



AFFINITY GROUPS

Information Guide

And

Frequently Asked Questions

The University of Chicago Affinity Groups

What is the purpose of Chicago Affinity Groups?

Chicago Affinity Groups are a means through which alumni can continue their association with the University of Chicago by engaging with each other around shared professional interests, shared identities, or shared University experiences. These Affinity Groups complement the work of our regional clubs, class councils, and professional alumni associations and are open to individuals from all areas of the University of Chicago community, including alumni, parents, and friends.

Which Chicago Affinity Groups are currently in existence?

Professional Interest Affinity Groups:

Life Sciences Alumni
Law Alumni Group (including the Committee on Legal Nought)
Military Alumni

Shared Identity Groups:

LGBT Alumni Network
Chicago Women's Alliance (CWA)
University of Chicago Association of Black Alumni (UCABA)
Latino Alumni
Christian Alumni

Shared University Experiences:

Chicago Men's A Capella Choir Alumni

If you are interested in joining or volunteering for an existing group, or possibly forming a new group, please email affinity@uchicago.edu

What are the responsibilities of Chicago Affinity Group volunteers?

1. Recruit members to increase alumni engagement with an eye to developing new leadership
2. Work with fellow Affinity Group committee members, volunteers, and Alumni Association staff liaison to discuss goals, activities, and strategies for the group
3. Attend Affinity Group events where possible
4. Develop by-laws once the group is well established in conjunction with ABG guidelines
5. Provide a year-end report of Affinity Group activities (fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30)
6. Record attendance for group events and submit to the Alumni Association staff liaison
7. Act as an ambassador for the group by explaining the group's goals to potential new members when attending events or speaking with other alumni, parents, and friends of the University of Chicago
8. Manage the group's website information including: announcements, volunteer updates, and events

What resources does the University provide?

1. Provide marketing support through Alumni Association websites and email blasts for established groups
2. Access to publicity for the Affinity Group through printed brochures whenever possible
3. Provide the group with a staff liaison for other departments within the University and work with regional clubs, class councils, and the graduate / professional schools alumni associations to develop cross-interest programming
4. Funding is available on a limited basis to support activities of individual affinity groups and funding is to be discussed with the staff liaison in well advance of the activity

What are the responsibilities of the Alumni Association?

1. Work with leadership members to identify new committee members
2. Attend meetings to determine how the group is reaching assigned goals and help strategize if they are not being met
3. Maintain the database of members and provide membership lists
4. Provide logistical support for event planning on an as needed basis
5. Attend Affinity Group events when possible
6. Share knowledge of best practices

Commonly asked questions

1. Does the Alumni Association fund Chicago Affinity Group events?

Generally speaking, the Affinity Groups do not receive funding for activities and initiatives. Please contact your staff liaison if you would like to receive funding for an Affinity Group project.

2. How long is the term of a board or committee member?

The commitment length on a board or committee is determined by the by-laws for that particular Affinity Group. For other groups within the Alumni Association, board or committee members commit for a minimum of one to two years with an option to renew.

3. Am I expected to attend all meetings by phone or in person if I am on the committee?

If for any reason you cannot attend, you are expected to let the other members know that you will not be in attendance.

4. How often are conference calls or in person meetings held?

The group may choose to meet once a month or every two months.

5. Do I have to attend events if I am part of the committee or board?

We encourage board/committee members to attend Volunteer Caucus and ask all committee/board members to attend at least one University event per year.

6. Will the staff liaison be at our Affinity Group event?

Due to the fact that each staff liaison person supports multiple affinity groups, it will not be possible for us to attend every event.

7. What types of events have been done in the past by Affinity Groups?

Chicago Affinity Groups have successfully organized networking events, lectures by faculty or distinguished alumni, happy hours, and dinners. Some events appeal to certain groups more than others.

8. How do I host an event for members of my Affinity Group?

Many volunteers enjoy hosting events for Affinity Group members in their regions. If you are interested in hosting a dinner in your home, or an event at a local restaurant, please contact your staff liaison. He or she will supply you with contact information for members in your area and will help market the event through the University communications department.

Many volunteers find inviting Affinity Group members to gather before an Alumni Club or other University event to be helpful. For example, you may wish to invite a group to attend a Harper Lecture together and gather for drinks at a local bar afterward.

9. How are Affinity Groups different from Regional Clubs?

Regional Clubs are only based on geographical location and include all alumni, parents, and friends in that area. Affinity Groups require the members to self-select for membership based on a shared identity or interest.

10. Do I have to make a gift in order to be a member of an Affinity Group?

No. Gifts to the University are not required for membership.

Possibilities for Chicago Affinity Groups

As groups develop, they may focus on whoever activities are most relevant to them. An emerging group can acquire new members and publicize their name in the community. Well-established groups might fundraise for an on-campus student group that reflects the group's own passion or interest. A moderately well-established group may grow chapters in different areas of the country or the world which shows interest in their affinity.

Groups succeed when they recognize and develop leadership, meet regularly to discuss ideas and build cohesiveness, and plan activities around the goals of the group.