



ABOUT: As part of the Forever Learning initiative, all regional clubs should host at least one educational/speaker event per year that allows alumni to engage their intellectual curiosity and reconnect with the academic mission of the University. Educational events can take many forms, but the most common variety involves a presentation by a speaker. Speakers can be people in your local community or a Duke faculty/administrator.

SPEAKER

Local Speaker

Begin planning your speaker event at least eight weeks before the proposed event date. Consider both Duke alumni and prominent non-alumni with whom Duke alums have connections. If a volunteer has a connection with a speaker, feel free to reach out to them. Don't be afraid to cold call an alum.

Helpful resources when looking for a local speaker:

- **People** with whom regional volunteers have connections
- **Alumni Network** (alumni.duke.edu) – DAA's networking tool allows you to search by professional information, location, class year, etc. Many alumni in the network have also chosen to speak to students and their classmates on topics such as career advice, networking and professional opportunities. You may also utilize and explore the class notes section to further your search.
- **Websites of major local companies** (sometimes have bios of employees listing their education)
- **Local news and publications**

Duke Speaker

If you'd like to invite a speaker from Duke, begin the process as early as possible and be as flexible with your date as possible. Have a rough timeframe for when you'd like to have the event but be willing to work around the speaker's schedule. If a volunteer has a connection with a speaker, feel free to reach out directly, and be sure to keep your regional DAA staff person in the loop. If you don't have a connection, your regional DAA staff person can help you reach out to your target speaker.

Duke Faculty Fellows

The Faculty Fellows program was launched by DAA to showcase Duke's top faculty talent. Working with regional groups, faculty fellows can travel to local groups to provide quality educational programming in their areas of expertise. If you are interested in having a fellow do a presentation in your area, contact the DAA regional team as soon as possible to begin planning.

Trouble Finding a Speaker?

If you don't have a specific speaker in mind:

- Reach out to DAA staff for help by narrowing down a topic, such as the environment, health care, etc.
 - ▶ Check the ["Duke News & Communications Office" website](#) for a list of faculty by topic for ideas.
- DAA staff will send you back a list of faculty suggestions that match your topic.
- If you have a preference, rank the suggested faculty.
- Your regional DAA staff person will move down your ranked list, making asks until a speaker is available. A convenient date will then be determined.

Special Note: *When flying in a Duke speaker, attendance is crucial. To make it worth the speaker's time, you need to have at least 40-50 people in the room. Speaking to an empty room will not only be disappointing for the Duke speaker, but it will also make them less likely to agree to speak at another DAA event in the future. It is fine to open events to non-alumni to help boost attendance, and to simultaneously expose Duke to others.*

FUNDING

DAA will pay for the travel expenses for one Duke speaker per year (based on DAA's fiscal year of July-June). This will include any travel-related expense (airfare, hotel, meals, rental car, parking, etc.). DAA does not pay honoraria/speaking fees for speakers. Most local speakers will not have expenses.

Expenses for the event itself – room rental, catering, etc. – are the responsibility of the regional group. The event should be planned on a breakeven basis. Funding to cover expenses should come from registration fees charged to guests and subsidy from the local regional budget.

Event budget considerations:

- Decide charge for event or subsidize event
- Cost of venue (if any)
- Cost to provide food or refreshments

VENUE

Once the speaker and date have been confirmed, begin looking for a venue for your event. Consider who the speaker is and whether he/she will draw a big crowd; this will help determine how large the venue should be.

Helpful resources when looking for a venue:

- **Local regional volunteers** – Ask about connections and available free space at company offices and/or conference rooms
- **Local alumni** – Reach out to other alumni in the area to see if they have access to free space for the event; if the event will be small, ask if they are willing to host at their home
- **Libraries** – Many local libraries have meeting and conference room space with low rental fees
- **Local YMCA** – Rental fees tend to be free or low cost
- **Churches and other houses of worship** – Many churches have event space that they rent to local groups at relatively low cost

Trouble locating a venue, reach out to DAA staff for ideas on who to contact and/or other venues that have been used previously for similar event.

EVENT OUTLINE AND AGENDA

Set a timetable for the event that factors in some reception time, giving attendees a chance to network with each other and the speaker.

Sample Outline:

- ▶ Welcome and Speaker Introduction (5 minutes)
- ▶ Speaker Presentation (30 minutes)
- ▶ Q/A Session (10 minutes)
- ▶ Reception & Networking (30 minutes)
- **Touch base with the speaker a few days before the event.** Make sure he/she knows where the event is, what time he/she is expected to arrive, how the event will flow and who to call if he/she is delayed on the day of the event.
- A DAA staff member will **coordinate logistics and details** for all Duke speakers delayed on the day of the event.
- For Duke speakers, a DAA staff person will often be able to attend the event and will **ensure the speaker gets to the event on time.**
- If no DAA staff is able to attend, it's a nice gesture to **arrange for a volunteer to pick up the speaker** and bring him/her to the event.

PUBLICITY

- Begin promoting the event **4 weeks before the event date**
- Create an **event write up that describes the event, including background on the speaker and topic of discussion.** Refer to Duke's or the speaker's website for basic biographical info to include. Keep it short, while conveying why this speaker is interesting. For Duke speakers, the DAA staff will work with the speaker to come up with a title of the talk and will send the write up to the faculty for approval before it goes out (so factor a little extra time into the publicity process). Have local speakers approve the write up as well.
- DAA can create a **registration page** where alumni can RSVP for the event online.
- Coordinate with DAA to **add the event to the website, e-newsletter and to send an email to local alumni,** inviting them to the event. Provide a link to register/RSVP online in the e-mail invitation. Plan to send your email **at least 4 weeks before** the email, and a **follow-up email 2 weeks before** the event.
- Post event details to the regional Duke website and/or all relevant **Duke social media accounts** i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.
- Be sure to send a **reminder email to all RSVPs at least 2 days before** the event.

DAY-OF EVENT TO DOS

- Keep a **sign-in/registration sheet** to track all attendees to the event; assign volunteers to work sign-in table, beginning 30 minutes before the event and up to 15 minutes after the event begins. If possible, have nametags available for all attendees.
- **Greet speaker** when he/she arrives, **review event timeline and venue, test A/V, etc.**
- As a nice gesture, **prepare to present the speaker with an appreciation gift and thank you note** on behalf of the regional group.

POST-EVENT TO DOS

- **Send DAA a write-up of the event,** and include a **list of all event attendees** along with their contact information.
- Send a **thank-you email to all attendees;** include calendar of upcoming events, and ask for feedback on the event
- Send a **thank you note/email to the speaker**

TIMELINE

Secure a speaker and date for event

8 weeks out

Begin event publicity

4 weeks out

Confirm number of attendees, refreshments, if any and A/V

Day of event

5 weeks out

Secure an event venue and finalize event agenda

2 weeks out

Send reminder e-mail

1-2 days after

Send thank you e-mails to attendees and speaker; send write up to DAA