ALUMNI - A PLATFORM FOR NETWORKING ALL LEVELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE HEI

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Definition

The alumni association is an **association of graduates** of the HEI with the aim of networking of **academic staff** and **HEI graduates** on different levels and with different functions.

The importance of networking is reflected with **positive effects** on the **academic education process**, preparation and adjustment of **curricula** and the **direct implementation of advanced methodical approaches** such as »Problem based learning« to the academic process.
Different levels of networking:

- Relations between the HEI and real economy
- Member of the alumni association – active student from HEI
- Relation of the HEI and the alumni association
The Alumni association at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Maribor was founded in the year 2010.

http://alumni.fs.uni-mb.si/

The aim of the founders was to create a junction point between graduates of the faculty on all levels (first, second and third cycle graduates) with the HEI, the real economy and the students.
RELATION BETWEEN THE HEI AND THE REAL ECONOMY

development of relations between the real economy and the HEI

The first real challenge for the Alumni association at the Faculty of mechanical engineering in Maribor was the organization of a “round table” discussion between the real economy – companies – their engineers and officers responsible for HR about the subject

“Introduction of young engineers after graduation into the real working environment”.

This subject is important especially for engineering companies for the understanding of graduates of the Bolognas first, second and third cycle programmes when starting to work.
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE HEI AND THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

HEIs need the **response of the real economy** about the **professional quality of graduates** to **evaluate the curriculum**.

They have to establish a supporting measuring system to get this response.
There is one difficulty: after graduating the students leave the HEIs, change their addresses and in some years the connection graduate – HEI disappears.

According to Slovenian national accreditation rules

[http://test.nakvis.si/](http://test.nakvis.si/)

the measurement satisfaction of the professional quality of graduates on both sides - graduates and real economy - must be provided directly after graduation, then after two years and furthermore at list after five years.
RELATION BETWEEN THE ALUMNI MEMBERS AND THE ASSOCIATION

The relation between the alumni members and the association must start during the active studying years of students on faculties.

The best way for students’ animation is organizing career centres for job searching, where students get the opportunity for self-promotion on special designed web pages, which are accessible by HR people from engineering companies.
After graduating alumni members are motivated for co-operation with the association with CPD activities and social events.

CPD activities organized by the alumni association tailored especially for professional groups are seminars with regard to the laws in civil engineering, the use of special software for engineers, discussions about the introduction of young engineers into real economy and the Engineers day and the introduction of the Bologna programs.
Social events are important for the alumni association, because they can be seen as **Coming- together** events where members meet members, academic staff - professors from the faculty and also students.
Annual ball of engineers in spring
Conclusions

The aim of the presented work is to show one possible model of networking

• academic sphere and HEI,
• real economy,
• alumni members and students.

Networking is especially important for HEI, because it gives the institution the possibility of closed-loop control of its academic functions.
Conclusions

The most important function in HEI is parallel to research the academic education and the learning outcomes can be measured best with direct contact of the real economy and the graduates – alumni members – working there.

Connections with the real economy are important also for the R&D activities in the real economy.

These activities can be carried out in the best way by the alumni association.