

## Initiatives to Increase Participation on the Alumni-Unicamp Platform

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### Abstract:

This article reports initiatives under development at the Institute of Biology (IB) of the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) to promote and expand the number of former students registered on the Alumni-Unicamp platform. In 2023, the Dean's Office and Institutes/Faculties partnered to launch the "**PrêmioEgressoDestaque**" (Alumni Excellence Award) honoring the professional excellence of past Unicamp students in their professions. The platform has been promoted at academic events such as Calourada (freshman welcome ceremony) and the UPA (Unicamp Open Doors).

**Keywords:** Alumni, Platform, Unicamp, Alumni Excellence Award

### Background and objectives:

Founded in 1966, Unicamp is a public institution renowned for its academic autonomy. Funded by the State of São Paulo government, Unicamp's financial resources encompass allocations from the state treasury alongside contributions from diverse national and international organizations. Unicamp has established itself as one of the most outstanding universities in the world and is considered by Times Higher Education as the third-best university in Latin America.

Encompassing four campuses in Campinas, Limeira, Piracicaba, and Paulínia, Unicamp fosters a diverse academic environment. It houses 24 teaching and research units, 23 interdisciplinary centers, two major hospital complexes (Hospital de Clínicas and Caism), and two technical high schools (Cotuca and Cotil). This vibrant community accommodates roughly 50k individuals daily.

It has approximately 34k students enrolled in 66 undergraduate courses and 153 graduate programs. Over five decades, Unicamp's undergraduate programs have empowered more than 65k. Due to this significant number and recognizing the value of reconnecting with its former students, Unicamp launched the Alumni-Unicamp platform in 2020. The number of registrants on the platform has been increasing with the initiatives adopted.

### Process:

In 2023, the Dean's Office launched the "Prêmio Egresso Destaque", the 1st Alumni Excellence Award to honor the professional excellence of past Unicamp students in their professions. The award categories in the Dean's Office public notice were "undergraduate alumni", "graduate alumni" and "technical course alumni". Each Teaching Unit awarded a former student in each category.

Eligibility for the prize required the registration on the Alumni-Unicamp platform and completion of the course at least five years prior. Institutes were granted autonomy in defining both judging committees and evaluation criteria. It was recommended the establishment of a three-member judging committee, with one member designated as the teaching unit's alumni facilitator.

The IB elected a committee composed of two professors and the IB platform facilitator that established the following evaluation criteria: a motivation letter detailing a significant field-related activity, its social impact, and the undergraduate/graduate degree's contribution to its success; a curriculum vitae; and supporting documentation. In the event of a tie, priority would be given to candidates who completed the program in the shortest timeframe and those with the least disciplinary disapproval.

The Institute received five award entries, three in the Undergraduate category and two in the Graduate category. Officiating at the awards ceremony, the Dean presented printed certificates to the honored alumni.

### **Outcomes and Impacts:**

Analysis suggests that the implementation of the Alumni Excellence Award and the platform promotion at Calourada (Freshman Welcome Ceremony) and the UPA (Unicamp Open Doors) resulted in a significant 10% rise in former student registrations on the platform.

Twenty-two of the twenty-six teaching units participated in the program. A total of thirty-one alumni were involved, with representation from one technical course graduate, fourteen undergraduate and sixteen graduate students.

### **Conclusion:**

We concluded that the limited timeframe for both announcing the award to former students and enabling Units to establish judging criteria likely contributed to the low registration numbers. To encourage greater alumni participation in forthcoming editions, initiatives include a broader dissemination of the public notice by the Dean, coupled with the allocation of a budgetary incentive.

Despite the initial challenges, the first edition of the award program witnessed a noteworthy increase in graduate registrations on the platform. Building on this success, we are firmly committed to sustaining these initiatives in the coming years. Our ultimate goal is to foster a more dynamic academic environment that attracts and retains alumni participation.

### **Sources:**

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