

VIDEO SUMMARY

Connect with Alumni

Resource person: Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula and Prof. Ashwin Mahalingam | IIT Madras professors and institutional leaders with experience in alumni relations, development, and higher-education administration
Connect with Alumni | Mentorship and Networking | careers

Alumni show the outside world what an institution's education leads to. Their contribution can take many forms. They can talk honestly about career choices and mistakes, mentor students, refer candidates, run mock interviews, introduce faculty to industry, advise on current practice, support prototypes or laboratories, and represent the institution. Keeping classmates connected often strengthens their relationship with the institution as well.

Start with a properly supported alumni cell or office. Give an engaged alumnus or faculty member clear responsibility and provide dependable administrative help. Put contact details in one maintained database and retire scattered personal lists. Batch representatives can keep details current and bring peers together. Choose them for their networks while keeping representation inclusive. At reunions, leave plenty of time for people to reconnect. Add one focused institutional segment for updates, student interaction, or a specific way to help. Between events, use email, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, or other channels that suit the group.

Keep engagement and fundraising separate. People can contribute at different financial levels through time, expertise, introductions, or gifts. Leadership can work closely with a short list of alumni who have both the interest and capacity to contribute, while a simple retail giving platform allows wider participation. Financial initiatives must follow the applicable legal and tax requirements. Apply every restricted gift to its stated purpose. Send personalised reports and evidence of impact. Where appropriate, connect donors with beneficiaries.

A sensible first plan has five steps: set up the cell, build the database, identify about twenty promising relationships, schedule regular engagement, and make specific requests. Placement support is often a good first ask. Listen before asking, offer several ways to take part, and show clearly how every commitment was used.