

 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

# AFFINITY GROUPS

## Proposal Guidelines and Application Packet



This toolkit provides information on the University of Iowa Center for Advancement Affinity Groups, the requirements of their establishment, and the ongoing support available.

# AFFINITY GROUPS

## WELCOME!

We appreciate your interest in supporting the University of Iowa as the leader of an affinity group. As an alumnus/ alumna, you are part of a robust network of 280,000 University of Iowa graduates—and our shared experiences connect us all in a special way!

Alumni volunteers give life to the mission of the University of Iowa by strengthening connections with alumni worldwide while deepening their engagement to the university. In an ongoing effort to provide support for our alumni affinity group leaders, the UI Center for Advancement is pleased to provide this toolkit (also available at [foriowa.org/groups](http://foriowa.org/groups)). UI Affinity Groups offer alumni an opportunity to stay connected with their alma mater and enjoy benefits and privileges that are not available without formal affiliation through the UI Center for Advancement. In an effort to make it easier for our alumni interested in creating a special interest group, we have created this Affinity Group Proposal Guidelines and Application Packet.

This first phase of the toolkit provides the primary purpose for why an affinity group is formed. Affinity groups aid in the advancement of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the University of Iowa and its alumni and friends. They also provide an avenue for alumni to continue their connections with the university.

This packet outlines the operating guidelines and procedures necessary to successfully form and maintain an officially recognized UI Alumni Affinity Group. Use this toolkit as a resource to make the startup and maintenance of your affinity group as easy and effortless as possible. We encourage each affinity group to be creative and innovative in its activity planning, as each group is unique in its membership and programming.

Thank you for your interest in serving as an affinity group leader. We are committed to assisting you in starting an alumni affinity group. As you give your time and energy, please know that you are shaping the strategic direction of the UI Center for Advancement and future generations of proud Hawkeye alumni and friends!

Sincerely,



Whit A. France-Kelly  
Associate Director of Alumni Engagement  
The University of Iowa Center for Advancement

## AFFINITY GROUP 101

### What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a collection of alumni with shared interests and common bonds that extend beyond the traditional alumni club regional structure, including experiences, identities, and activities (such as cultural/heritage ties or student activities). Affinity groups are formed to establish and engage a mutually beneficial relationship between UI alumni and friends and to provide an avenue for alumni to continue their connections with the university.

### What do affinity groups do?

Affinity groups support community building and provide visibility and practical support to alumni and friends around the world. Affinity groups:

- Act as advocates for the University of Iowa.
- Encourage UI alumni and friends to maintain an active relationship with the university and each other.
- Facilitate events and programming focused on increasing involvement within all alumni age groups and for diversified interest areas.
- Foster a spirit of camaraderie among alumni who share similar interests.
- Inspire and support students.
- Receive access to services, benefits, and support from the UI.
- Strengthen the alumni community and its relationship to the university.
- Engage in intellectual, cultural, and athletic life, as well as social and networking opportunities, to enhance professional development.
- Enhance and enrich the scholarly and cultural resources of the UI.

### What are some questions to consider when thinking about starting an affinity group?

- What are the group's goals? Do they align with the university's goals? ([provost.uiowa.edu/ui-academic-mission](http://provost.uiowa.edu/ui-academic-mission))
- Can an existing group or university entity accomplish these goals?
- How is the group different from other UI affinity groups?
- Is there sufficient interest among alumni to support the new group?
- Is this a viable short-term and/or long-term organization?
- How would this group offer value to the university?
- What affinity are you interested in connecting in support of the UI?
- Are there current students on campus who can continue your group's legacy with a similar affinity?

### What are the affinity group leader expectations?

The primary leader (president, chair, or co-chair) of an affinity group is expected to:

- Act as the main contact between the UI and the affinity group members and maintain regular contact with the staff liaison. In most cases that means at least monthly communication.
- Respond in a timely manner (usually 48 hours) to inquiries or requests from the UI and alumni.
- Follow the group's governing documents and bylaws including holding elections as specified.

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- Maintain the affinity group's good standing with the UI.
- In most cases, devote 3-6 hours per month to this leadership position (may require more time during busy event seasons).
- Act as a positive representative and chief ambassador for the UI.
- Establish an affinity group board of at least four people to help guide the mission and decisions when necessary.
- Serve as an active participant in regular board meetings providing positive leadership and direction to the group's board.

## **Leadership responsibilities:**

- Schedule and preside over group meetings.
- Solicit agenda items and distribute agenda prior to meetings.
- Lead the board in establishing an annual plan and goals.
- Create a calendar with timelines for each project.
- Ensure each project has a lead with accountability for deadlines.
- Assign responsibilities for individual duties or events and follow up on progress.
- Appoint committee chairs (if applicable) and assist with committee member selection.
- Ensure that all committees stay on target with specified tasks.
- Ensure that publicity, activity reports, attendee reports, minutes, funding requests, year-end survey, and photographs are submitted in a timely manner.
- Support UI affinity group events and programs throughout the year.
- Understand and uphold the university's branding and reputation management policies.

## **All leaders and board members must abide by these guidelines:**

- Keep the interest of the affinity group and/or UI foremost in mind when providing assistance and avoid all conflicts of interest.
- Adhere to UI policies and procedures and ask for clarification if you do not understand them.
- Serve as a positive university representative and conduct yourself in an appropriate, professional manner.
- Strive to achieve the highest quality and effectiveness in both the process and output of volunteer work without promoting any self-interest.

The UI values its volunteers and works to create services and programs to support and enhance their involvement. However, UI volunteers conducting themselves in a manner inconsistent with the university's mission, or these expectations, may be removed as affinity group leaders.

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## STARTING AN ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP

### Steps to start an affinity group:

#### 1. INITIAL REQUEST

- Visit our Affinity Groups webpage, located at [foriowa.org/groups](https://foriowa.org/groups), to ensure that the group you wish to create does not already exist.
- Complete the Affinity Group Application web form located at [foriowa.org/newgroup](https://foriowa.org/newgroup) or fill out the attached application and return to the associate director of alumni engagement at [alumni.reunions@foriowa.org](mailto:alumni.reunions@foriowa.org).

#### 2. INFORMATIONAL MEETING/CALL

- We will contact you to discuss the proposed alumni group. The discussion will include the number of alumni interested in forming the group; the list of alumni associated with the proposed group, if applicable; ideas for events, and related student groups, etc.

#### 3. APPROVAL

- We will review submitted materials to ensure that the proposed group's mission and values align with the principles of the broader affinity group program. The reviews will take place during the first week of January, April, July, and November.

#### 4. ORIENTATION

- Once approved, the affinity group's designated leaders will complete an orientation session to discuss the UI Center for Advancement Affinity Group Handbook and the next steps. Best practices and more institutional guidelines will be provided for review.

#### 5. LAUNCH

- The affinity group's leaders will meet with the associate director of alumni engagement (either in-person or virtually) to plan a first event for the initial launch of the new affinity group.

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## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT

Creating opportunities for everyone to stay engaged is at the core of the university's commitment to advancement. Advancement encompasses all that our alumni and friends do to strengthen the University of Iowa.

Our mission is to advance the University of Iowa through engagement and philanthropy. The UI Center for Advancement was formed by joining the UI Alumni Association and the UI Foundation to better serve our alumni and friends in the state and the region, throughout the country, and around the world.

We are committed to engaging everyone who loves the University of Iowa—alumni, fans, patients, art lovers, students, parents, and friends—through programming, events, and opportunities to give back.

A nonprofit IRC Sec. 501(c)(3) organization, the UI Center for Advancement is an independent organization and the preferred channel for private contributions that benefit all areas of the University of Iowa. Located in the Levitt Center for University Advancement, we are governed by a volunteer board of directors that elects our officers and appoints our leadership. Our work is also guided by our volunteer Alumni Leadership Council, which serves as the university's alumni advisory body and includes alumni representing areas across campus.

The University of Iowa Center for Advancement is an operational name for the State University of Iowa Foundation.

### UI CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT MISSION

*Advance the University of Iowa through engagement and philanthropy.*

### UI CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT VISION

*Engage. Inspire. Advance Iowa.*

### UI CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT CORE VALUES



#### ASPIRE

We aspire to make the greatest possible impact on the University of Iowa.



#### SERVE

We are committed to exceeding the expectations of everyone we serve.



#### LEAD

We uphold the highest level of integrity and ethical behavior.

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## AFFINITY GROUP APPLICATION

**President/primary contact's information:**

First name \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Did you go by any other names while attending Iowa? \_\_\_\_\_

Class year(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (select one: Home Work Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the type of proposed affinity group and provide a brief description:**

Identity Based     Student Activity     Other

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**Provide a history of your group (Include when you began informally meeting and for how long and how often.)**

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**What is the mission for your proposed affinity group and how will this align with the UI's mission?**

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**What are a few proposed events/activities your group wishes to host to engage similar interest individuals?**

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# AFFINITY GROUPS

## Submission of required materials

1. An Excel roster (names, phone numbers, and email addresses) of a minimum of four (4) steering committee members who have pledged to assist the group during your initial and probationary period.

2. An Excel roster (names, phone numbers, and email addresses) of a minimum of 30 alumni, including the four (4) person steering committee, who aspire to be recognized as members of the group.

I agree with and understand the rules and regulations of starting and maintaining an affinity group through the University of Iowa.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_