Communication Best Practices for Regional Associations

What, When, Where, and How

Charlie Kohl ‘72

President, Princeton Association of New England (PANE)

CORA

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Foundations

- Many of these best practices have been drawn from previous TQUAD presentations, including:

  - JT Wu ‘16 & Leslie Robinson ’18
    - ***Empowering Recent Alumni to Engage with Regional Associations***
  - Raquel Frisardi ’06, Beth Stahlman ’89, Christina Clarke ’97, Jenny Korn ’96, Rob Wolk ’91
    - ***Bringing Tigers Together in a Virtual Age***
  - Camellia Falcon ‘00, Marisa Elena Goldenberg ‘98
    - ***Hex codes to Hashtags: Getting Started with Social Media***
  - Talbot Payne ’84, Sarah Erickson
    - ***TIGERS & TECHNOLOGY***

https://alumni.princeton.edu/volunteer/resources/regional-volunteers/communications-events-programming

Utilizing Multiple Channels for Communication

- Use a mix of communication channels such as email, social media, newsletters, online meetings, and websites to effectively reach our communities.

- Different communication channels will cater to the different preferences and habits of our alums.
  - Email newsletters
  - Social media notifications for events and special occasions
  - Websites for events, news, and recognition

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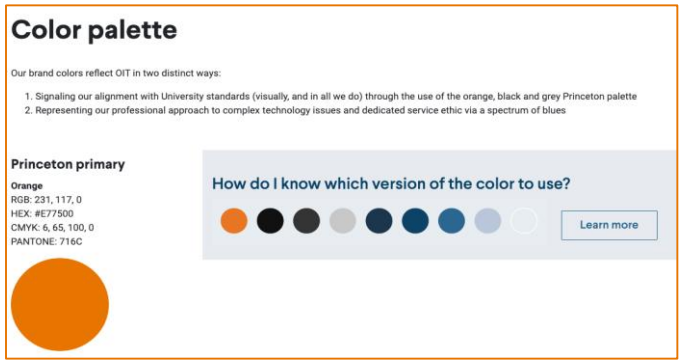
Use Consistent Branding Across All Platforms

- Maintain consistency in branding across all communication materials including logos, colors, fonts etc. This creates a cohesive identity for your association.
- Maintain consistent visual identity across all platforms.
- Use Princeton's colors, logos, and fonts.
- Create a recognizable voice and tone.
- Reinforce the alumni community's unique identity.
- See "From Hexcodes to Hashtags" on the CORA resource page.

https://oitstyleguide.princeton.edu/



Use Engaging Content

Best Practice - Create compelling content that resonates with your audience. This can include local news and events or updates on the Princeton community at large.

Local events
Local alumni news and success stories
Updates on campus developments
Affinity group events
Interactive two-way content (polls, quizzes, contests)

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Event Content

Consider offering a range of events, from informal social hours to structured content, and see what sticks! (from Virtual Event Toolkit)

- Book club/Princeton Pre-read
- Happy hour/Wine tasting
- Cooking/Baking demonstration
- Panel discussion/Fireside chat
- Open mic night/Live performance
- Princeton diversity discussion
- "Tigers in Service" Community service project
- New admit receptions
- Student send-offs
- Movie watch party
- Annual dinner/Board meeting
- Hobby hour/Wellness
- Trivia/Game night
- Alumni Association Speakers Bureau
- Lunch and learn

Event Tips, Tricks & Considerations

Event timing	Event duration	Event preparation
• Mid-week is optimal; avoid Fridays & weekends • Catch people before they sign off for the day – plan events for late afternoon or early evening • Be mindful of all holidays	• Limit your event to 60 minutes • If your event will be longer than 60 minutes, consider dividing into 2+ sessions • Launch your event at least 15 minutes early to allow speakers and host(s) to "meet & greet"	• Designate both a program host, and a technical lead, as well as back-ups should any issues arise • As host, keep an alternate device handy in case of connectivity issues • Offer a separate "practice session" when featuring a speaker/panelists to address logistics and program flow

Tiger “Tent” Event

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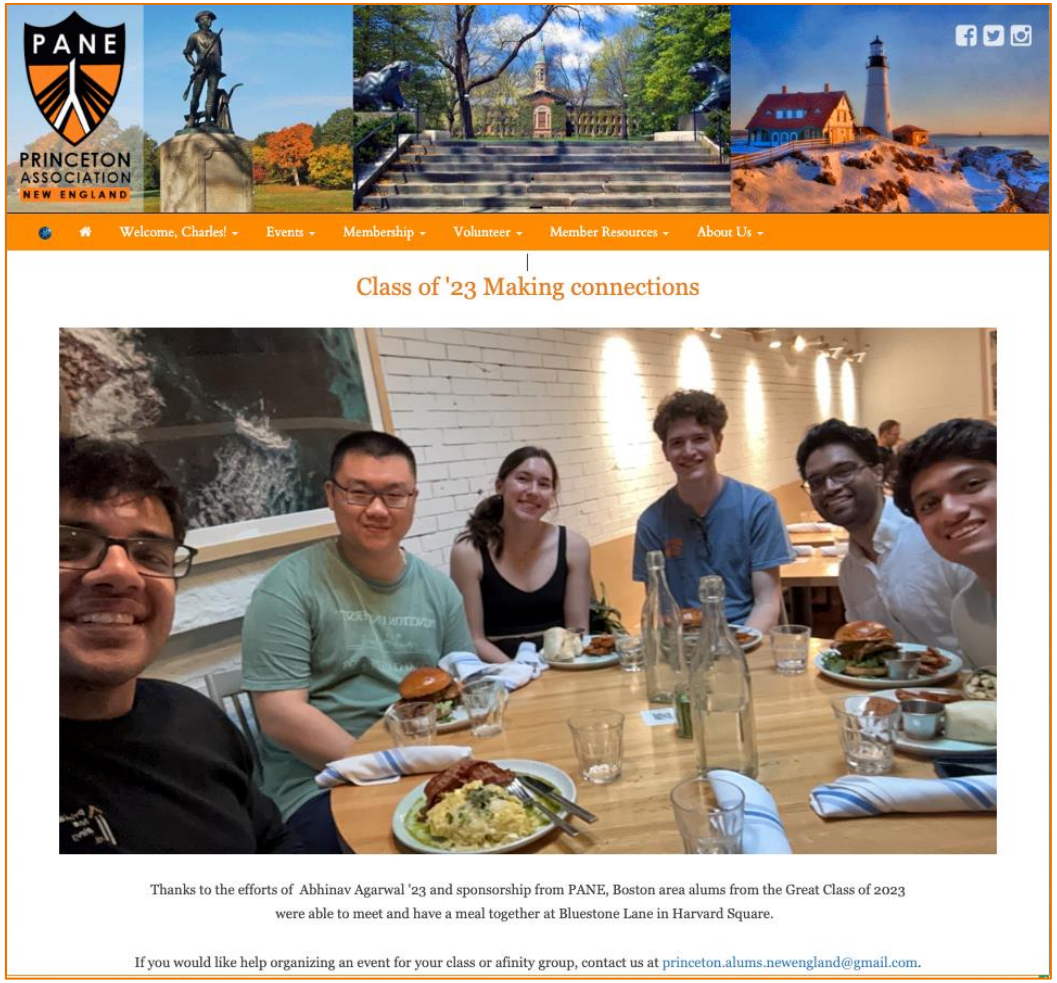
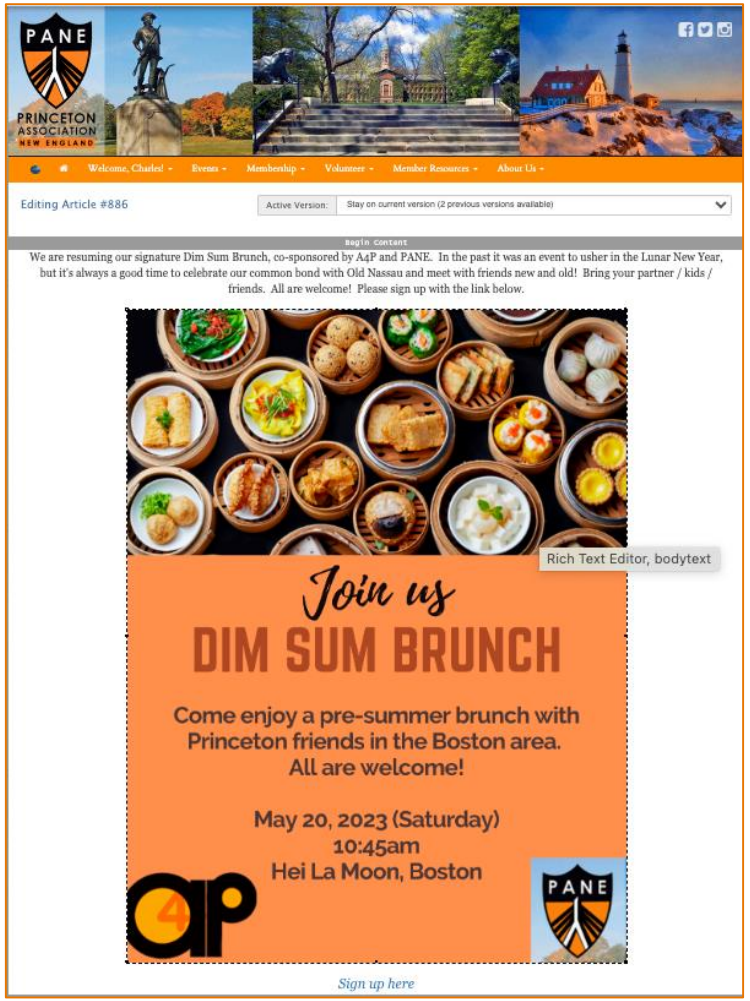
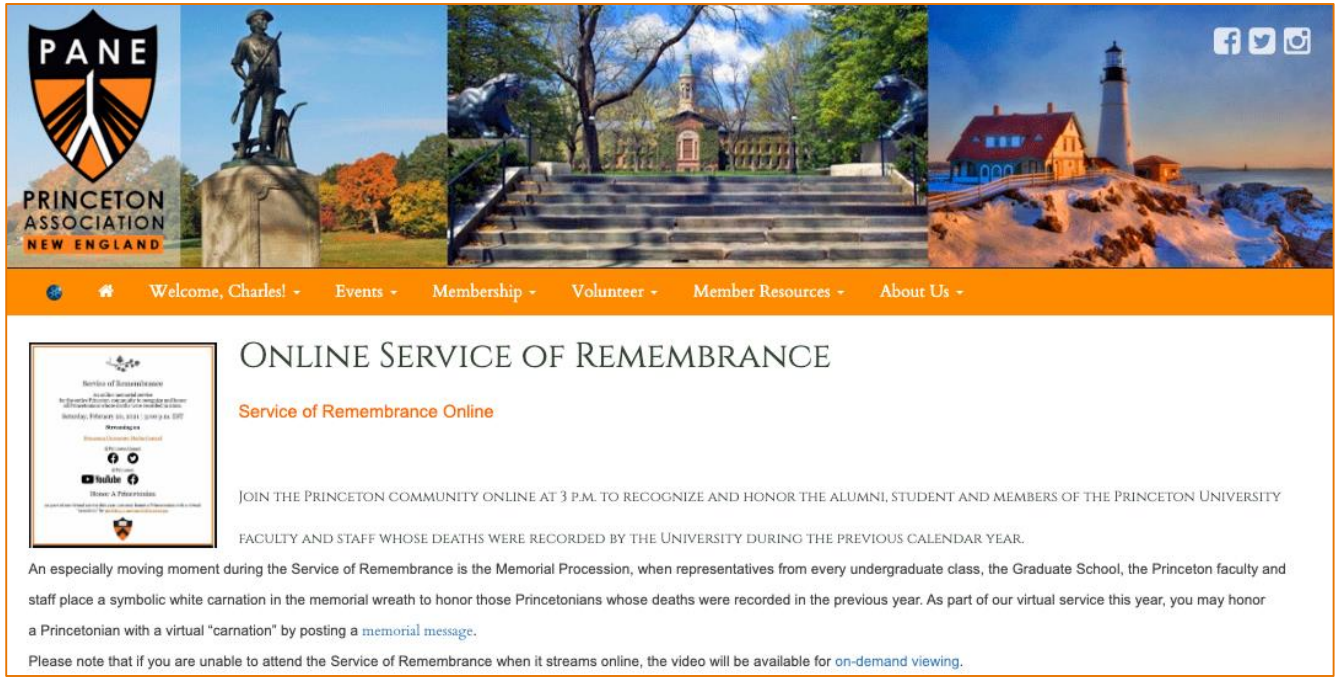
Local Alumni News and Events



Affinity Group and Campus News and Events





Interactive Content - PANE Survey

PANE PRINCETON ASSOCIATION NEW ENGLAND

What events or activities should PANE plan for 2025?

5 Minute Survey: We want to hear from you.

Share what you like about PANE activities and what you'd like to see more of. You are free to skip any question, but we learn a lot from every bit of information you share.

1. How many PANE events have you attended in the past year (in person or virtual)?

2. Which types of PANE events would you be interested in attending?

Sporting Events
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Maybe
- [ ] No

Performing Arts
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Maybe
- [ ] No

Family-friendly
- [ ] Yes

3. How much do you rely on public transit to participate in PANE events?

4. What are the best ways for PANE to communicate with you? (Please feel free to skip the unfamiliar.)

Mastodon
- ○ Unlikely
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Likely

X/Twitter
- ○ Unlikely
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Likely

5. What would you think about PANE hosting a *formal* event (like a year end Princeton party or All Ivy ball)?

6. Would you have any suggestions about future PANE events?

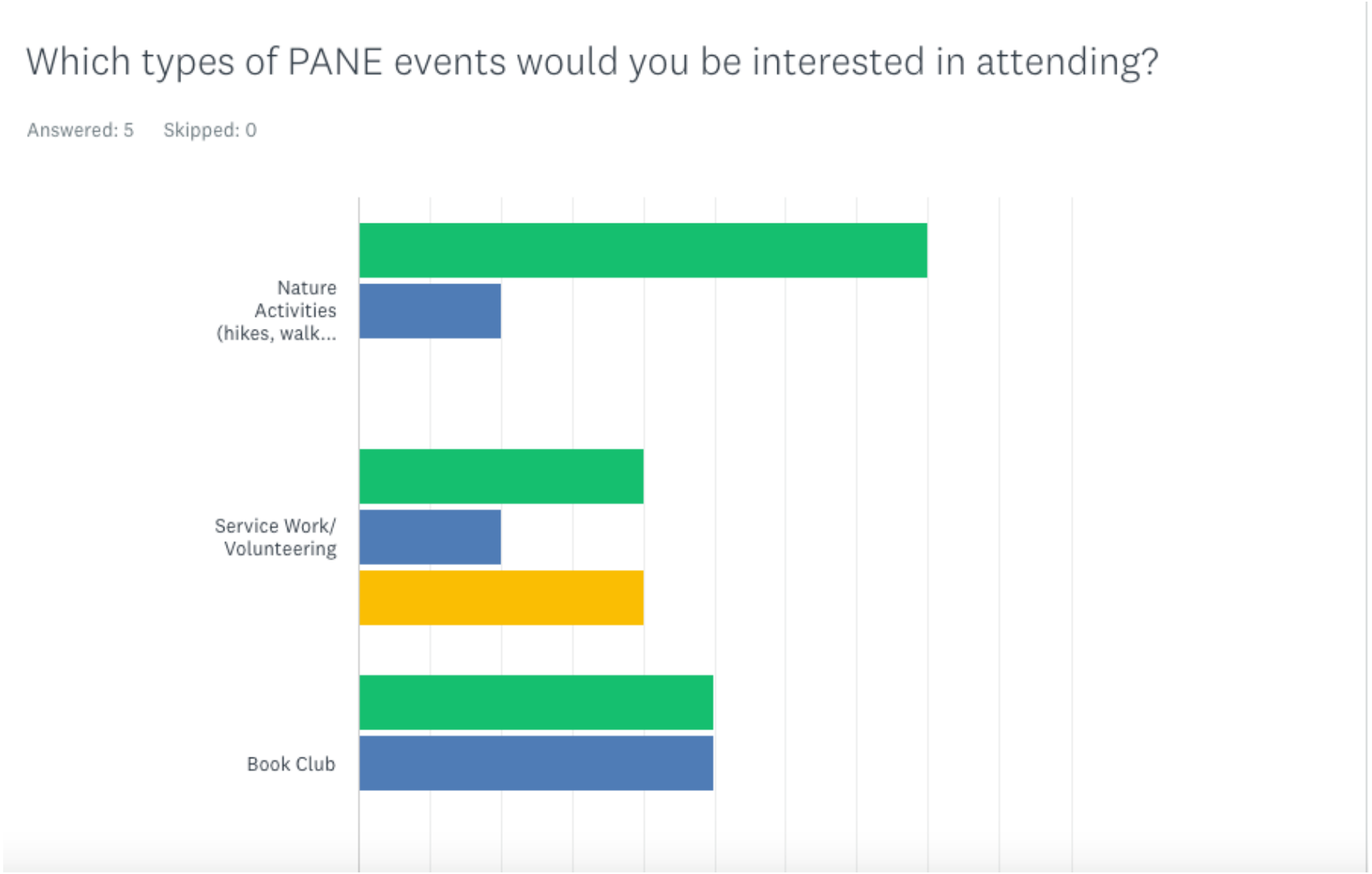
8. (Optional) Please share

your full name

Class year (undergrad or grad)

email address

Survey Report Format



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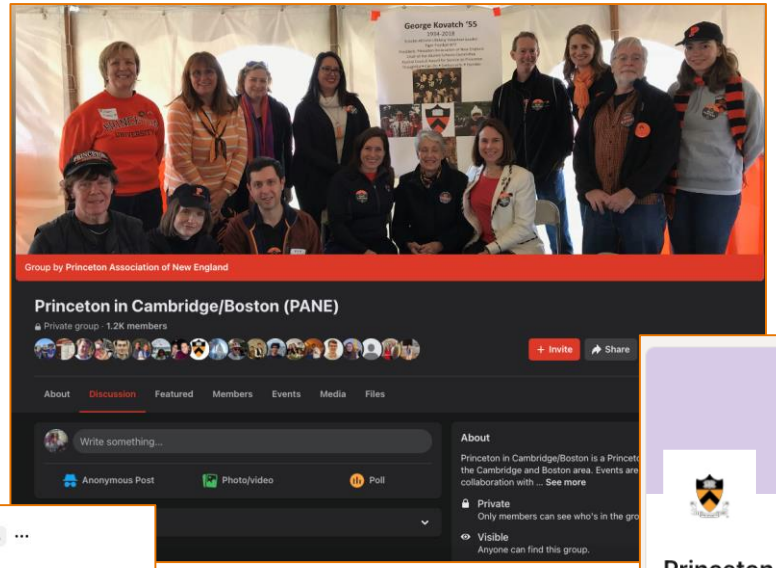
Lots of Digital Channels Available for Distributing this Content

- **Facebook**: *Building Community*
  - Facebook remains a powerful platform for nonprofits to connect with a diverse audience.
  - Create fundraisers, share success stories, and engage with followers through posts, comments, and live videos.
  - Leverage Facebook Groups to build a dedicated community around your cause, spearheading timely discussions and interactions among supporters.
- **Instagram**: *Visual Storytelling and Impactful Content*
  - Ideal for sharing visually appealing content, Instagram is perfect for nonprofits with compelling stories to tell.
  - Utilize Instagram Stories, IGTV, and Live to showcase behind-the-scenes insights, success stories, and real-time updates.
  - Engage with followers through interactive features like polls, questions, and donation stickers.
- **X** (formerly Twitter)*: Quick Updates and Trending Conversations*
  - X's fast-paced nature makes it suitable for sharing timely updates, news, and engaging in trending conversations.
  - Utilize hashtags strategically to increase the discoverability of your content and join relevant conversations.
  - Host Twitter chats to facilitate discussions around your cause and connect with like-minded individuals.
- **Snapchat**: *Engaging a Younger Audience*
  - Similar to TikTok, Snapchat's short-lived visual content can be harnessed to engage a younger audience with fun and interactive campaigns.
  - Create time-limited content, host takeovers, and leverage filters to promote your cause.
- **TikTok**: *Creative and Viral Outreach*
  - Reach a younger demographic by creating short, engaging videos that showcase your nonprofit's impact or share educational content.
  - Leverage trending challenges and hashtags to increase visibility and encourage user-generated content related to your cause.
- **LinkedIn**: *Professional Networking and Partnerships*
  - LinkedIn is not only for job seekers; it can also be a valuable platform for nonprofits to connect with corporate partners, volunteers, and professionals interested in your cause.
  - Share thought leadership content, success stories, and engage in discussions relevant to your field.
- **Pinterest**: *Visual Storytelling and Content Curation*
  - If your nonprofit creates visually appealing content such as infographics, posters, or artwork, Pinterest can be a valuable platform for sharing and organizing such content.
  - Utilize boards to curate content related to your cause and inspire supporters.
- **YouTube**: *Impactful Visual Content and Storytelling*
  - Video content on YouTube can deeply resonate with audiences, making it ideal for showcasing your nonprofit's mission and success stories.
  - Create informative videos, vlogs, and live streams to engage supporters and provide in-depth insights into your work.
  - The University maintains an engaging and well produced YouTube account/channel. There is endless content there that regional clubs can take advantage of and repurpose (as opposed to creating new content.

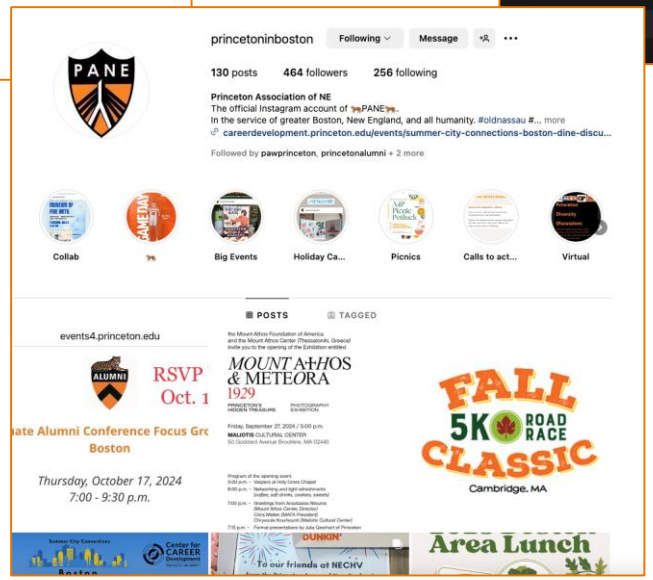
From https://iamparagon.com/2024/02/01/leveraging-social-media-for-alumni-engagement/

Content on Social Media

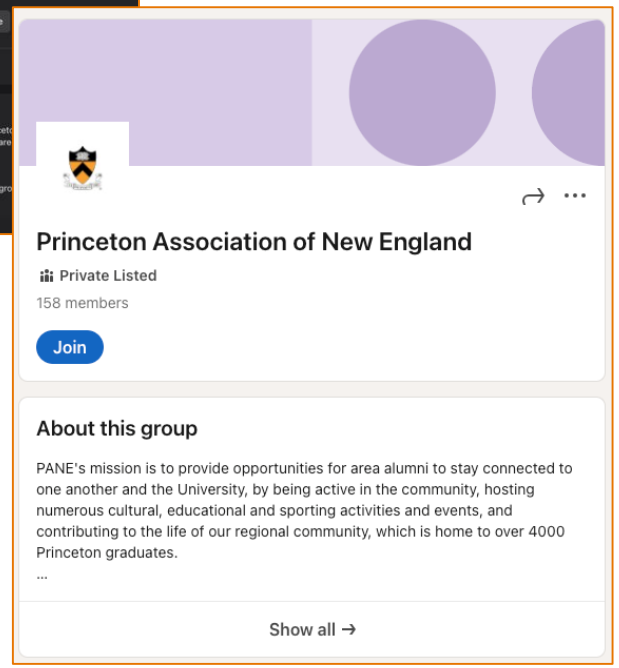
X (Twitter)



Facebook



Instagram

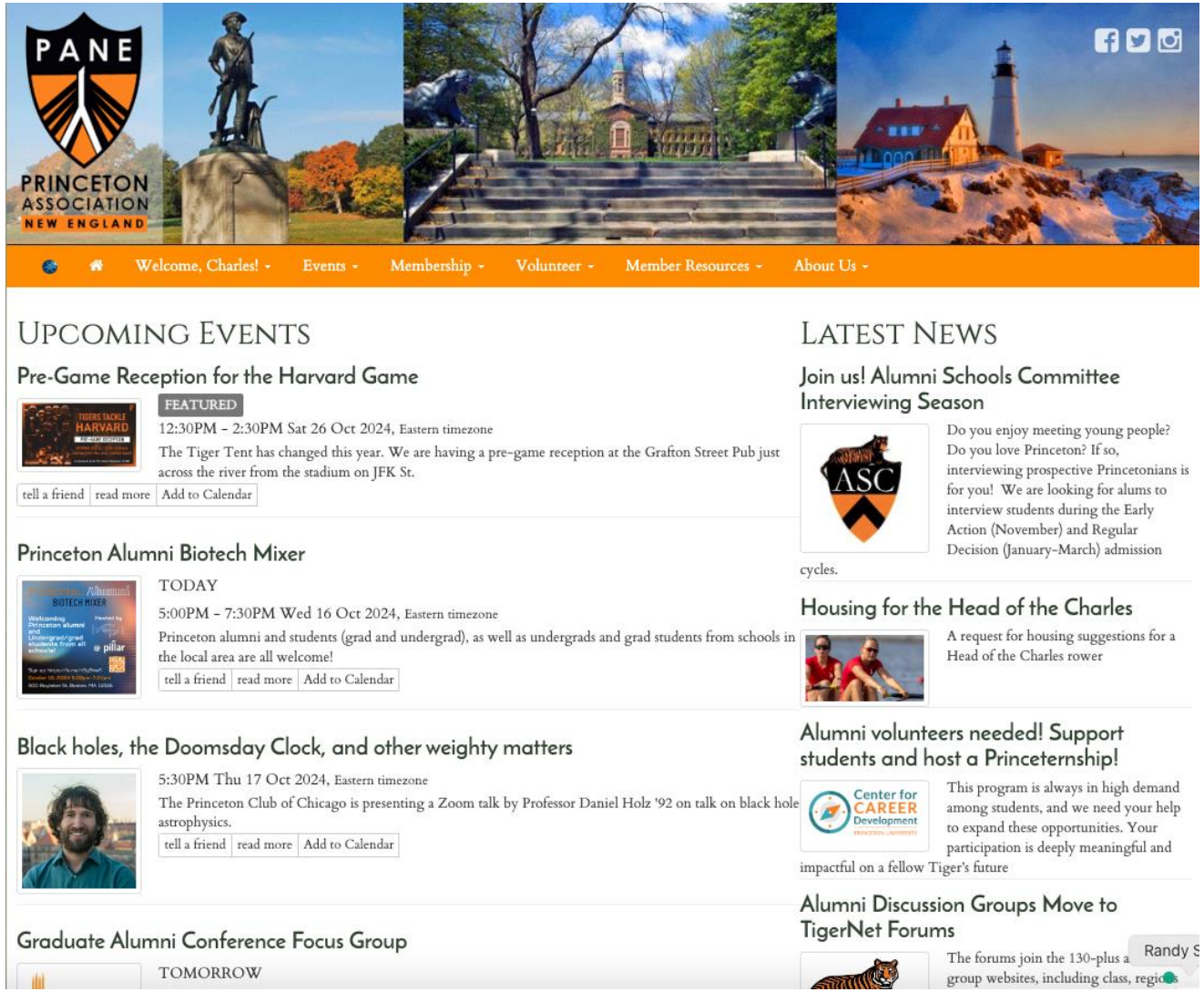


LinkedIn

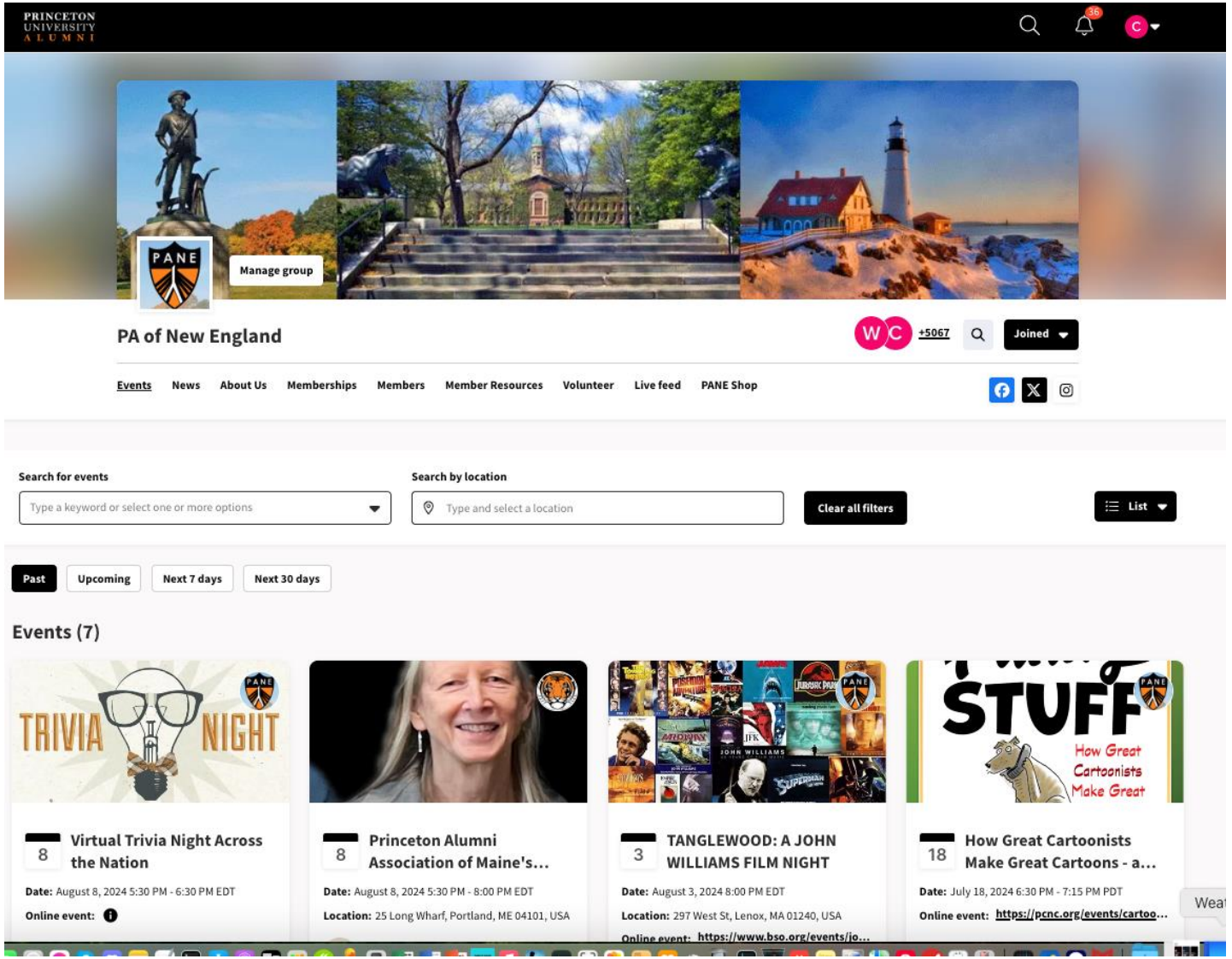
Website Best Practices

- Websites should incorporate dynamic elements such as discussion forums, event calendars, and career resources.
- Have frequent updates. Be it spotlighting alumni success stories, promoting upcoming events, or sharing valuable content, a consistently refreshed website keeps alumni engaged.
- Incorporate registration, payments, and feedback mechanisms.
- Have an image archive.
- Have multiple website administrators trained.
- Have an internal style guide.
- Pay attention to usage rights.

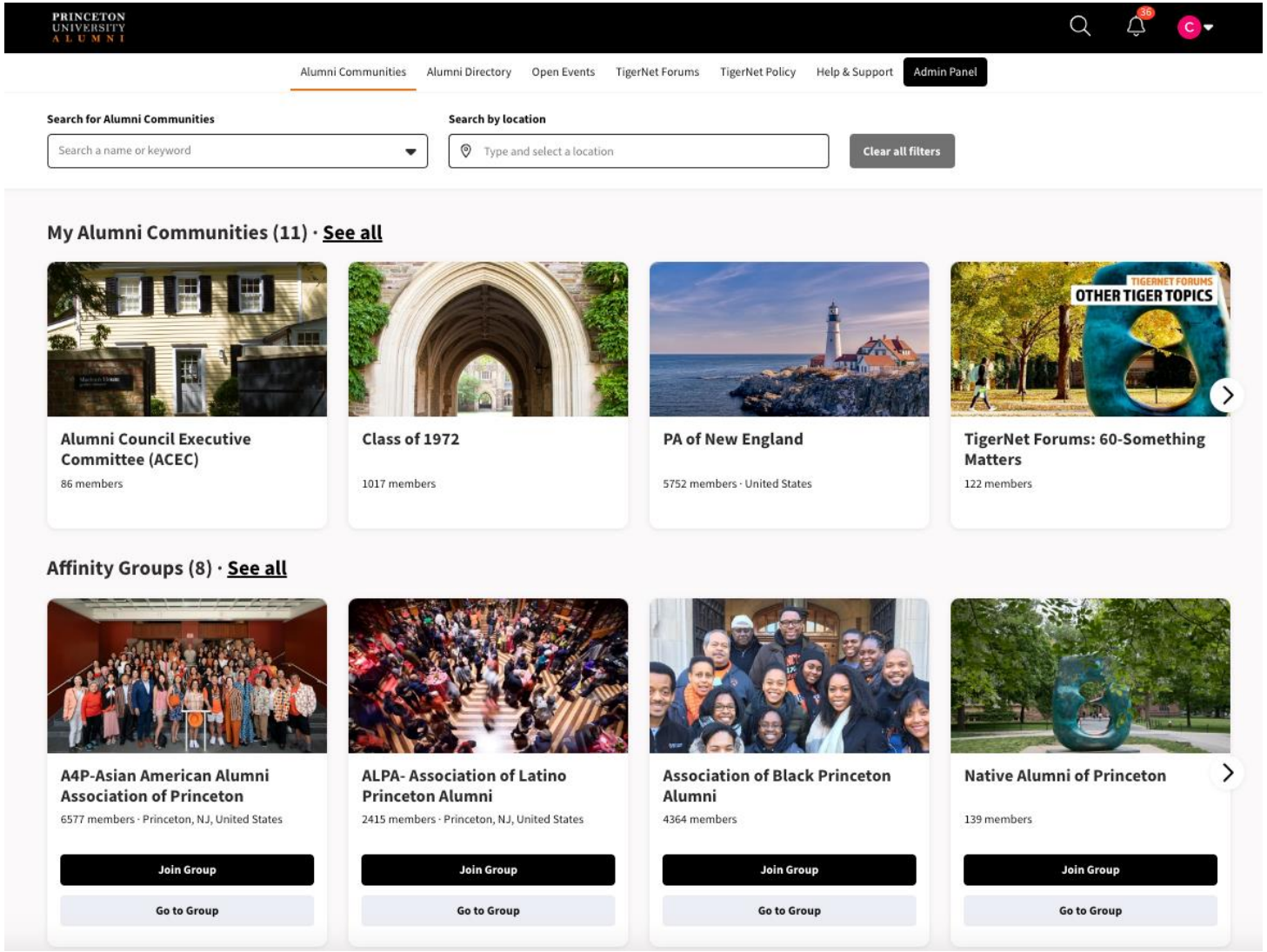
Current PANE Website



New PANE Website



Tigernet2 Provides an Inclusive Princeton Environment



TQUAD – Communication Best Practices

October, 2024

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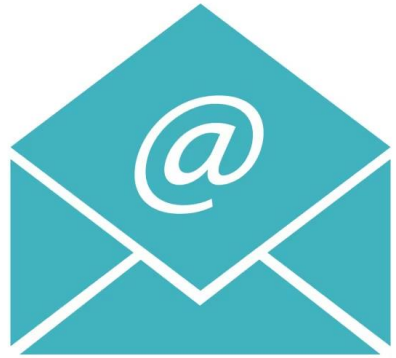
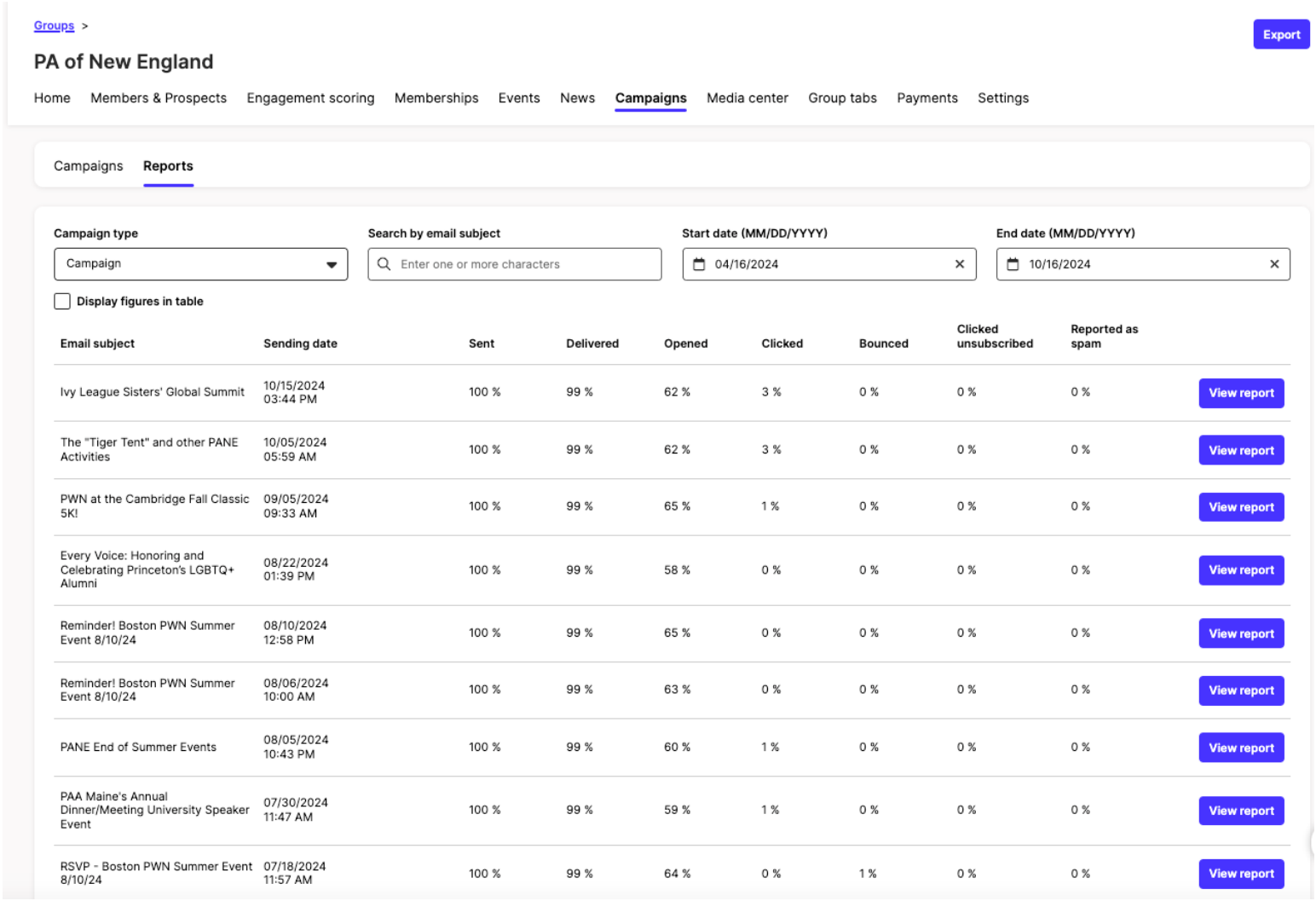
Email Best Practices



- Frequency
  - Do not overload email inboxes.
  - Regular schedule for newsletters - Monthly, Quarterly.
- Content
  - Avoid TLDR – use click through links for explanatory or detailed links.
  - Break text into short paragraphs.
  - Test on monitors as well as phones.
  - Be aware of accessibility guidelines (https://huit.harvard.edu/news/creating-accessible-emails).
  - Keep the subject line short but meaningful (*research says 12-character lines best, but I have never met that goal*)
  - Use the words “Support” “Need” “Thanks” “Thank You” instead of “Help” “Last” “Left” “Give” “Renew”.
- Distribution Timing
  - General rule is that Mondays are best.
  - However analysis of Princeton emails show that weekends have consistently higher open rates than weekdays.
- Use analytics to improve your communication strategies.
  - We have an advantage over most communities; from a 2017 study the Princeton open rate is 36% while other universities are at 25%.
  - What gets opened? What are your click throughs?
  - Consider using analytics on your social media channels.

Tigernet2 Email Analytics



Groups >

PA of New England

Export

Home | Members & Prospects | Engagement scoring | Memberships | Events | News | Campaigns | Media center | Group tabs | Payments | Settings

Campaigns | Reports

Campaign type: Campaign

Search by email subject: Enter one or more characters

Start date (MM/DD/YYYY): 04/16/2024

End date (MM/DD/YYYY): 10/16/2024

Display figures in table

Email subject	Sending date	Sent	Delivered	Opened	Clicked	Bounced	Clicked unsubscribed	Reported as spam	
Ivy League Sisters' Global Summit	10/15/2024 03:44 PM	100 %	99 %	62 %	3 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
The "Tiger Tent" and other PANE Activities	10/05/2024 05:59 AM	100 %	99 %	62 %	3 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
PWN at the Cambridge Fall Classic 5K!	09/05/2024 09:33 AM	100 %	99 %	65 %	1 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
Every Voice: Honoring and Celebrating Princeton's LGBTQ+ Alumni	08/22/2024 01:39 PM	100 %	99 %	58 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
Reminder! Boston PWN Summer Event 8/10/24	08/10/2024 12:58 PM	100 %	99 %	65 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
Reminder! Boston PWN Summer Event 8/10/24	08/06/2024 10:00 AM	100 %	99 %	63 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
PANE End of Summer Events	08/05/2024 10:43 PM	100 %	99 %	60 %	1 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
PAA Maine's Annual Dinner/Meeting University Speaker Event	07/30/2024 11:47 AM	100 %	99 %	59 %	1 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	View report
RSVP - Boston PWN Summer Event 8/10/24	07/18/2024 11:57 AM	100 %	99 %	64 %	0 %	1 %	0 %	0 %	View report

Events Best Practices

- Announce the event on your website.
  - If you have paid admission consider a discount for dues-paying members.
- Follow the announcement with a brief listing in a monthly or quarterly newsletter that links to the website.
- As the event grows near, post it on your social media feeds.
- If it is a significant event, send a reminder email and place social media posts the week of the event.
- If the event is an in-person talk or Zoom, consider recording the event and making the recording available on the website.

Tiger “Tent” Event Webpage

Tiger “Tent” Email and Social Media Posts

Tigers -

At long last we have news of this year's "**Tiger Tent**" for this year's Harvard football game. Due to a variety of factors (construction, Parent's Weekend, and a ceremony for Ryan Fitzpatrick) Harvard was unable to offer us space for a tent this year. However, with the help of the Princeton Varsity Club and the Office of Alumni Engagement we have been able to create a new and different event - a Pre-Game Reception at the Grafton Street Pub just across the river from the stadium on JFK Street.

For more information and to make reservations, go to the PANE website. Please note that, because space is limited, reservations **must** be made in advance using the registration link on that page.

Also note that a reservation to the reception does not include game tickets - tickets in the Princeton section (and optional parking passes) are available directly from Harvard at Harvard Game Tickets.

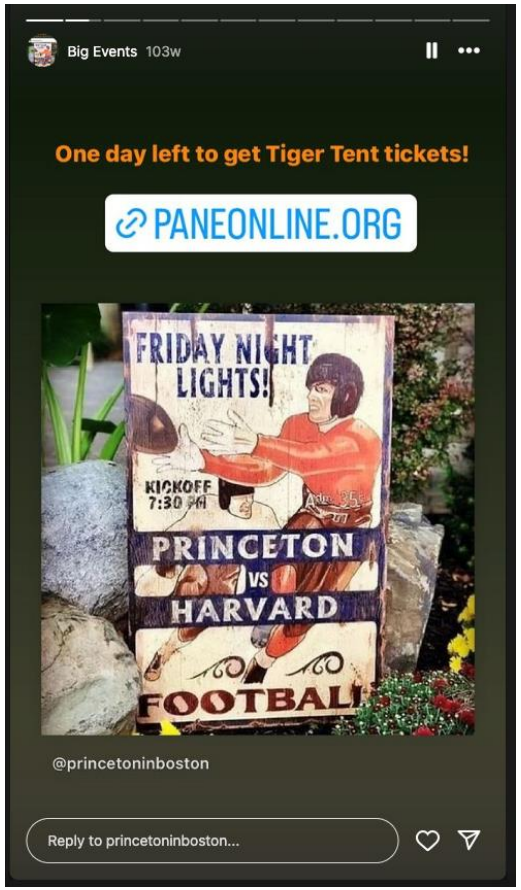
Other October Events

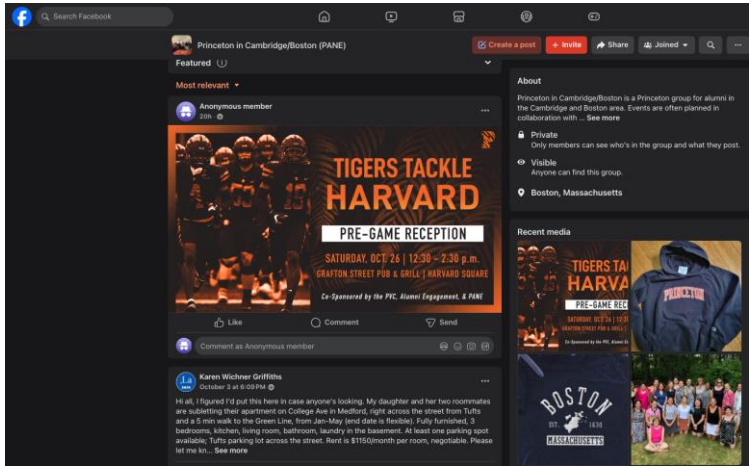
Orange and Black Day. Show your colors and celebrate the University's 278th birthday on October 22nd. Join alumni across the generations for a day filled with connection, fun and Princeton spirit — on campus, online and around the world through your regional club. Take a photo in your best Princeton gear and post it to social media or a kudoboard as we color the internet orange and black.

We have two local gatherings for Orange and Black Day.

- Abhiram Karuppur '19, (a current MBA student at Harvard Business School) is organizing an event for local alums on October 21st. See https://partiful.com/e/bFmOJSTkypEMpuTEvgAl for more information and a registration link.
- Grace Gong '22 is organizing an event for alumna from the classes of '22 and '72 on October 22nd from 6:00-7:00 at Sidebar (14 Bromfield St, Boston, MA 02108; https://sidebarboston.com/). Please RSVP to princeton.alums.newengland@gmail.com.

Virtual Wine Tasting - Princeton Wines at the White House. The Princeton Club of Hilton Head invites Tigers to an exploration of White House wines with a Princeton connection on October 21st. See the PANE website for details.





Tiger “Tent” Email Report

Campaign Analytics : The "Tiger Tent" and other PANE Activities

Back to the emailing campaigns

Overview | Activity | Links

Sent to 4343 with the following targeting parameters

Number of recipients: 4343

Targeted list of users: All - No Membership

Analytics overview

Sent	Delivered	Opened	Clicked	Dropped	Bounced	Clicked unsubscribed	Reported as Spam
4 287	4 268	2 685	150	54	31	10	0
100 %	99 %	62 %	3 %	-	0 %	0 %	0 %

Personalization Best Practices

- The ideal is to personalize your communications by addressing recipients by name and targeting content based on their activities or interests.
- It is difficult for our regional associations to personalize our communications with our current tools.
  - Segment your audience based on graduation year, field of study, interests
  - Tailor content to different demographic groups.
  - Use personalized greetings in emails.
  - Highlight relevant events and opportunities.
- New ideas are encouraged…

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Other Best Practices

- **Pay attention to copyrights!**
- Have a shared email account that can be used for email verification.
- Keep a master repository of account credentials.
- Have a crisis communication plan in place to address any unforeseen issues or negative publicity.
- Communicate with alumni about volunteer opportunities and engage them in various activities to strengthen their bond with the organization.
- Coordinate communication efforts with other regional associations and Alumni Engagement.
- Ensure timely dissemination of news related to the organization's activities such as events or reunions.

University Resources

- Style Guide - https://oitstyleguide.princeton.edu/
- The Princeton University YouTube channel
- Volunteer Resource page - https://alumni.princeton.edu/volunteer/resources/regional-volunteers
  - Handbook
  - Recognition and award opportunities
  - Past TQUAD presentations
  - Speakers bureau
  - Alumni Engagement
  - Kat Kennedy - katkennedy@princeton.edu
  - Natalia Dempsey - nd2409@princeton.edu
  - Hannah Marino - hm4575@princeton.edu
  - Athletics Advancement
  - Princeton Varsity Club

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General Best Practices Checklist

- In crafting communications for OIT, we recommend referring to the following set of prompts. If you can't answer (or keep answering "no"), you should return to your outline and/or source(s)
- Is it timely?
- Who are the main audience(s)?
- Will the audience(s) consider it relevant?
- How do I want the audience to feel while reading/hearing it?
- Which content is must-know, vs. good-to-know?
- Is it benefit-driven?
- Is the terminology written in an easy-to-understand manner?
- Are tech acronyms spelled out?
- Can I say any of it in a shorter way?
- Does it flow intuitively?
- Is the language inclusive?
- Does it require action from the audience?
- Will it require follow-up?
- Have I opened and closed with standard OIT language?
- Is there a template I should follow for this kind of messaging?
- Has permission been granted by copyright owner for the use of rich media assets (photo, video, illustration, etc.)?

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Questions and Discussion

Thank you.

Let’s open the floor for any questions or comments.

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What, When, Where, and How

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President, Princeton Association of New England (PANE)

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Ideas For Discussion

- Texting as a new channel?
  - Would have to be opt-in to gather phone numbers
  - Advantages
    - Highly personalized
    - Immediate
  - Disadvantages
    - Intrusive
    - Labor intensive

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Ideas For Discussion

- What are the best channels for our community?
  - Does the same information go on all channels?
  - With respect to our various affinity and demographic groups, who uses which channels?
  - How do we avoid overload and keep alums eager to receive communications?
- Are the TigerNet forums our platform of choice?
- Can we make use of the Princeton University YouTube channel

Ideas For Discussion

- How do we best collaborate?
  - Should we define a standard format for information about events involving multiple regional associations?
  - Should the regional associations have a shared calendar?
  - Should we have a regional association discussion platform?

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