SOCIAL MEDIA ADVICE FOR ALUMNI GROUPS:

As an office, we recommend alumni groups embrace social media as many alumni tend to use social networking to communicate and seek out information, therefore it can only help as a publicity tool.

We would suggest, however, that you focus on one platform, possibly by conducting a poll of members to see which is most widely used. As a rule, we would not advise the use of **Twitter** as it can be quite time consuming, as you need to be 'tweeting' regularly and therefore have sufficient news to 'tweet' about to appear in users' Twitter feeds.

Facebook would probably be the best social networking site to use and we have listed some general information and advice on it below:

General advice for Facebook:

There are three options for managing groups on Facebook and different groups are approaching this in different ways, depending on what they're wanting to achieve:

- Open group (new members can join instantly without approval):
  I.e: OUS Washington DC:
  http://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/groups/84798695082/

- Closed group (new members ask permission to join and need to be approved):
  I.e: OUS Munich:
  http://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/groups/191349387611235/

- Facebook page (a public profile for a business or group):
  I.e: OUS Northern California: http://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/pages/Oxford-University-Society-Northern-California-Branch/344050925691006?sk=info

Facebook's official guidance is that pages are for 'entities', whilst groups 'allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organise, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.'

An open group will be easier for you to administer, whilst a closed group will require more of your time, but you would be able to verify that everyone in it was a 'genuine' Oxonian. It may be worthwhile contacting the secretaries for the groups listed above, to see if they can offer you guidance on how they set up and attracted members (and why they chose the option they chose) to see what would work best for your situation. Their contact details can be found in our *Oxford Alumni Network Directory*.

We would suggest that an open group would be your best solution as it makes the joining process instant for new members, thus removing any barriers to joining. They are also easily searchable on Facebook itself. As an administrator you would still have the ability to remove members who turned out to be 'fake' (or just behave badly – for example posting endlessly about job opportunities, or self-promotion of some sort).

Please note that groups are not permitted to use the official logo of the University: We do, however, have a logo for use by our Oxford alumni groups and a separate logo for joint Oxford & Cambridge groups – please contact us about this if you have not already received a version tailored for your group.

Our final advice would be that people don't like to be the first to join a group with no content. Try and seed the group in some way before you encourage alumni to join and keep regularly posting in the group once set up so that members are engaged and talking to one another.

Use the group to set up your next events, get friends to join the group and post some questions/photos (we find photos are often the biggest draw for getting people to look at and engage with our main Oxford Alumni page).

Don't forget you can post event information both as an event and then to your wall for maximum coverage.

Posting regular content as well as encouraging members to post is key to keeping the group active. You may wish to try:

- Posting polls about what kinds of events you should run as a group
- Sharing current research from the University with a question e.g. 'what do you think about this...' (you will often find this on our main Oxford Alumni Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/oxfordalumni/ to share)
- Posting photos from previous events
- Asking questions to the group – e.g: finding out what kinds of careers people have had after their time at Oxford, what subjects they studied, etc.
- Introducing new members to the group every so often and ask them to write a little about themselves
- Adding upcoming events

Please do get in touch if we can provide any further advice or support in this respect by emailing the Networks Team at: networks@alumni.ox.ac.uk