Proposal for International Ocean Institute Alumni Network

The IOI Alumni Network will be established as a fee based membership organization which will operate at arms length of the IOI and IOIVU corporate structures.

Objectives

Using the internet as a technological resource to build and maintain a community of graduates of IOI and IOIVU programmes so as to:

- Establish a continuum between programmes and their alumni;

- Engage the IOI alumni in the identification, planning and execution of future activities;

- Provide an easily accessible and up to date directory of alumni in order to facilitate network building between ocean professionals;

- Harness and share the rich knowledge and expertise of the alumni;

- Support the marketing of the IOI and the IOIVU; and

- Serve to enhance IOI and IOIVU relations with other organizations.

Initial Components

A central web portal to serve as an interactive communication tool providing:

- An online searchable up-to-date directory of all IOI alumni;

- Updated information on IOI and IOIVU activities and other relevant conferences, workshops and meetings;

- A real-time and near real-time 'virtual' interface between IOI and IOIVU events and the alumni utilizing online discussion forums, chat servers, video conferencing, etc.;

- Dissemination of a monthly electronic newsletter;

- Scholarship information and support to application processes for IOIVU.

The Alumni network will also identify opportunities for national and regional gatherings of their members. Such events may take the form of:

- Social/Networking events;
- Workshops;
- Roundtables;
- Lecture series;
- Refresher courses.

All of which will support the mandate of the IOI and the IOIVU as well as provide the alumni with rich opportunities.

Structure and Membership

Membership to this professional association will be fee based. Fees will be nominal and collected annually.

Members will elect a small executive body which will be governed by a IOI/IOIVU Alumni Network Charter. The Charter will be drafted by the Governing Board of the IOI with input from a select group of alumni.

A part-time position will be contracted to coordinate the day-to-day operations of the Network, update the web-site, coordinate alumni relations, etc.. The terms of reference for this position will be established by the executive of the Network and the term for the contract should be no less than two years.

All executive positions will be unsalaried.

A regional alumni point of contact will be established for several regions, initially including:

- Africa;
- East Asia;
- Europe and West Asia;
- Pacific Islands; and
- Americas.

As the membership grows, it will be important for the alumni network to remain as decentralized as possible, within organizational limitations, in order to allow members the flexibility to organize themselves in a practical and workable manner.

Funding and Budget

Initial seed funding should be provided by IOI-Headquarters.

Further funding will be raised by the Network and managed by the executive of the Network with quarterly reporting obligations to the IOI Executive Director. The establishment of an IOI Alumni Network Fund, with charitable status, will be required.

Initial budget entries will include:

- Website design and creation:
  - Contract to IOI-SA online services.

- Server side development and maintenance:
  - Contract to IOI-SA online services.

- Ongoing maintenance and update of website:
  - Part-time staff.

- Alumni recruiting and alumni relations:
  - Part-time staff.

- Coordination of alumni network activities:
  - Part-time staff.

Initial Activities

The drafting of the Alumni Association statues and the appointment of a part-time staff member.

The updating of all IOI Alumni information, including current contact information and profession, is a large undertaking which must be accomplished as quickly as possible.

The IOI Alumni website and server-side requirements can be also be developed in the initial stages. This should include the creation of a Alumni database which can be updated through the Website. Once a large proportion of the Alumni information has been updated, the recruiting should begin.

Subsequent activities should be undertaken in a stepwise fashion and be contingent on available funding and level of Alumni activity.