

CLUB LEADER HANDBOOK

A Guide to Leading an Alumni Club



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY®
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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OVERVIEW/CONTACT

All Grand Valley State University graduates are automatically members of the Grand Valley Alumni Association for life. Membership is just another part of being a Laker for a Lifetime, helping alumni stay informed, get involved, give back, and have Laker pride. One way that alumni stay involved with their alma mater is through clubs.

The Alumni Relations Office and Grand Valley value our alumni clubs and are grateful for your leadership and involvement. The information provided in this handbook is designed to provide you with the information and tools to be a successful club leader.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your staff liaison, Courtney Geurink, at (616) 331- 3593 or geurinkc@gvsu.edu.

WHAT IS AN ALUMNI CLUB?

An alumni club is a group of Grand Valley graduates who live in a concentrated geographical area (at least 200+ alumni within a tri-county/hour radius) and unite through periodic events to socialize, network, and participate in community service in order to stay connected to the university and each other. Clubs are recognized by, and accountable to, GVSU Alumni Relations and are led by alumni club leaders who live in the designated area.

The purpose of a club is to

- advance the mission of the Alumni Association, which advances the mission of the university;
- be a GVSU presence in communities;
- promote the interests and welfare of GVSU and its constituents;
- provide at least one yearly opportunity for fellowship and networking;
- provide one yearly community service project during Community Outreach Week;
- support University Development and giving efforts;
- mobilize alumni to meet special needs of the university; and
- contribute new ideas to the university about existing or possible programs.

HOW TO START AN ALUMNI CLUB AND/OR BECOME A CLUB LEADER

If there is no club in your area:

- Reach out to the [staff liaison](#) to verify that your region meets the 200 or more alumni within a tri-county/hour radius.
- Find help - clubs with multiple leaders find it easier to complete the planning process.
- Complete and submit the [Club Leader Application](#).
- After the application has been submitted, the Alumni Relations team will review it for consideration. Alumni Relations accepts new clubs based on alumni population size, strength of club leadership, and current budget. This process may take several weeks.
- Once approved, participate in orientation training with your staff liaison.

If there is a club in your area:

- Email the current leaders and/or the [staff liaison](#) to learn more about the expectations and to express interest.
- Complete and submit the [Club Leader Application](#).
- Once approved, participate in orientation training with your staff liaison.

REQUIREMENTS OF CLUB LEADERS

Club leaders are required to

- plan the required events, including a Community Outreach Week event in March;
- communicate consistently with the Alumni Relations staff liaison and inquiring alumni;
- manage and properly engage with alumni via the club's Facebook Page;
- make an [annual financial gift](#) to the university and encourage others to do the same;
- serve as an ambassador for alumni who live in or who are new to the region (answer questions about housing, restaurants, etc.);
- 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;
- be able to devote the necessary time to the organization; and
- complete the Annual Report at the end of each fiscal year.

EVENT PROTOCOL

Club leaders are required to plan at least two events per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), one of which must be a [Community Outreach Week](#) event in March.

Event Ideas

- Community Service
 - Collaborate with local organizations
 - Serve food at a shelter
 - Park/beach clean up
 - Conduct a toy/clothing/food/book drive

- Social
 - Happy hour
 - Beer/wine tastings
 - Food truck gatherings
 - Unique venues to your community
 - BBQ/picnic
 - Gatherings around local events (parades, concerts, art festivals, etc.)
 - Local tours (architecture, museums, bike, boat, etc.)
 - Escape rooms
 - Bowling
 - Arcades
- Athletic
 - Professional/semi-professional sports events
 - GVSU game watch parties
- Educational/Professional Development
 - Highlight alumni guest speaker
 - Networking nights
- Give Back
 - Host an event where donations are collected or a portion of the ticket price supports a related GVSU scholarship
 - Write encouraging cards to students during exams

Event Planning

- Brainstorm and research your event's goals, date/time, location, and capacity. Remember to refer back to your Club Interest Survey if you've recently completed one for your area.
- Communicate with your staff liaison in GVSU Alumni Relations regarding your idea.
- Once given the go-ahead from Alumni Relations, complete the [Event Proposal Form](#).
 - This form needs to be submitted **at least eight weeks prior** to the event for us to be able to provide promotion support.
- The staff liaison will handle all contractual and payment obligations.
- Work with your staff liaison to finalize details.

Promotion

- Promptly communicate with your staff liaison throughout the event process.
- Promote the event via social media platforms and personal connections.
- If the Event Promotion Form was submitted at least eight weeks prior to the event, the staff liaison will coordinate with the Alumni Relations Communications Team to put your event in the Alumni Association enewsletter, send out emails specifically to your region, create social media graphics, and send other promotional pieces.
- If the Event Promotion Form is submitted with less than eight weeks prior to the event, no promotional steps can be guaranteed.

At the Event

- Attend and host the event. This includes, but is not limited to: set-up, welcoming, talking points, collecting information from walk-ins, and taking pictures.
 - The staff liaison will send you nametags, giveaway prizes, registration sheets, walk-in sheets, and other necessary items for your event.
- Engage with attendees, learning about their GVSU experience and stories.

Post Event

- Submit the Event Recap Form to your staff liaison no later than three days post event, including walk-in sheet and pictures.
- The Alumni Relations Communications Team will create and send out a Thank You email to those who attended. This will generally include photos from the event, a brief survey, and link to the Facebook Page.

BUDGET/EXPENSES

Event Costs

To help offset the costs of an event, if it is not a “pay-on-your-own” event, Alumni Relations will support and cover various expenses. This amount will be determined by the office in order to keep the ticketed price at a reasonable cost for event attendees.

Club Leaders

Due to the costs and expenses generated for hosting club events, as a thank you for your service, the Alumni Relations Office will cover the registration fees of the first two events per fiscal year for the club leaders.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

A Facebook Page and official alumni club logo are created by the Alumni Relations Communications Team for each alumni club. Your staff liaison will add club leaders as administrators to the page. An Alumni Relations staff member must remain as an administrator for the group at all times. Club leaders are encouraged to post regular updates and engage the GVSU alumni community following the expectations.

As an institution, GVSU recognizes the value of social media applications and supports their use. Because social media blurs the line between personal voice and institutional voice, GVSU has crafted [guidelines](#) to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media. Please review these guidelines.

Links to the Alumni Association pages can be found here: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

Additional information on GVSU’s marketing, messaging, or logo information may be found at www.gvsu.edu/identity. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Howard at (616) 331-3591 or howardsu@gvsu.edu.

RESOURCES

[Alumni Association Home Page](#)

[Club Leader Resources Page](#)

[Club Home Page](#)

[Club Leader Application Form](#)

[Club Locations](#)

[Club Event Forms Packet](#)