



Network/Society Handbook  
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## OVERVIEW

By choosing to assume a leadership role within a network/society, you become an integral part of the Wright State University Alumni Association. We believe that the key component to a network/society success involves providing alumni leaders with information, programming ideas and policies that are needed to begin and grow a network/society. The Wright State University Alumni Association believes the role of a leader strongly impacts the success of a network/society. We are dedicated to providing the tools necessary for our leaders to be successful.

### ***Wright State University Alumni Association Mission***

*The Wright State University Alumni Association will foster and develop pride, prestige, and partnership among alumni, students, and community to promote the value of education and our legacy.*

## NETWORK/SOCIETY PROGRAM

### Purpose of Sanctioning

In order to encourage diversity in programming by groups wanting to form as networks/societies, the current network/society program was implemented with expectations and criteria for success clearly defined. The Wright State University Alumni Association network/society program highlights the focus areas listed on pages 3 and 4.

Each year groups must meet set criteria in order to be recognized as sanctioned network/society by the alumni association. Completion of these requirements must be met between January 1 and December 31. The staff liaison for a group, with the group's leadership, keeps track throughout the year of activity as it occurs. After December 31 network/society status is granted to those groups completing the annual requirements.

All networks/societies must complete the annual requirements, listed on page 4. All networks/societies will receive the services provided by the alumni association listed on page 5.

### Alumni Network Purpose and Criteria for Establishment

The Wright State University Alumni Association geographic network programs exist to provide assistance and support for the continuing success of Wright State University and to offer responsive programs, diverse activities and services and enriched camaraderie for our alumni.

- Demonstrate the network is being formed to promote the mission and interests of Wright State University and the Alumni Association.
- At least 200 alumni must reside within a 50-mile radius of the proposed network location.

### Alumni Society Criteria for Establishment

The Wright State University Alumni Association society programs exist to provide assistance and support for the continuing success of Wright State University and to offer responsive programs, diverse activities and services and enriched camaraderie for our alumni.

- All Wright State University schools, colleges, and campuses will be recognized by the Alumni Association as having an alumni society. The Alumni Relations office will work with each the dean's (or chair's) office to assist in the operation guidelines described below. The name of the society will be, for example, the L.A.A. Society (College of Liberal Arts).
- Other non-academic groups may be formed to promote the mission and interests of Wright State University and the Alumni Association. These Wright State University interest groups will be recognized by the Alumni Association as having an alumni society. The name of the society will be, for example, the African American Alumni Society. The Alumni Relations office will work with each society council to assist in the operation guidelines described below.

### Annual Requirements

1. Submit an annual report, due December 15 of each calendar year.
2. Submit any proposed changes to your constitution or bylaws to the Alumni Association before adoption (in years changes are made.)
3. Submit roster of officers.
4. One activity from at least two of the five focus areas. Along with alumni association initiatives when requested, i.e. student recruitment, community service day, etc.
5. Maintain a webpage hosted on the Wright State University Alumni Association website.
6. Submit quarterly reports.

### Focus Areas

1. Education/ Professional Networking
  - a. Guest speakers, job postings in the online community
2. Alumni Outreach/Engagement
  - a. Reception prior to or in conjunction with performance, games, etc
  - b. Day at a Park, Zoo
  - c. Wine Tasting/Beer Tasting
3. Bring alumni and students together
  - a. Coordinate events on an annual basis to bring alumni and students together for the purposes of networking, mentoring or panel discussions
  - b. Alumni student recruitment
4. Establish or enhance financial support for the university
  - a. Establish a society or network scholarship fund
  - b. Fundraise to support existing scholarship/program funds
  - c. Encourage society or network supporters to donate annually to the society or network fund or any Wright State Foundation fund
5. Community Service (define and qualify the organizations to be chosen).

- a. Can be for school, department, or locally in your area in the name of the network/society

## **SUPPORT FOR A SANCTIONED NETWORK/SOCIETY**

Wright State University Alumni Association offers the following support for our networks/societies.

- **Event Box:** Provided for social events or designated events, includes nametags (when needed), brochures, writing utensils, table covers/banner, give-a-ways, etc.
- **Funding:** To be determined by the Wright State University Alumni Association Board of Directors based on the annual network/society budget request
- **Leaders Handbook:** Reference manual for network/society leaders in print and online
- **Online Services:** A variety of services including network/society website hosted on the Wright State University Alumni Association website, blast email system, events calendar on the Alumni Association website and online event registration
- **Promotion:** Network/Society activities listed on the Wright State University Alumni Association website events calendar, mass emails, included on monthly E-AlumNews and on the quarterly postcards if submitted in the appropriate time
- **Speakers:** When feasible and applicable, speakers can be provided for events
- **Staff Liaison:** A professional staff member is assigned to work with each network/society
- **Visit from Wright State Alumni Team:** Tell us which event you would like us to attend in a year and we'll make an attempt to be there.

## **BEGINNING A SANCTIONED NETWORK/SOCIETY IN YOUR AREA**

1. Gauge Interest  
Once it has been determined there are enough alumni in the area, the next step is to gauge the interest of those alumni in starting a sanctioned club. We recommend one of the following events as a way to get people together for this purpose:
  - Dinner at a restaurant or family-friendly bar
  - Picnic
  - Game watch partyTake time to plan a quality event that will reflect well on you, Wright State, and the Wright State University Alumni Association. This event will set the tone for the support and participation from alumni will give to the network/society. The activity should appeal to a range of age groups.
2. Form a Steering Committee  
Form a steering committee consisting of at least three to four people, based on interest gathered from your survey and event. This group will meet to discuss the possible future of a sanctioned network/society.
3. Develop a draft of constitution/bylaws

If the committee decides to organize as a sanctioned network/society it should precede with establishing a constitution, using the required template provided in the resources.

4. Have a meeting to adopt constitution/bylaws and elect officers

Following the steering committee meeting where a constitution is developed, a meeting should be called to adopt the constitution/bylaws and elect officers.

It is also recommended that the steering committee create an agenda for the meeting. A sample agenda for the first meeting will include the following:

- Sign-in sheet with name, address, and email address
- Welcome by organizer and introduction of attendees if feasible
- Suggest everyone wear name tags. After the meeting send the sign-in sheet to the alumni office at [alumni@wright.edu](mailto:alumni@wright.edu)
- Thank you to steering committee for the work completed to date
- State reason(s) for gathering and share future plans and goals
- Distribute proposed constitution and ask for input
- Elect officers

5. Recommended Officers and Job Descriptions

All successful networks/societies share one thing in common; there is at least one identifiable person responsible for each important aspect of the networks/societies activities. Don't underestimate the influence of a strong organized leader! Some networks/societies have a small leadership team and rely on a few people to accomplish its goals. In others, many people are involved. Whenever possible, it is best to divide responsibility among many leaders to avoid burnout, encourage involvement and to train future leaders. The more people you include, the more likely their return and commitment.

Wright State University Alumni Association recommends each network/society have a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Below are suggested job descriptions for these leadership roles:

Each officer position will be filled with a degreed alumnus or non-degreed alumnus who has established a strong affinity for the specific network or society.

**President**

Summary of position:

Wright State University's Alumni Association (Wright State University Alumni Association) recommends electing a President to serve a term established by the network/society bylaws. This individual will be a liaison between Wright State University Alumni Association and the local alumni to serve the interests of both groups. He/she should ensure that plans are developed and finalized for the network/society. As the presiding officer, the President is responsible for leading meetings and functions, often operating as a master of ceremonies at social functions and meetings. Additionally, the President also serves the role as an official committee member, of all committees formed by the network/society so

that the President knows what is happening with each committee. The President should always be in contact with the Vice President and committee chairs. Lastly, the President is responsible for the distribution of e-mail information sent in collaboration with the Secretary, and coordinating the details for any visits from Wright State University Alumni Association staff.

#### Duties of position:

The President or his/her designee shall preside at all meetings of the network/society, appoint committees, and serve a term established by the network/society bylaws. He/she should be at the network/society events at least 75% of the time. The President shall exercise all powers and perform all responsibilities delegated by network/society. The President shall have the authority to fill, by appointment, vacancies in among the officers of Vice President or Secretary on an interim basis until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

### **Vice President**

#### Summary of position:

Wright State University's Alumni Association recommends that the term of the Vice President be parallel to that of the President— a term established by the network/society bylaws. The most common obligation of the Vice President is to stand in for the President as needed. It involves being ready to assume the position as President, which in turn means this individual must be informed of all plans or policies. The Vice President should also serve as the chair of some of the network/society most important events as it keeps them connected to the planning required and is supportive of the network/society membership.

#### Duties of position:

The Vice President shall perform such duties assigned by the President and Bylaws shall be vested with all of the powers and responsibilities of the President during the absence or disability of the President.

### **Secretary**

#### Summary of position:

As Secretary, this individual is the head record keeper responsible for keeping information related to alumni in the network/society area. This can be time consuming, and as such, Wright State University Alumni Association recommends electing/appointing the Secretary for a term established by the network/society bylaws. The Secretary also takes minutes to provide a written record of meetings. Lastly, the Secretary serves as the communicator to the society/network membership. He/she is responsible for reminding committee

members/volunteers of upcoming meetings and events, newsletter content, and notifying Wright State University Alumni Association of any board member or officer changes.

Duties of position:

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping official minutes, records of votes, resolutions, and proceedings for the network/society. This information shall be forwarded to the appropriate Wright State University Alumni Association staff member.

### **Treasurer**

Summary of position:

As Treasurer, this individual is responsible for maintaining an account of all society/network funds. Wright State University Alumni Association recommends electing/appointing the treasurer for a term established by the network/society bylaws in order to allow proper time to transition between elected members. The Treasurer serves as co-chair of the committees that handle funding (i.e.: fundraising, special events, etc.).

Duties of position:

The Treasurer oversees and maintains all network/society finances, and provides reports of financial status to be included in the minutes. He/she also takes money during events. A network/society may choose one person to serve as secretary and treasurer. See resource documents for a list of treasurer's duties.

*\*\*It is common that networks/societies combine the Secretary and Treasurer position into one, the position duties remain the same\*\**

### **Vacancies**

Summary of position:

The President shall have the authority to fill, by appointment, vacancies in the office(s) of Vice President or Secretary on an interim basis until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

## **6. Annual Budget**

It is the responsibility of the network/society officers to submit an annual budget request to the Wright State University Alumni Association Board by September 1 of each calendar year for approval. The budget should outline the networks/societies plan for the upcoming year and the funds needed to execute the plans. Budgets are not guaranteed from year to year and can be reduced or increased based on the network/society budget request and the available funding



from the Alumni Association. Reference the annual budget request guidelines in the resource pages.

## **NETWORK/SOCIETY MAILINGS & EMAILS**

Use the following information to guide you when considering a mailing via the USPS. All information needed for mailings, which Wright State University Alumni Association sends out, must be submitted at least eight weeks in advance of the date of the actual event. This time period is necessary for the alumni association to gather the appropriate address information, develop the mail piece and send the mailing out. Information that is considered necessary for mailings include:

- Name of network/society, contact information of officer submitting request
- Copy for the mailing
- Specifications for the mailing
  - Postcard
  - Letter
  - Type of paper
  - Etc.

For each mailing that the network/society chooses to do will require that postage is paid from the network/society annual budget. In most cases, printing and design can be done in house and will not incur a cost.

Use the following information to guide you when considering an email blast

The Wright State University Alumni Association office will support the network/society efforts by sending professionally designed emails. Content for the email will be the responsibility of the network/society. Wright State University Alumni Association staff will put the email together, provide tests to the officers and send. Wright State University Alumni Association staff request at least four weeks prior to an event/announcement that an email wants to be sent.

## **WEBSITES**

Wright State University Alumni Association provides server space to any network/society that has met the requirements to be a sanctioned and that wants a webpage. Our webpages are template based, so that each one maintains the brand and image of the Wright State University Alumni Association, but can be tailored with varied information to suit the network/society.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Social media outlets provide an opportunity to engage with internal and external audiences in a nontraditional way. Using these mediums, we do more than push out a message; we have the opportunity to contribute to communities. While social media is free, it serves us well to have a solid understanding of what it means to be part of the larger social media community and join the global conversation about our institution and the work we do.

In regards to Wright State Alumni social media platforms it is required for continuity that individual alumni groups have a standard “about me” statement that the Wright State University Alumni Relations Office will provide along with an official logo. For every social media platform the group name needs to have Wright State versus WSU. In order to help manage social media pages and groups please assign at least one Wright State University alumni staff member as an administrator.

#### Important info for particular social media platforms:

For Facebook we recommend that our alumni groups have a page versus a group and for LinkedIn your group needs to be a subgroup of the Wright State University Alumni Association group. In the event your group already has its own group, please do not make any changes. You cannot transfer a group to a subgroup without deleting and starting over.

#### If you participate in social media, consider following these guiding principles:

- Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives regarding what’s going on at Wright State University and the Alumni Association, your community and in the world.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments.
- Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- Respect proprietary information and content, and confidentiality—particularly if you are involved in sensitive research.
- When disagreeing with others’ opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Be engaging. Be authentic. Be yourself. Serve, don’t sell. Maintain a personal/professional tone.
- Don’t fuel fires.
- Be very careful about grammar and spelling errors.
- Be diligent about fact checking.
- Never fabricate “viral” material. A post (or photo or video, etc) is said to be viral when many, many people share it over their networks. Some viral videos have been viewed many millions of times). Opportunities are everywhere for genuine viral content; find them and use them. Just for the record, it is almost impossible to predict what content may become viral, and when you try to create it, it tends to backfire.

#### Guidelines of Social Media Engagement

**Listen.** Don’t jump into social media without goals or a plan. Discuss options, ideas, and strategies before engaging. Having a goal related to social media will guide discussions regarding what elements should be included in the social media plan on a case-by-case basis. Everyone will have a different path involving social media. Decide which social media community best fits the needs of the network/society. Get to know the community you would like to engage and be an observer. Then engage respectfully with purpose and direction as you become more comfortable and confident in the environment.

**Read.** If you are engaging in social media for marketing purposes, find books on the subject (even if the media changes, the principles do not), go to conferences or webinars, read articles and more—get to know the medium. Follow bloggers who write about social media (or your given topic) and learn from those who have more experience.

**Be transparent.** Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out.

**Write what you know.** Make sure you write and post about your areas of expertise, especially as related to Wright State University Alumni Association.

**Perception is reality.** In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a Wright State volunteer you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the University/Alumni Association by our stakeholders, students, and the general public. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with Wright State University's values and professional standards.

**It's a conversation.** Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Don't be afraid to bring in your own personality and say what's on your mind. Consider content that's open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing others who are blogging about the same topic and allowing your content to be shared or syndicated.

**Are you adding value?** The best way to get your content read is to write things that people will value. Social communication from Wright State University Alumni Association sites should help our audiences. It should be thought provoking and build a sense of community. In general, social media content adds value if it enhances readers' knowledge or skills, including but not limited to helping them to perform their job duties more effectively; solves problems; or helps people understand Wright State better.

**Be a good leader.** Try to frame what you write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, you can't really get them back. And once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it's hard to stop.

**When we make mistakes.** If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

**If in doubt.** If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit 'send.' Take a minute to review these guidelines and try to figure out what's bothering you, and then fix it. Ultimately, what you publish is yours—as is the responsibility. So be sure.

## **SPEAKERS**

University speakers at network/society events can significantly enhance an event. Wright State University Alumni Association is always open and willing to attempt to accommodate as many requests for speakers as possible. Unfortunately, scheduling and financial realities play a large part of Wright State University Alumni Association ability to secure a speaker for any given event. Wright State University Alumni Association simply cannot provide every network/society the speaker they want - or occasionally, any speaker at all. In order to increase the odds of having a particular chosen speaker, Wright State University Alumni Association asks that you follow this process:

- At least three months prior to an event, and once an officer has an idea that they would like to have a speaker at the event, they will contact the appropriate Wright State University Alumni Association staff member
- When contacting Wright State University Alumni Association, provide at least first and second choice speaker. If you are uncertain as to whom to invite, Wright State University Alumni Association staff member can assist in choosing a speaker that will suit the theme, population, and tone of the event.
- In addition to providing first and second choice of speaker, provide several specific, available dates for the event.
- If possible, provide details regarding the event. For example, will it be a golf outing, a picnic, a sporting event?
- Please be patient! It may take a few days for us to have any information to provide you.

While it may seem easier to contact your speakers directly, we strongly discourage network/society volunteers from extending the invitation. Just like you, University speakers are volunteers at network/society events. Wright State University Alumni Association is respectful of time commitments and scheduling issues these speakers may have while maintaining a relationship. We ask that our network/society officers are equally respectful, by allowing the Wright State University Alumni Association to handle the process.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Networks/Societies can fundraise for scholarships, community outreach or programming for their particular network/society. Fundraising dollars are separate from their annual budgets and these funds carry over from year to year if they are not used.

Please see the resource documents for ideas regarding fundraising.

## **FINANCIAL & CONFIDENTIALITY RESPONSIBILITY**

As a volunteer for Wright State University Alumni Association you will be handling money and confidential information it is important that as volunteers you take appropriate measures to safeguard against loss, theft or general misuse of information. Please reference our financial resource documents and the treasurer's to-do list to ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.

## **Resource Documents**

### **Events**

- Event Notification (will be an online form)
  - Mail/Email Request Form included on the notification
- Event Evaluation (will be an online form)
- Event Planning, on (vendor policy) and off campus
- Event Marketing Checklist
- Event Budget Estimate Sheet
- Programming Ideas by Focus Area
- Alcohol Policy
- Gambling Policy

### **Network/Society**

- Steps to an Effective Network/Society Meeting
- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Constitution/Bylaws Template
  - Network template
  - Society template
- Annual Budget Request Guidelines
  - Budget Notes
- Network/Society Roster
- Fundraising Ideas

### **Misc**

- Guidelines for Rockafeld Alumni Center use
- Guidelines for Wright State University Alumni Association Nutter Center Suite
- How to request a check/reimbursements
- Treasurer's To-Do List