

Viewpoint

Birth of the high-energy network

The CERN Alumni Programme will offer unique networking opportunities for all its members.



A career networking event at CERN organised by the LHC experiment collaborations in 2016.

By Laure Esteveny

With over 60 years of history and currently more than 13,000 users from all over the world, CERN clearly has great potential to bring together a varied alumni community. Today, CERN alumni are distributed around the world, pursuing their careers and passions across many fields including industry, economics, information technology, medicine and finance. Several have gone on to launch successful start-ups, some of them directly applying CERN-inspired technologies.

Setting up and nurturing this important network is a strategic objective for CERN management. Following 12 months of careful preparation, the new CERN Alumni Programme will be launched in June this year.

The new community, united by a shared pride in having contributed to CERN's scientific endeavours, will provide an opportunity for alumni to maintain links with the Organization. It will allow them to continue to share CERN's values and support its activities, and serve as a valuable resource for members of personnel in the transition to work outside the laboratory. Physicists, in particular, often consider CERN as a "prime environment" that comes just after academia. The prospect of having to leave CERN may be daunting, with no guarantee that one's professional future will offer a similar environment and possibilities. However, preliminary statistics on the CERN alumni community demonstrate that professional experience at CERN nurtures skills and talents that are highly sought after by employers and can aid the development of alumni careers in many different fields.

The CERN Alumni Programme has been purposely designed to be inclusive. Former users, associates,

students, fellows, staff, and any member of personnel who has held a contract of either employment or association with CERN, may join the alumni community simply by registering. Current members of personnel will also be able to register and interact with the alumni, as well as partner companies. The final objective is to establish a dynamic, long-lasting and high-energy network of engaged members.

Since November 2016 it has been possible for previous and current members of personnel who wish to become members of the network to leave their contact details on the alumni webpage (see below), which CERN will use to contact them once the new web platform is up and running. Registered members of the CERN alumni community will have access to dedicated editorial content, opportunities to exchange experiences and establish contacts with other alumni, in addition to career development opportunities. The aim is to gather a large number of members, whether they are former colleagues still working in academia, have set up their own businesses, have moved into completely different professional environments, or have retired but wish to stay connected.

CERN alumni will themselves be actively involved in building the community, which will evolve with them. The advisory board of the new programme will include representatives from the community as well as members of CERN management. Alumni will be able to set up thematic groups within the community based on factors such as regional interests and scientific topics. A mobile app will help them to stay connected with news, events and networking activities that are published by the community.

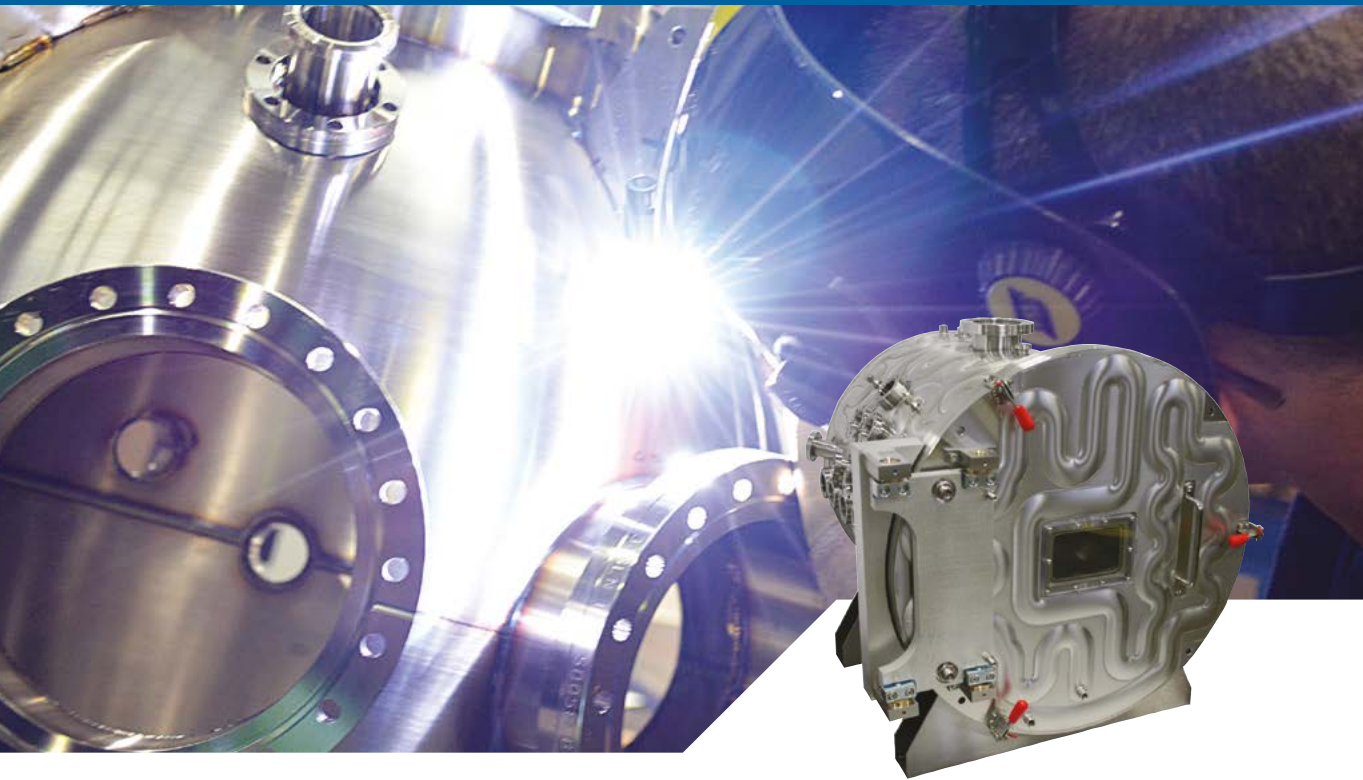
The CERN Alumni Programme kick-off event will be held on 2–3 February 2018. In addition to offering unique networking opportunities, it will be possible to visit the LHC and its experiments as well as experimental areas that are usually not accessible to the public. Inspiring seminars and several panel sessions will complete the programme. The event is designed to be a valuable experience for all different types of alumni, from young scientists who have recently left CERN to those with long-standing careers in different fields, and many others.

We are aware that it will be a challenge to reach all of our alumni spread across the planet over such a long period. If you are one of them, do not hesitate to leave your contact details at <https://alumni.cern/>. It is the best way to show your interest, join the new community and stay connected with CERN. We also invite you to get in touch with any questions by emailing alumni.relations@cern.ch. We will be very happy to welcome you back to CERN again!

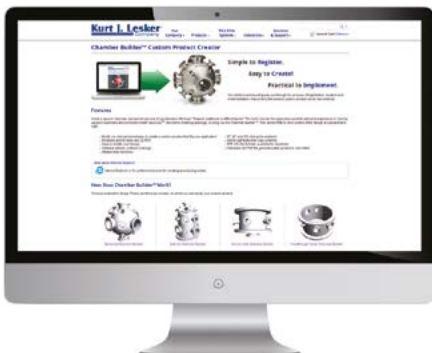


Laure Esteveny, senior adviser on strategic planning and evaluation for CERN's director for international relations, is project leader for the CERN Alumni Programme.

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