who are about to graduate, but the alumni of UNB have much to offer the school. We, as alumni will have the opportunity to participate in setting direction for the school; return to see friends at Reunions; and provide enthusiastic support for the university and its programs.

So?

Universities across Canada and the U.S. have come to realize the importance of establishing traditions and good relationships with their students. Students that feel as though they truly belong in the university community and are contributing to its established history and reputation develop a sense of loyalty and pride for their school.

This was not a problem for schools in the past when enrollment was low, classes were small, and students knew one another. There was time to foster friendships and create special ties with the university. The alumni from these classes feel a very strong bond with UNB. However, today's students face many difficult challenges. Many must work during the school year to be able to pay the rising costs of tuition, books, and accommodations. This, and the time that they spend studying, limits the time that they have to participate in university activities. Graduating students spend at least 4 years at UNB and many leave without feeling as though they were a part of the spirit and tradition of excellence that will continue into the future. These students are now alumni, but it is not likely that they will be active and contributing members of the Alumni Association. This is where UNB can benefit from SPARC.

Student
Pride &
Alumni
Relations
Committee

What is SPARC?

SPARC is the Student Pride & Alumni Relations Committee, an organization for students that creates campus spirit, gives students and alumni the opportunity to interact, and helps to install a sense of tradition and pride in the students of UNB. Students & Alumni - sounds contradictory? It isn't really. SPARC encourages students, faculty, alumni and the community to become involved in activities at UNB in order to bridge the gap between students of the past, present and future.

What does SPARC do?

SPARC has established two committees: the Mentoring Committee and the UNB Ambassadors Committee. Both of these are designed to give students practical experience and to share their enthusiasm for UNB. Here is a brief description of the committees and what they do:

UNB Ambassadors Committee

The UNB Ambassadors are involved in promoting UNB to visitors, to prospective students, and at events hosted by Dr. Armstrong, the president of UNB. We will be participating in cultural evenings at the home of Dr. Armstrong once a month. We will also be conducting campus tours for visitors to UNB.

The Ambassadors will play a role in the recruitment of high school students as well. We will be showing prospective high schools students around the campus, taking them to classes and activities (club meetings, student council activity, etc...) and giving them an idea of what life is like at UNB. We are also presently finding representatives from UNB's clubs, sports teams, and other associations to participate in FHS's UNB day on February 8. This day has traditionally been mainly academic in nature, but we feel that it is important to also have the non-academic side of UNB represented.

Mentor Committee



With our sou'westers from the pub crawl through Halifax (l-r): Tammy Oram, Julie Ferguson, Stephen Maynard, Shelly Swyer and Dave Gallant (front).

Want to be a banker, engineer, teacher, lawyer, nurse, or entrepreneur? Are you unsure of what jobs your degree will get you? Mentoring gives you the chance to peek into "the real world" of your area of study by shadowing an alumnus of UNB on the job. The Mentor Committee will be working to establish a database of alumni in various fields of the workforce to approach for shadowing. We will also be working with counselling services to provide training for both the students and the alumni that will be participating in this program.

Other Ideas...

We are also looking for ways to involve to Fredericton community in our events, and to promote campus spirit. We will be expanding our programs and projects in conjunction with what we, the students feel are the most important areas to be addressed by SPARC.

Why join SPARC?

SPARC is an organization of enthusiastic students. As a member of SPARC, you have the opportunity to do as much or as little as you wish. SPARC will give you the opportunity to:

- Network with the University and Fredericton communities
- Play a leadership role in showing high school students and visitors around the campus
- Display pride and a knowledge of the history of UNB
- Shadow a prominent alumni working in your field of study
- Develop organizational skills by chairing a committee or by helping to organize an event
- Meet new people and discover the UNB spirit!

The main reason for joining SPARC comes down to this: every student becomes an alumni, but only a few become alumni who have made a difference.

The Final Word (Did we SPARC your interest?)

SPARC is a great club with new and innovative ideas to help students and to promote our university. The people are great and the opportunities are fantastic! If you are an enthusiastic UNB student who likes to meet new people, improve yourself, and have some fun while you're at it, I hope that this article will 'SPARC' your interest. If so, you can reach SPARC co-ordinator Julie Ferguson at the Alumni Office at 453-4847, or feel free to drop by Room 119 of the Alumni Memorial Building.



SPARC Committee Execs and Recruitment (l-r): Dr. Armstrong, Shelly Swyer (Ambassadors Committee), Shawn Pleunis (Mentor Committee), Tammy Oram (Ambassadors Committee), Dave Gallant (Mentor Committee, Julie Ferguson (Coordinator).

Upcoming Events for SPARC

Feb. 8 **UNB DAY at FHS**
If there are any clubs interested in having a booth at FHS, please let us know.

Feb. 26 **Student Wellness Conference**
SPARC members will be assisting with regestrations and posters to advertise this conference aimed at improving student life. Sessions will include: Stress & Time Management, Physical Fitness and Wellness, Nutrition, Sexual Relationships, Relaxation, and Finding a job in the 90's.

March **Pilot Project for the Mentor Program**
The project will involve students from a variety of faculties interested in job shadowing in their field of study.

Ongoing **Campus Tours**
Applications to universities are due in February so students will want to check us out before they apply.



Showing off our SPARC sweatshirts during a break at the SAA National Congress in Halifax (l-r): Shelly Swyer, Julie Ferguson, Tammy Oram.

Contributed by Julie Ferguson