



Affinity Group, Chapter & Friends

Handbook

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I. What is a Chapter?

An alumni chapter offers opportunities for alumni in a specific geographic region to connect based on their passion for Georgia College. A chapter is a community of alumni that come together to celebrate their alma mater wherever they may roam, and act as local advocates for the Georgia College Alumni Association.

II. What is an Affinity Group?

An affinity group offers opportunities for alumni of shared interests and common bonds to connect on meaningful levels beyond the traditional regional structure, whether that connection is based on identity, experiences, or personal interests. The Georgia College Alumni Association fosters opportunities for alumni to connect to the university and each other in ways that address these special interests and common bonds.

III. What is a Friend?

Friends are defined as individuals who are not graduates of Georgia College, but share a common love and vested interest for the advancement of the University. Some examples of “friends” are parents of Georgia College students or alumni, faculty and staff, donors and individuals who were members of Georgia College student organizations during their tenure. To be a member of a particular affinity group or chapter, the friend must meet the minimum criteria of that organization. For example, they must be African American to be a member of the African American Alumni Council or stay in or near the surrounding areas of Nashville to be a member of the Nashville Alumni Chapter.

IV. Chapters/Affinity Groups Support Role for Purpose, Mission and Goals

A. Purpose

The chapter and affinity group’s purpose is to be the foundation for engagement by providing innovative events and opportunities for alumni to connect with the University, the Alumni Association, and with one another.

B. How Chapter and Affinity Groups support the Alumni Association

Mission:

1. Act as advocates for Georgia College.
2. Facilitate Georgia College events and programming focused on increasing involvement within all alumni age groups and for diversified interest areas.
3. Foster a spirit of camaraderie and sentiment among alumni who reside in common regions and/or share similar interest.

4. Respond to inquiries from the Alumni Association, other volunteers, and alumni promptly.

C. Goals

1. To encourage alumni and friends of Georgia College to maintain an active relationship with the university and with each other.
2. To serve alumni, parents, and friends by:
 - a. Providing social and professional networking opportunities through events and activities within their own communities.
 - b. Helping Bobcats to stay connected with Georgia College by keeping them informed about major university events or simply by providing the opportunity for alumni to share their campus memories and experiences.
 - c. Providing enrichment or educational programs that provide lifelong learning opportunities.
3. To serve our university by:
 - a. Helping alumni stay involved with the university.
 - b. Providing feedback to the campus through the Alumni Association.
 - c. Serving as ambassadors of the Alumni Association to their communities.
 - d. Providing their time and resources to aid in Georgia College's goal for preeminence

V. Chapter and Affinity Group Relationship with the Alumni Board of Directors

- The Alumni Board of Directors is the governing body of the Alumni Association. Each Affinity Group and Chapter will provide updates to the Alumni Board on their events and activities (membership increases, scholarships, fundraising campaigns etc.).
- A representative from each Affinity Group and Chapter will serve on a committee with the Alumni Board of Directors. This will allow each group to share interests and concerns with one another.

2. Based on current societal trends, the Alumni Association takes the initial steps to form a group and seeks out alumni volunteers.

VIII. Steps to become a Chapter or Affinity Group

A. Initial Request

1. Check the Alumni Association website to ensure that the group you wish to create does not already exist.
2. Contact the University Advancement Department for additional information.
3. For Affinity Groups, please fill out Affinity Group Questionnaire and submit online.

B. Informational Meeting/Call

1. The University Advancement Department will contact the alumnus/alumna who made the initial request to discuss the proposed alumni group.
 - a. The discussion will include the individual's relationship to Georgia College; number of other alumni who are interested in forming the group; the list of alumni associated with the proposed group, if applicable; affiliations with other organizations; ideas for events, and related student groups, etc.

C. Submission of Required Materials

- a. After the follow-up meeting, the primary alumni contact will gather the necessary requirements (listed below) and submit them to the University Advancement Department
- b. Memorandum of Understanding
- c. Confidentiality Agreement

D. Approval

1. Once all materials are received, the Alumni Board of Directors will review the documents and approve the organization for listing on the Alumni Association website.

E. Contact your fellow Bobcats

1. Work with the University Advancement Department to understand the system and process for sending emails to alumni in your market and to get your social media channels established.
2. Send out your first e-mail, using resources available to you through the University Advancement Department, and start making connections and friends!
3. Stay in touch through social media.

IX. Requirements for Establishment

These requirements are necessary to start your chapter or affinity group, maintain your active-status and reap all the benefits associated with being a registered Georgia College Alumni Association affiliated group.

A. Membership Requirements

1. To initiate an alumni chapter or affinity group, there should be a suggested minimum of 15 alumni who have demonstrated an interest in establishing and maintaining the group.
2. All chapter and affinity groups, regardless of size, level of activity, and complexity should develop a leadership team, or steering committee, to ensure that:
 - a. Responsibility for planning and implementation of events and outreach is distributed in manageable portions.
 - b. Diversified program planning is developed that is responsive to the variety of interests and needs of targeted alumni.

B. Executive Committee

1. The Executive Director of the Alumni Association, in consultation with their committee, will assign leadership positions for the first two years. After which, the members of the Chapters and Affinity Groups will be responsible for voting on leadership. Those who receive the majority vote will be placed onto the Executive Committee. Alumni Affinity Group and Alumni Chapter Executive Committee members cannot serve on the Executive Committee of the Alumni Board of Directors simultaneously.
2. Positions to be filled:
 - a. President: point person for all major information.
 - b. Vice-President: to create scholarship opportunities and assist the President as needed.
 - c. Secretary: to maintain notes and meeting minutes, and e-mail or social media maintenance.
 - d. Event Coordinator: to facilitate events.
3. Executive Committee Position Details:
 - a. President: The president must assume the responsibility for the coordination of all activities sponsored by the chapter. The president has the responsibility to adhere to the guidelines established by the Alumni Association for its affiliated chapters and to report to the Association on matters relating to the chapter's activities.
 - b. Vice-President: Shall, in the President's absence, preside over all meetings and perform other duties as assigned by the President. Primary role will be as a Scholarship Coordinator. The Vice President will research and develop plans to fund existing scholarships as well as creating new ones. They will form a Scholarship Committee within the Affinity Group and oversee its members. The Vice President will also

be eligible for selection to serve on the Scholarship Committee of the Alumni Board of Directors and participate in the voting process for Georgia College scholarship recipients.

- c. Secretary: The Secretary will prepare and send to the Alumni Office a report of the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings and chapter activities within one week after their occurrence. The Secretary should also make every attempt to continually update the chapter's membership list (full names, addresses, and phone numbers). The secretary should notify the Alumni office of address changes, deaths, marriages, and births. Will arrange notices of Council meetings and activities. Will book meeting locations, be responsible for all outgoing correspondence, and will perform other duties as assigned by the president.
- d. Event Coordinator: The event coordinator will help create innovative events to engage alumni. They will scout venues to host off-campus events and communicate with Committee President and the Alumni Association's Assistant Director of Alumni Awards, Reunions and Collaborations for event logistics. Create a Calendar of Events for the fiscal year. They will form an Events Committee within the Affinity Group and oversee its members.

C. Meetings

- 1. The Executive Committee must have three meetings per year. One meeting in the fall, spring, and summer. Members must be present, or join virtually, for 2/3 of the annual meetings.
 - a. In the event no general membership meeting is held during either of the six-month periods of July 1 through December 31 or January through June 30 or both, the Alumni Association shall have the power to declare that a vacancy exists in the office of the council president and shall proceed with assistance to appoint a new president and to reorganize the chapter.

X. Requirements to Sustain Active Status

A. Affinity Groups:

- 1. Must have at least two alumni events per fiscal year (shall not exceed more than 4)
 - a. One event must be at Alumni Weekend in November or Homecoming Weekend in February
 - b. Must alternate events between these two weekends
 - i. Groups are permitted to have events at both Alumni Weekend and Homecoming in the same fiscal year
 - ii. Groups are not permitted to have events during Alumni Weekend in two consecutive fiscal years without having had an event at Homecoming and vice versa
- 2. Examples of additional events

- a. Life-long Learning Events
 - b. Networking Events
 - c. Fundraising Events
 - d. Collaborations with Student Organizations
3. Executive Committee must maintain 100% giving towards Georgia College Foundation or Georgia College Alumni Association Accounts
 - a. No minimum dollar amount

B. Chapters:

1. Must have at least one regional alumni event per fiscal year.
2. Executive Committee must maintain 100% giving towards Georgia College Foundation or Georgia College Alumni Association Accounts
 - a. No minimum dollar amount

C. Grounds for Dismissal

1. Failure to meet the aforementioned requirements
2. Unprofessional conduct that undermines the intent and goals of Georgia College
3. Financial instability
4. The group chooses to dissolve itself