

ONU Alumni Club Handbook



Introduction

This handbook is intended to aid Alumni in the formation and management of regional/local Alumni Clubs. This guide contains the necessary tools that volunteer leaders need in order to run a regional/local Alumni Club officially, as set by the Ohio Northern Office of Alumni Relations.

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Starting a New Club

An Ohio Northern Alumni Club may be developed in any area where there is a large enough concentration of alumni to both sustain events and manage a club. Alumni Clubs are formed for the benefit of both alumni and Ohio Northern University.

Minimum Requirements for a Club

Level A – Full Funding

- In the state of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 500 within 50 miles of the city where the club will be formed. Outside of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 250 within 150 miles of the city where the club will be formed, or by special approval of the Office of Alumni Relations
- At least 3-5 committed alumni to form a volunteer board who will set up the club formally with the Alumni Office (**this core group shall be appointed as the first executive board**)
- Ability to hold at least 3-4 events per year
- Permission from the Office of Alumni Relations to begin a club

Level B – Partial Funding

- In the state of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 250 within 50 miles of the city where the club will be formed. Outside of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 100 within 150 miles of the city where the club will be formed or by special approval of the Office of Alumni Relations.
- At least 2-3 committed alumni to form a volunteer board who will set up the club formally with the Alumni Office (**this core group shall be appointed as the first executive board**)
- Ability to hold at least 2-3 events per year
- Permission from the Office of Alumni Relations to begin a club

Level C – No Funding

- In the state of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 100 within 50 miles of the city where the club will be formed. Outside of Ohio, minimum alumni base of 50 within 150 miles of the city where the club will be formed or by special approval of the Alumni Board/Office of Alumni Relations.
- At least 1-2 committed alumni to form a volunteer board who will set up the club formally with the Alumni Office (**this core group shall be appointed as the first executive board**)
- Ability to hold at least 1-2 events per year
- Permission from the Office of Alumni Relations to begin a club

Procedure

- 1) **Contact the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs** – Inform the Office of Alumni Relations of your interest in having a club in your area.
- 2) **Demographic Research** – The Office of Alumni Relations will provide you with demographic information of local alumni. If the minimum requirement is met, the process of starting a club at the appropriate level will begin.
- 3) **Survey** – A survey will be initiated in your area by you and the Office of Alumni Relations to gauge the amount of interest and support that can be expected for the club. The results of the survey shall be reviewed by the Office of Alumni Relations to determine whether the process will continue.
- 4) **Initial Meeting/Board Formation** – An initial meeting will be held for those who indicated on the survey that they wish to hold leadership roles in the club. Ideally, this group is composed of individuals representing various age, gender, and ethnic groups. The goal of this meeting is to form the volunteer board who will then take the necessary steps to formalize the club. It is best to limit the number of board members to the minimum necessary for operation. The three required officers for a level A club are president, vice president, and secretary. A level B club requires only a president and secretary, and a level C club requires only a president. The Coordinator of Alumni Clubs should be present at this first meeting.
- 5) **By-laws** – Once the board is formed, they can use the Office of Alumni Relations' template to create and vote on club by-laws. The by-laws of the club must be filed for final approval with the Office of Alumni Relations. The club will be official upon approval.
- 6) **Event Planning** – The next step the board needs to take is to set a calendar of events for the following year. The Coordinator of Alumni Clubs will inform the board of the budget, if any, available to the club to offset costs.

Governance

Mission Statement

All Ohio Northern Alumni Clubs should have a formal mission statement that is clear and accurately represents the purpose of the club.

Example (Ohio Northern University Club of _____)

The mission of the Ohio Northern University Club of _____ is to encourage community between alumni, students, parents and friends of the university in the _____ area, to inform local alumni of the state of the university, and to promote Ohio Northern University locally by sponsoring or organizing activities of any nature, including charitable, educational, social and athletic activities which further the interest of the club members or Ohio Northern University.

Alumni Clubs should:

- Support Ohio Northern alumni, students, parents of students/graduates and friends of the university in the club's area through communication, fellowship, networking and continuing education.
- Foster a lifelong connection between alumni, students, parents of students/graduates, and friends of the university and Ohio Northern University.
- Serve Ohio Northern University interests by promoting the university locally and assisting in recruiting outstanding high school students to apply and select Ohio Northern University for their undergraduate education.
- Establish a relationship with undergraduate students so that they will play an active role as alumni once they graduate.

The Club's mission is then carried out by the Club's Volunteer Board with the assistance of other volunteer alumni and committees, as well as continued assistance from the Office of Alumni Relations.

Club Structure

Each club level should start with at a **minimum number** of Board members.

Club Level A: 3-5 Board members

Club Level B: 2-4 Board members

Club Level C: 1-2 Board members

Executive Board

Clubs conduct business through an appointed volunteer Executive Board, which includes all the officers of the club. The number of officers may vary depending on the size or level of the club and number of activities. Ideally, officers should be alumni that represent different age, gender and ethnic groups and geographical areas within the club. It is best to limit the number of board members to the minimum necessary for operation. The three officers required for Level A clubs are president, vice president, and secretary. Level B clubs require only a president and secretary, and Level C clubs require only a president. (It is far easier to get committee chairs for other functions of the club.)

Officers

President

- Arranges location and sends out notification of Board meetings
- Presides at all meetings following the basics of Roberts Rules of Order and assigns another officer in his/her absence
- Maintains primary contact monthly via email or conference call with the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs and has access to the Leadership web site for templates and other club needs
- Suggests and guides the projects/activities of the club
- Prepares and submits an annual report and annual event plan for the Office of Alumni Relations
- Appoints all club committees
- Serves as the local spokesperson for the chapter
- Ultimately responsible for the club activities

Vice President/President Elect (Optional)

- Presides at meetings in the absence of the President
- Is the President-elect and will assume the duties of the President once his/her term is over; therefore, he/she should familiarize themselves with the duties of the President
- Chairs and appoints members for the annual nominating committee and actively recruits volunteers.
- Assists the President, Vice President for Programming/Events, and Secretary.

Secretary (Optional)

- Records and distributes minutes of all meetings to the Board and the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs
- Maintains the membership list and advises the Alumni Office of all address changes within the club area
- Maintains a club file with copies of correspondence
- Submits club news to the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs for publication
- Communicates with local media along with the President about upcoming local ONU events
- Takes pictures and sends them to the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs so that they can be included on the web site, Facebook and in The Alumni Journal

Committees (Optional) – The Board has the power to appoint any committee it deems necessary to achieve the club’s mission and goals. The following are suggestions for committees.

BEARS Committee Chair (Recent graduates are great for this position)

- Recruits and manages BEARS members in the club area
- Contacts and assists with the assignment of BEARS members to college fairs and other recruiting events (for example: Student/Alumni Receptions) in the club area
- Distributes and collects Admission materials (keeping a small amount of admission materials for prospective students inquiring about ONU)
- Maintains contact with Admissions BEARS Representative and the Alumni Office BEARS Representative to provide feedback and receive necessary instruction
- Help Events Chair organize a Welcome Event for high school seniors who have been accepted and committed to ONU. (Ice cream social, picnic etc...)

Student Relations Committee Chair

- Recruits Alumni to foster a relationship with ONU students from the club area
- Organize student care packages during finals week from the club to students from the club area
- Hosting student groups
- Mentoring/assisting in finding internships or employment

Term Limits

The term limit for an office is two (2) years and should not exceed three (3) consecutive terms. If new volunteers are not identified, the terms for an office may be extended. In order for continuity and smooth transition, terms should be staggered, with new board members appointed every year. A membership committee should propose a slate of candidates for the Executive Board for their approval. The approved slate should then be presented to the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs for approval.

Membership

Membership in ONU alumni clubs is open to any students, graduates, parents of a current student/graduate, or friends of the university who live within a 50 mile radius of the club location within the state of Ohio and within a 150 mile radius of the club location outside of Ohio. The average club should strive to have an attendance rate of approximately 20-30% of those alumni that live in their area annually.

Club Expectations, Awards, and Benefits

Expectations

In order for ONU alumni clubs to continue to be formally recognized by the Office of Alumni Relations they are required to meet the following minimum expectations annually:

- 1) By-laws filed and approved by the Club Coordinator/Office of Alumni Relations
- 2) Minimum number of board members for club level
- 3) Hold a minimum number of events annually for the club level
- 4) File an Annual Report and Annual Plan of Events with the Office of Alumni Relations
- 5) Consistent contact with the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs
- 6) Fiscally responsible (club budget breaks even or under budget)
- 7) Encourage alumni in their local area to give back to the University with time, talent or treasure.

Awards

Each year the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs will review the clubs activities and present to the Alumni Board for their approval awards under the following categories:

ONU Alumni Club Improvement Award – This award recognizes Alumni Clubs with improvement in organization, events and attendance from the previous year. Criteria for this certificate include but are not limited to improvement from previous year in at least one category:

- Number of events
- Percentage of attendance at events
- Number of board meetings and/or percentage of attendance at board meetings
- Addition of social media or an increased use of social media
- Number of volunteers
- Addition of a service event
- Addition of a student send-off event

ONU Alumni Club Individual Contribution Award – This award honors individual volunteers who provide exemplary service to an Ohio Northern Alumni Club in that year.

Criteria for this award:

- Represents Ohio Northern University as an alumni ambassador at events with integrity, dedication and loyalty
- Understands the mission and importance of Alumni Clubs and their role within the University
- Proactively plans events and follows through to ensure all aspects for the events are completed and event is a success
- Communicates and works closely with the club coordinator on all events
- Reasonably and realistically prices events so that both alumni are able to attend and the event does not adversely affect the club budget

- Attends and actively works at the events
- Attends board meetings and shares club responsibilities with the board members
- Brings forth new ideas for events with varied locations and topics
- Respects and takes into consideration the following: the opinions of all board members, the needs of the alumni in the area, and the needs of the university

ONU Alumni Club Recognition Award – This award honors Alumni Clubs that have exceptional organization, events, or programming and enhance alumni engagement in their local area.

Criteria for this award:

- Meets all minimum expectations for Alumni Clubs as outlined in the Alumni Club Handbook.
- Holds more than the minimum number of events for club level
- Adds new initiatives, as suggested by club coordinator, when possible (For example: Service Events, Student Send Offs)
- Uses social media to promote events and keep alumni in the area informed of club activities.
- Holds consistent board meetings (in person, conference calls, email consensus decisions)
- Has a strong board with leadership skills who actively participate on a regular basis
- Maintains a high percentage of attendance at events
- Encourages alumni in their area to give back to the ONU with time, talent or treasure.

Volunteer Benefits

As an active alumni Club board member, all are eligible to receive the below benefits:

- Early registration for Club Events
- Formal ONU metal plated name tag
- Personal ONU Alumni Club business cards
- Free admission to one Alumni Club event per fiscal year
 - Must be to an Alumni Club event for the club you volunteer on
 - Volunteer must actively participate in meetings, conference calls, event planning and regularly attends Club events
 - Only pertains to events under \$20
 - One guest ticket is permitted
 - May be redeemed once a year (June 1 – May 31)

Club Programming/Events

All events or programs bring alumni together to learn, network, and to have fun! The Club's Board is vital in deciding each year what types of events and programs the alumni in their area will respond to and participate. The Board should try to vary the types and location of events during the year to strive for the alumni in the area to be interested and able to attend at least one event every year. Below are some suggestions for different types of events. Clubs may use the list or create their own event under a category that fits the needs of their area.

Suggestions for Events

- Educational/Cultural
 - Lecture by ONU Professor
 - Campus/University update from ONU Administrator
 - Theater Event
 - Museum Event
 - Breakfast Series with local or ONU speaker
 - Alumni Book Club
- Family Events
 - Day at the Zoo
 - Museum outing
 - Alumni BBQ/picnic
 - Bowling
 - Play groups
- Athletic
 - Pre-game/post-game tailgate when ONU athletics are in area
 - Local Athletic Event
 - Professional Sporting Event
- Community Service
 - Service Project (Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, etc...)
 - Toy Drive partnered with another event
 - Participate in a local 5k for charity
 - ONU Admissions Center Event
- Social
 - Freshman Send-off
 - Casual Dinner/Lunch
 - Social Hour after work
 - Holiday/Seasonal Events
- Professional
 - Networking Social Hour, Lunch, Dinner
 - Tour of a local company/facility
 - Business Directory

The Board should set an event calendar by the end of March for the year ahead (June 1-May 31). A good idea is to have an event for each season (Fall/ Spring/Summer). This does not mean that all the events have to be fully planned and booked but a rough idea of the type of event and the month/season that it will occur. Then the Board can follow the Event Planning Checklist under the Best Practices section, located on page 12 of this handbook.

Office of Alumni Relations Support

Online Leadership Tools

The Office of Alumni Relations has links from the Alumni web site available to the club leaders. Resources available online include the following:

- ONU Alumni Club Handbook
- Template for By-laws
- Template for Surveys
- Event Evaluation Forms
- Club Annual Report Form

“Best Practices”

The Office of Alumni Relations has put together some advice on how to plan events, manage volunteers, and recruit members. If your club has a best practice or lessons learned, please let the Office of Alumni Relations know so we can share these “best practices” with other clubs.

Event Best Practices

- 1) Know your members/audience and try to match the events to their interests. Make sure you have a variety of events that attempt to cover the range of age, gender and ethnic groups. Since it is impossible to please all of the people all of the time, at the very least one event per year will spark a particular groups’ interest.
- 2) Schedule annual or seasonal events for the year so members can plan and look forward to upcoming events. Check dates for possible conflicts with other events in your community or with the University.
- 3) Check with the local Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and or the Calendar/Life sections of your local newspaper for locations and event ideas. Choose your location carefully and make sure it is convenient as possible for all members of the club. If you have multiple events it is a good idea to have events in different geographic areas of your club in case travel time factors into a member’s decision to attend.
- 4) Encourage members to RSVP by reducing the price of the event for RSVPs versus the door price. This will help with the headcount and planning the event.
- 5) Budget wisely! The Office of Alumni Relations offers a fixed budget depending on the club level to assist clubs with offsetting event ticket prices, so keep in mind the price point per person and make sure that your membership is willing to pay the ticket price.

Volunteer Management Best Practices

- 1) Volunteer candidates should be considered for positions in the club based on their available time and desire to contribute to the club.
- 2) When enlisting new volunteers, it is helpful to use written job descriptions, which detail the specific responsibilities of each chairperson and committee member.
- 3) Teamwork!! One person cannot do it all nor should they. Delegate, delegate, delegate!
- 4) Use me or lose me! Keep volunteers busy, involved and appreciated.
- 5) Don't waste the time you spend together. Everyone has busy lives and volunteers will continue to help only if it is not a waste of their time.
- 6) Enthusiasm is contagious! Club officers should have a clear vision and be willing to work hard to accomplish that vision.

Recruiting Attendance/Members Best Practices

- 1) Email blasts, and Facebook work well to spread the word about events (you can even use e-vite as your invitation to smaller events or Facebook).
- 2) Location, Location, Location! — Keep in mind the size of your area and if it is large consider having events at different geographic locations in order for all members to have events at a convenient location at least once a year.
- 3) Vary events in order to hold onto members' interest in the club. Usually it is a good idea to hold one young alumni, one family, one social, and one continuing education event. This way, members should be interested in at least one event per year if not more.

Event Planning Checklist

By the end of March:

- Contact the Office of Alumni Relations by the end of March to approve the event calendar for the next year, and check to make sure there is not a conflict with another ONU event locally
- The Office of Alumni Relations and Club discuss an annual budget so that the Club can price the events appropriately to cover costs
- Keep in mind some events need a longer planning timeline otherwise follow the timeline set below

12 weeks before the event:

- Finalize who, what, where, when, and how much (date, time, venue, and costs for event). Reserve necessary accommodations, ask Coordinator of Alumni Clubs to sign contracts, make deposits, secure speaker, discuss numbers, sign contracts, etc.
- Send necessary information to Coordinator of Alumni Clubs for the creation of invitations/flyers including deadline for RSVPs
- Contact Coordinator of Alumni Clubs to send out invitations, if necessary.

6 weeks before the event:

- Begin publicity among alumni in the club area.
- Recruit volunteers for the event (set up/clean-up/sign in welcome table) if necessary
- Confirm hotel, flight, and transportation for speaker if applicable

4 weeks before the event:

- Set up a spreadsheet/ sign in sheet of attendees and either have name tags available or print name tags
- If Coordinator of Alumni Clubs will not be present at event, ask for table tents and name tags to be sent.

2 weeks before the event:

- Email/phone tree a reminder about the event to ensure a good turnout
- Make arrangements for decorations if necessary

1 week before the event:

- Confirm all event arrangements
- Provide a final headcount to facility and Office of Alumni Relations

Following the event, complete the **event evaluation** and email to the Coordinator of Alumni Clubs within two weeks, including sign in sheets, pictures, cost summary and evaluation forms. Send thank you notes and follow up with any alumni that expressed an interest in participating further in the club.

When in doubt it is always best to contact the Office of Alumni Relations with any and all questions about your club. The Office of Alumni Relations is here to serve the needs of its Alumni Clubs.

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