WHAT IS AN AFFINITY GROUP?

An affinity group offers opportunities for alumni of shared interests and common bonds to stay connected to the University of Rochester and to connect with each other beyond the traditional class and regional structure. This connection can be based on identity, previous involvement with student organizations, or interests (personal, career specialties, etc.). University of Rochester Alumni Relations (AR) relies on affinity groups to assist in providing opportunities for alumni to connect to the university and to each other in ways that address these special interest and common bonds.

WHY CREATE AN ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP?

Affinity groups allow alumni to:

- Create a medium through which alumni can reconnect with each other around shared experiences, interests, and identities;
- Increase opportunities for alumni to get involved and meet other UR alumni;
- Promote leadership;
- Foster a sense of community within the alumni population; and
- Support a culture of philanthropy for the university.

TYPES OF ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUPS
(with examples)

- Identity-based groups
  - UR New York Metro Women
  - Multicultural Alumni Network
- Student Experience-based groups
  - Athletic Alumni
  - Greek Alumni
- Interest-based groups
  - UR Finance Alumni
  - UR Green Alumni Network
MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT

To initiate an alumni affinity group, there must be at least ten (10) alumni who have demonstrated an interest in establishing and maintaining the group.

AFFINITY GROUP STRUCTURE

I. Leadership Structure
Each alumni affinity group should be managed and governed by an executive board. There should be a minimum of six individuals willing to assume one of the group’s leadership roles:

- Past Chair (2 years)
- Chair (2 years)
- Vice-Chair/Treasurer (2 years)
- Membership & Student Relations Chair
- Marketing Chair
- Events Chair

A roster of founding members must be completed with the names of the group’s first ten members and submitted to the Office of Alumni Relations.

II. Leadership Descriptions
As noted above, the Executive Board leadership structure is required to have a minimum of the six listed leadership positions. Below are sample position descriptions for each of those six positions.

- **Chair:** The Chair is responsible for leadership within the organization, including presiding over executive board and general meetings. The Chair will serve as the primary liaison to UR and the Office of Alumni Relations. The Chair is charged with upholding the group’s constitution, achieving the group’s mission statement and ensuring the group fulfills the ongoing requirements set forth by the UR Office of Alumni Relations.

- **Past Chair (not applicable for the first two years of the group’s existence):** The Past Chair shall ensure that past knowledge necessary for successfully governing the affinity group is conveyed to the current Chair. The Past Chair will serve as counsel to the current Chair, and will also ensure that the group’s vision and plan are aligned with Advancement’s strategic priorities.

- **Vice-Chair/Treasurer:** The duties of the Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall include: assuming the rights and responsibilities of the Chair, should the Chair vacate their position; and, assuming responsibility for assisting the Chair in providing leadership within the organization. In executive and general meetings, assume responsibilities of Chair in his or her absence. The Vice Chair/ Treasurer will also manage the group’s budget,
which will include any budgeted funds provided by Alumni Relations, event/program expenses, and income generated by events.

- **Membership & Student Relations Chair:** The Membership & Student Relations Chair shall oversee all matters regarding membership including, but not limited to, recruiting alumni; maintaining a current roster of interested members; providing Alumni Relations with updated information for data management; and, creating membership material to be used at events. Additionally, he or she will serve as the primary contact linking UR students to the group, with responsibilities including: (a) establishing necessary contacts with various university departments and related student organizations, (b) assisting the Marketing Chair with creating a visual presence at university events, and (c) serving as the group’s connection to the concerns of current students.

- **Marketing Chair:** The duties of the Marketing Chair shall be to: (a) publicize the group’s activities to the membership as well as to the University community; (b) produce and distribute monthly newsletters, if applicable; and, (c) develop marketing strategies for each group event.
  - **Suggested additional responsibilities:** Managing the group’s activity and presence on various social media channels (where applicable), working with the Affinity Group Liaison on submissions to Rochester Buzz or other e-communications offered by Alumni Relations, etc.

- **Events Chair:** The duties of the Events Chair shall be to: (a) assist with scheduling events, including developing a calendar of events, (b) collaborate with the Marketing Chair to distribute information about the group’s activities; and (c) oversee the planning of group activities that go beyond the scope of regular meetings.

**GROUP LEADERSHIP MEETINGS**

Each group is required to host a minimum of two programming meetings and one strategy session each year. The number of programming meetings will depend on the size of your group and number of events your group will host.

Minutes of the group leadership meetings should be submitted to your Affinity Group Liaison within five business days following the meeting.
STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT

At the beginning of each fiscal year, active alumni groups will be required to submit a Strategic Planning Document. The document will include the group’s plans for the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), including:

- Group goals for upcoming fiscal year
- Proposed calendar of events;
- Proposed calendar of Executive Board meetings; and
- Anticipated budget needs

The Strategic Planning Document will be due to your Affinity Group Liaison by the end of July each fiscal year.

SEMI-ANNUAL UPDATES

A brief update must be submitted to your Affinity Group Liaison every January 15. The statement should include:

- Events and programs conducted within the past six months;
- Upcoming events;
- An updated membership list (if applicable);
- Questions from members that AR may be able to answer (if applicable); and
- Other updates for Alumni Relations.

END OF YEAR ANALYSIS

An annual analysis must be submitted to your Affinity Group Liaison by June 30 each year. The report must include:

- The number of new alumni (with school and degree information) discovered/located by the group. (Current year graduates should not be included in this number.);
- An updated membership list and names of leadership;
- The number of activities that were conducted in the past year;
- Any co-sponsorships with other groups/departments; and
- (If applicable) A member acknowledgement section, recognizing professional achievements of members and other note-worthy accomplishments
ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

As a reminder, all groups will conduct their activities according to the following group principles:

- Accurately promote the overall mission of the University of Rochester in a positive manner.
- Promote a spirit of service to the University and alumni community.
- Strive to strengthen the relationship between alumni and the University.
- Actively engage in communication with Alumni Relations about event planning and for continual guidance and support.
- Accurately represent the interests of members and other constituents.
- Create opportunities for diverse alumni participation in organization activities.
- Align with Advancement strategic priorities