

GVSU Alumni

Laker for a Lifetime

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WHAT IS AN AFFINITY ALUMNI NETWORK?

An Affinity Alumni Network is a group with an affiliation to a certain college/major, program, industry, student organization, or other special interest group who unite through periodic events to socialize, network, and participate in community service in order to stay connected with each other and the university. Networks are recognized by, and accountable to, GVSU Alumni Relations. They are led by a Campus Liaison and volunteer alumni leaders.

The purpose of an Affinity Alumni Network:

- Bring alumni together for networking, professional development, social activities, lifelong learning, and community service.
- Build relationships among GVSU alumni both personally and professionally.
- Provide support to students, alumni, and the campus department(s) in the respective affinity.
- Support the mission of the Alumni Relations office.
 - We [Alumni Relations] strive to provide Grand Valley alumni with a sense of community and pride, as well as lifelong learning opportunities. We do this by engaging alumni with student support activities, social and professional development events, communications, ways to give, and academic resources.
- Advance the mission of GVSU.
- Be a GVSU presence in communities – Go Lakers!
- Provide at least two-yearly opportunities for fellowship and networking.
- Mobilize alumni to meet special needs of the university.
- Contribute new ideas to Alumni Relations about existing or possible programs.

HOW TO START AN AFFINITY ALUMNI NETWORK

- Make a campus connection – Affinity Alumni Networks are required to have a Campus Liaison from a department related to their affinity group. This Campus Liaison will be responsible for requesting alumni contact lists, sending emails, creating events, and requesting funds.
- Find alumni help – Networks with multiple alumni leaders (2-3) find it easier to complete the planning process and to plot for succession. Alumni leaders are responsible for generating and implementing event ideas through close partnership with their Campus Liaison, as well as recruiting and promoting events to their alumni networks.
- Complete and submit the [Affinity Alumni Network Application](#). Either the main Alumni Contact or Campus Liaison may submit the application.
- The Affinity Alumni Network Application will be reviewed by the Alumni Relations office. This process may take several weeks.
- Once approved, participate in a virtual orientation with the Alumni Relations office.

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY ALUMNI RELATIONS

- The Alumni Relations office will financially provide up to \$750 per fiscal year to each official Alumni Affinity Alumni Network meeting the requirements.
- Aid in drafting and promoting an Affinity Alumni Network interest survey to your alumni population.
- Provide promotional support in e-newsletters, social media, and calendar of events as well as creating specific Affinity Alumni Network graphics.
- Send quarterly newsletters with resources, reminders, and best practices to Affinity Alumni Network leaders and Campus Liaisons.
- Host two annual virtual meetings to provide additional support, reminder, and share best practices with alumni leaders and Campus Liaisons.
- Host and manage an Affinity Alumni Network webpage on www.gvsu.edu/alumni/networks.
- Provide swag and giveaway items for engagement activities.
- Assist in finding speakers/presenters/alumni volunteers as needed.
- Send and collect an Alumni Network Annual Report survey link.
- Thank and support our Campus Liaisons and Alumni Leaders.

REQUIREMENTS OF AFFINITY ALUMNI NETWORKS

GENERAL

- Plan and host the required minimum two annual engagement activities.
- Communicate consistently with the Alumni Relations staff and inquiring alumni.
- Manage and properly engage with Affinity Alumni Network alumni population (via email, social media, or other communications outlets).
- Encouraged to make an annual financial gift to the university and encourage others to do the same (there is no minimum requirement).
- Be able to devote the necessary time to the organization.
- Complete the [Alumni Network Annual Survey](#) at the end of each fiscal year.

CAMPUS LIAISON

- Responsible for CMS event creation; tagging “alumni” when event is on the main GVSU calendar to cross-promote on the Alumni Events calendar; requesting and managing transferred funds from Alumni Relations to support Alumni Network events; requesting alumni information list pulls; creating and sending promotional/newsletter emails; other internal GVSU actions as needed.
- Engage alumni via the social media platforms.
- Work with the Alumni Leader(s) to develop, plan, and implement activities and outreach for Alumni Network.
- Email will be listed on the website, so alumni can reach out directly with questions.

ALUMNI LEADER

- Support, plan, host, brainstorm, and work closely with the Campus Liaison to coordinate activities and outreach for the Alumni Network.
- Engage alumni via the social media platforms.
- Be an advocate for the university/department/industry/Alumni Network to peers.
- Show enthusiasm for and support of GVSU, as well as a desire to further the interests and visibility of GVSU in the community, among the affinity base, and nationally.

RESOURCES

- [Alumni Relations Home Page – gvsu.edu/alumni](https://gvsu.edu/alumni)
- [Alumni Networks Webpage – gvsu.edu/alumni/networks](https://gvsu.edu/alumni/networks)
- [Resources for Campus Partners – gvsu.edu/alumni/campuspartners](https://gvsu.edu/alumni/campuspartners)
 - Affinity Network Graphics
- [Affinity Alumni Network Application](#)
- [Alumni Network Annual Survey](#)
- [File and List Request Form](#)
- [Social Media Guidelines](#)
- [Social Media Ambassadors](#)

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES BEST PRACTICES

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Lifelong Learning/Professional Development
 - Keynote/alumni guest speaker
 - Educational outings/workshops/webinars
- Student Support
 - Alumni panels
 - Write encouraging cards to students during exams
 - Host an event where a portion of the ticket price supports a related GVSU scholarship
- Social/Networking
 - Gatherings around local events (parades, concerts, art festivals, etc.)
 - Local tours (architecture, museums, bike, boat, etc.)
 - Activities (athletics, bowling, arcades, sporting events, escape rooms, etc.)
- Community Service
 - Collaborate with local organizations
 - Park/beach clean-up

PLANNING TIPS

- Brainstorm and research your event's goals, date/time, location, and capacity.
- Campus Liaison will create event on Grand Valley's Content Management System (CMS);
 - Include it on the Main GVSU Calendar and tag "alumni" to be included in Alumni Relations promotions and on the Alumni event calendar.
- Campus Liaison can request up to \$750 per fiscal year for event support.
- Campus Liaison will request a contact list of alumni through the [File and List Request Form](#), to email the event promotion to your alumni audience.
- Request swag and giveaways from the Alumni Relations office by emailing alumni@gvsu.edu.
- Create the Facebook Event and make the GVSU Alumni Association a co-host.
- Alumni Leaders personally promote the event via social media platforms and connections.
- Attend and host the event. This includes but is not limited to: set-up, welcoming, talking points, registration, and taking pictures.
- Post event, the Alumni Relations team will reach out for a list of attendees.
 - If you have any pictures, please share those as well, in the original format/size.
- Send a thank you email to those who attended, consider including a survey to aid in planning your next engagement activity.
 - Alumni Relations can provide a sample survey to use.
- Post photographs to social media pages.