

How to Start an Alumni Affinity or Specialty Interest Group

Creation of new Groups

- New Affinity Groups can be proposed to the Alumni Council Affinity Group Chair and the Office of Alumni Engagement at any point throughout the year. Proposals must include the following:
 - Name of Alumnus proposing.
 - Clearly identified goals for the group.
 - List of at least **25** interested alumni in participating in the group along with a proposed chair of the group.
- Upon receipt and review of each new proposal the Alumni Council Affinity Group Chair and the Office of Alumni Engagement will determine if the proposal should move forward to the Alumni Council for a full vote and approval or if there is additional information needed by the proposing party.
- Affinity groups will be officially granted approval upon full vote of approval by the Alumni Council.

Recognized Affinity Group Requirements

A recognized affinity group must maintain at least **25** alumni members, have a mission and common goal, and have approval from the Geisel and Dartmouth Health Office of Alumni Engagement.

Types of Affinity Groups

Affinity groups must fall under one of the below classifications:

- Cultural/Heritage - Alumni who share, identify with, and would like to participate in cultural and/or ethnic groups.
- Specialty – based on professional practice and interest. Regional – Organized on a geographic basis in cities throughout the United States, and internationally, wherever there is sufficient interest and a concentration of alumni.

Affinity Group Structure and Membership

- Groups should be comprised of at least **25** members and include one Chair or two Co-Chairs. The Chair(s) must commit to serving a minimum of a **two-year** term with two additional terms for a maximum of **3 terms**.

- Affinity Group Membership should be inclusive of all those in the Geisel and Dartmouth Health Community who identify or affiliate with the mission of the Group. This includes students, faculty, and Dartmouth College alumni in Healthcare and Biomedical Sciences.
- Groups will be reviewed every **two** years coinciding with the transition of the Chair(s) role.
 - Reviews will include but are not limited to:
 - Meeting with the transitioning Chair(s), incoming Chair(s), Alumni Council Affinity Group Chair, and the Office of Alumni Engagement to discuss current goals/priorities, challenges, membership, and plans for the next **two** years.

Guiding Principles for Formation and Operations

- Gather Interest: Plan a gathering of the core group of alumni. At this informal gathering, share with the assembled group the idea of an alumni affinity group and collect names of people who might be willing to participate.
- Initial Alumni Meeting: Set up an initial meeting for all alumni who have expressed an interest in the potential affinity group. At this meeting, your primary goals are for alumni to become acquainted with one another, delegate responsibilities, brainstorm ideas for events and activities, gather names and contact information, and develop a target list of alumni who might be interested in affiliating.
- Leadership: Once the initial meeting is held, an affinity group must identify an alumni Chair(s) from the individuals who attended the meeting.
- Development of Mission and Goals for first year: Subsequent planning meetings should include the development of an annual plan for engagement within this group, to include,
 - Events: Groups must plan at least one event (virtual or in-person) annually.
 - All events must be proposed and approved in accordance with the Office of Alumni Engagement policies and procedures.
 - Programming: Groups must develop one annual professional development program that includes networking.
 - Affinity Groups will have access to a modest budget overseen by the Director of Alumni Engagement.
 - Communications: Chairs are expected to meet and/or communicate with group members and the Office of Alumni Engagement regularly.
 - All drafted communications to the broader alumni body by the group Chair(s) must be coordinated, reviewed, and approved by the Office of Alumni Engagement.
 - All communications to the broader alumni body should be planned in a timely fashion and have finalized approved content at least 10 business days prior to distribution.

Affinity Group Chair(s) Responsibilities

- Serve at least one **two**-year term.
- Serve as the point of contact for the Office of Alumni Engagement (OAE) in regards to all matters pertaining to the Affinity Group.
- With the help of the Office of Alumni Engagement:
 - Establish and manage Affinity Group meetings and agendas.
 - Craft communication as necessary on behalf of or to the Affinity Group.
 - Facilitate organization of events and programming based on the group's mission.
- Present updates annually at the Spring Alumni Council Meeting.

For any questions regarding the above or the creation of a new group, please email Geisel.Alumni.Relations@dartmouth.edu.