Northwestern | ALUMNI

NAA CLUB

Expectations

Updated September 2026

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OVERVIEW

What is an Alumni Club?

The Northwestern Alumni Association's (NAA) alumni clubs are an invaluable network of ambassadors, advocates, and supporters.

We are immensely proud that our clubs have a wide reach around the globe. We have over 60 alumni clubs serving more than 260,000 alumni. The NAA is deeply committed to building strong and enduring relationships with our global alumni community. The network of volunteer-led alumni clubs around the world is the community's cornerstone.

Official Recognition

Northwestern University considers volunteer-led alumni clubs extensions of the University and officially recognizes them on NAA web pages, social media channels, and printed materials.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This document, in its entirety, is a Memorandum of Understanding between the NAA and alumni clubs—a formal non-binding agreement that outlines expectations and standards for alumni clubs. Annually, each club must reconfirm this agreement, sign this Memorandum of Understanding, and adhere to the following terms, expectations, and standards in this document.

Being an officially recognized alumni club is conditional on full compliance with each component of the Memorandum of Understanding. If the NAA, in consultation with the Club Leaders Council (CLC) considers that the actions of an individual alum or alumni club are not in accordance with these, then details of the individual alum or alumni club may, at the discretion of the NAA, be removed from all web pages and publications. In addition, the alumni club will lose its official recognition and all associated benefits.

Primary Contact

Alumni clubs agree to appoint and provide contact details of a primary contact, typically the alumni club president. The primary contact is responsible for sharing this document with their club board, managing, and signing this document on an annual basis. The primary contact ensures the NAA receives current information about club activities and leadership contact details. This contact also shares key NAA and University information with the alumni club.

Primary contact agrees to the following:

- Sign the Memorandum of Understanding on an annual basis.
- Adhere to their club bylaws.
- Read, and when required, respond promptly to all communications from local alumni and the NAA.

- Share the alumni club list of board members and their roles with the NAA.
- Receive and read NAA volunteer communications and distribute news to the alumni club board.
- Respond to occasional surveys and requests for information from the NAA.
- Attend NAA club leader meetings when possible.
- Update the NAA if the primary contact is unable to continue in this role and provide details of a new primary contact.
- Work productively with the NAA to ensure the alumni club functions as effectively as possible and to resolve issues, including the NAA's suggested outcomes.

Formal Relationship with the University and the NAA

It is important that all alumni clubs understand and recognize the relationship they've entered with the University and the NAA once they are officially chartered:

- The NAA relies upon alumni clubs to act in the best interests of the University as its key ambassadors, advocates, and supporters.
- The NAA has the discretion, at all times, to remove an officer or officers of an alumni club should they act in a way that could be construed as prejudicial, harmful, or not aligned with the mission of the University or the NAA.
- Completion of the chartering requirements process and vote of the NAA Board establishes the formal relationship between an alumni club and the NAA.

General Standards

Alumni clubs agree to conduct their affairs lawfully, without discrimination or prejudice, to further the purposes of the NAA and the University and not to use the alumni clubs for the purposes of promoting private enterprises or political views. Any alum acting as a representative for an alumni club must not do anything, without legal justification, likely to prejudice the NAA or the University or to bring the NAA and the University into disrepute through their actions.

The following standards of behavior are expected of all alumni club representatives. The standards of behavior also include expectations as to how alumni clubs are expected to work together.

Alumni club volunteers must do the following:

- Act as advocates and ambassadors for the NAA and the University.
- Actively encourage alumni to join and/or connect with alumni clubs without discrimination or prejudice.

- Show respect for fellow alumni, alumni club members, students, parents, friends, and NAA and University staff by demonstrating courtesy, honesty, integrity, and fairness in all dealings on behalf of the alumni club. NAA and University staff are expected to follow this same guideline in interactions with club volunteers.
- Refrain from using the alumni club to promote private enterprises and political or religious views.
- Reach baseline requirements on the Leading Strategies Model (located at the end of this document).
- Adhere to all sections of this document.

The NAA does not involve itself in disputes between individual members of an alumni club.

There may be times the NAA approaches an alumni club with plans to carry out an event or activity in the region. The alumni club should be willing to help as reasonably required and publicize the event or activity to their own members.

Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement



Submit the **Confidentiality Agreement**

The NAA and University consider the records they maintain on alumni, donors, parents, and friends of the University to be highly confidential. Some information may also be subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or other protections. As a result, any infraction of this policy may initiate investigative measures to determine the source of the violation and solution to resolve the matter.

Expectations of club leaders around use of Northwestern and constituent information:

- All constituent information is confidential and is to be used only for the legitimate business and stated mission of Northwestern University.
- Do not seek personal benefit or knowingly permit others to benefit personally from constituent information.
- Do not share Alumni Relations and Development (ARD) information or materials with anyone outside the University without prior approval.
- Access constituent information using only the most secure and private method available and accept full responsibility for ensuring its security.
- Do not collect, create, or save data in systems outside of those approved by the NAA.
- Appropriately destroy constituent information and data after the intended business use is complete.

Each alumni volunteer must sign the confidentiality agreement and volunteer code of conduct when they begin their time as a Northwestern volunteer. The club's primary contact is responsible for making sure all club board members sign these agreements.

Volunteer Code of Conduct



Submit the **Code of Conduct**

NAA volunteers must agree to a code of conduct. Any violations of the Alumni Volunteer Code of Conduct may result in termination of the volunteer role or removal from NAA programs indefinitely. The NAA reserves the right to modify this code of conduct. Volunteer participation in any NAA program will constitute acceptance of such changes.

The code of conduct helps ensure that the program experience is meaningful, productive, and safe for participants. The NAA requires each volunteer to read and comply with the code of conduct to be eligible for NAA volunteer opportunities.

The Code of Conduct includes the following:

- Northwestern University non-discrimination statement
- Appropriate behavior
- Policy on sexual misconduct
- Use of confidential information and confidentiality
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Profile and appropriate use of online portals, databases, or messaging functions
- Transportation guidelines
- Alcohol guidelines
- Cannabis regulation

Support for Alumni Clubs



Visit **Resources for Club Leaders**

Staff serve as facilitators, advisors, and stewards, helping guide and support club efforts strategically. Our NAA staff team focuses on recognition, communication, training, funding, reporting, and providing access to signature events, club leader resources, and tools like the ***Our Northwestern*** alumni portal. The Alumni Relations and Development (ARD) Event and Email Support team (the support team) handles execution: club emails, event registrations, and reporting.

Volunteers are the connectors and culture carriers who bring the spirit of Northwestern to life in communities. Club leaders manage day-to-day club business: annual reviews, budgets, bylaws, calendars, communications, and advocacy. This year, we've added forums to help club presidents connect and learn from each other.

Our shared purpose is clear, but our roles are distinct, and having clear guardrails ensures success and sustainability.

NAA Team

Club and Service Awards

Club Leader Newsletter Execution

Club Pages Management

Leadership Symposium Invitations

LSM Funding via NAA Board

Membership and Giving Drives

Regional Demographics Reporting

Revenue Memo Distribution

Signature Event Funding

ARD Support Team

Club Email Subscription Management

Email Communications Execution

Event Registration Form Management

Weekly Event Registration Reports

Alumni Club Leaders

Annual Review

Board Management

Budget Management

Bylaws Maintenance

Club Leaders Forum

Communication Requests and Approvals

Event Planning and Attendance Reporting

NAA and University Advocate and Ambassador

Data Protection



Read the **Privacy Policy**

The University is subject to data protection regulations and laws, which control the use of personal contacts and data. Officially recognized, volunteer-led alumni clubs must protect personal data obtained through club activities and comply with applicable data protection regulations. If you are using information about the University or its alumni, you must respect data protection regulations and personal privacy. Alumni clubs agree to take proper care of all personal data and to comply with all applicable US laws—and related country laws as appropriate for international clubs—in respect of that personal data.

As of May 25, 2018, when the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) went into effect, the NAA enforced the policy of using only Northwestern-approved tools to communicate with alumni audiences via broadcast emails. This ensures Northwestern is in compliance with global data protection laws and maintains responsibility for data compliance and security. As of June 1, 2024, all alumni clubs must work with the ARD support team to build these communications. Alumni clubs are still encouraged to use social media accounts to communicate with club members.

All officially chartered NAA alumni clubs are considered extensions of Northwestern University, and as such, the data collected by those alumni clubs is the property of Northwestern University. Alumni clubs are no longer permitted to maintain separate databases or lists of alumni and their contact information. The alumni club is responsible for following all privacy and communications controls required of Northwestern University by our constituents.

The following are required of alumni clubs:

- Respect individuals' wishes about not being contacted.
- Do not maintain or use an external or shadow database.
- Comply with local data protection laws.
- Send member communication update requests (email addresses, contact information, communication preferences) to ONVolunteers@northwestern.edu to be updated in the database of record. This helps ensure we align with alumni communications preferences and maintain current information.

Email and Event Registration Support

ARD dedicated staff support our volunteers by assisting alumni clubs and communities through the creation of branded and copy-edited event registration pages and email communications.

This program aims to improve communications for our alumni community volunteers, including the following:

- Improving email quality through editorial support and design assistance while maintaining a club's established voice and style
- Maintaining Northwestern's brand standards in all communications
- Adhering to healthy data practices

Staff will work closely with volunteers to create a seamless, efficient, and helpful system.

Alumni Club Leaders

Responsibilities include the following:

- Compiling email/event copy and photos and submitting through the request form at least four (4) full business days before the desired email send date or event launch date
- Reviewing email/event preview and either approving or sending changes within one (1) business day to ensure email/event can be deployed on the desired date

Expectations are as follows:

- Alumni leaders must sign the Alumni Volunteer Code of Conduct and the Volunteer Confidentiality Statement to be eligible to make requests of this support program.

- Alumni leaders will not send mass email communications to alumni using other email tools such as MailChimp or Constant Contact. All mass email communications will be sent using this provided support model. Northwestern will no longer provide contact information data to volunteers for communication purposes. Clubs should not use old contact information for mass email or mail communication.
- Alumni leaders will send names of any non-alumni that they would like added to their email audience to ONVolunteers@northwestern.edu so that they will be included in future communications (spouses, event attendees, etc.).
- Alumni leaders will treat each other and staff with respect and professional courtesy.

ARD Support Team

Responsibilities include the following:

- Using email content and graphics to build an email within four (4) business days
- Attaching the appropriate audience to the email
- Sending an email preview to the alumni club at least one (1) business day prior to the requested send date, provided the email request was submitted at least four (4) full business days prior to the requested send date
- Releasing the email—once the email preview is approved by the alumni club and the staff liaison has had at least one (1) business day to review the email—or, making any changes that have been requested from the preview email and sending a new preview in a timely manner

Expectations are as follows:

- Maintain email audiences and handle email and contact updates sent in from the alumni club in a timely manner
- Copy the primary club contact and the individual who submitted the email request (if different) on all email development correspondence. Do not release any email without final approval from an alumni club leader.
- Advise clubs on email marketing and accessibility best practices and University communication strategies, making content revisions where appropriate
- Treat each other and alumni club leaders with respect and professional courtesy

NAA Communities Staff Liaison

Responsibilities include the following:

- Reviewing email content and communicating with alumni club and/or the support program staff about any changes or concerns within one (1) business day
- Reviewing and approving requests for deviations to standard outputs (i.e., additional email sends, unique one-off requests, timeline adjustments, custom audiences, etc.)

- Communicating with alumni club leaders to enforce deadlines for submissions and conveying if late submissions cannot be accommodated

Expectations include the following:

- Staff liaison will treat each other, support staff members, and alumni leaders with respect and professional courtesy.

Electronic Mail

All duly chartered alumni communities will be granted access to a Google Workspace account managed by Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT).

These accounts have limited storage and access to all Google Workspace applications, including Gmail, Drive, and Meet.

All outgoing email sent on behalf of the club through the email support program will have the community's @alum.northwestern.edu address used as the sender and as the "Reply To" destination should a recipient choose to respond to a communication. Each community should ensure that the several officers and board members have access to the Gmail account and that the inbox is monitored regularly.

Alumni Surveying

Since 2017, ARD has followed a policy that limits how frequently individual alumni can be surveyed by University schools, units, and related entities, including alumni clubs. Based on the policy, alumni may only be surveyed a maximum of every four months. This approach helps reduce survey fatigue and supports stronger response rates.

Each fall, the NAA administers the Alumni Perceptions and Interests "Pulse" Survey to better understand alumni experiences, viewpoints, and interests as well as how connected alumni feel to Northwestern. The survey is distributed to one-third of alumni each year. Starting in fall 2025, the Pulse Survey will include questions specifically about alumni club experiences. A summary report of overall findings, including insights related to clubs, will be shared with club leaders a few months after the survey concludes.

Some clubs may wish to gather additional feedback from their members on topics not covered in the Pulse Survey. In such cases, club leaders can submit the survey request form. When the request is submitted, clubs will work directly with their NAA staff liaisons to explore the most effective ways to collect insights that support their club's alumni engagement goals.

University and NAA Marks and Brand

The use of the University and NAA's marks and brand must adhere to the University style guide, updates to those guidelines, and any other directions issued by the University and NAA. Alumni clubs must submit examples of their use of the University and NAA's marks and brand if asked to do so. Alumni clubs must not customize, adapt, or amend the University and NAA marks and brand in any manner and must only use them in the form provided.

The alumni club must immediately notify the NAA in writing if it becomes aware of any actual, suspected, or threatened infringement on the University or NAA marks and brand. The alumni club agrees to provide the University with the assistance it may reasonably require in resolving the infringement.

Alumni clubs should:

- Use only University- and NAA-provided/approved brand assets (names, registered or unregistered trademarks, or branding elements). Use of "similar" marks is not permitted.
- Protect the University and NAA's marks, brand, reputation, and/or goodwill by ensuring each club or others take no action or permit no action that will weaken or negatively impact elements associated with the University and NAA.
- Not sell or market (or permit any third party to sell or market) products or services that carry the University and NAA marks and brand.
- Not commercially exploit or otherwise profit from the University and NAA marks and brand.

The Seal of Northwestern University

The University's seal and, by association, logo represent 175 years of excellence. It is an international symbol of the University's reputation for high quality and standards, and this makes it a valuable asset that requires protection. As such, the University seal is only used for ceremonial and official University purposes.

Disclaimers

The alumni club acknowledges that the NAA and University have not made and do not make any representation or warranty of any kind in relation to the NAA and University's marks and brand. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the University will not be liable to the alumni club for any costs, expenses, loss, or damage (whether direct, indirect, or consequential, and whether economic or other) arising from the alumni club's exercise of the rights granted to it under this agreement, even if the NAA and University are aware of the circumstances in which such loss could arise.

The NAA or University may investigate any concerns relating to alumni club activities, organization, or use of the NAA or University's marks and brand, and the alumni club shall provide the NAA and University with any reasonable assistance requested in any such investigation. The NAA and University reserve the right to act with respect to any use by an alumni club of the University's marks and brand that does not conform to these terms or infringes any intellectual property right or other right of the NAA or University.

Risk Management and Insurance

The University does not expect club leaders to eliminate all risks associated with events and activities. Rather, leaders are expected to exercise reasonable judgment in identifying potential risks and taking appropriate steps to help protect participants. Risk assessment is an important part of event planning and should be tailored to the nature, size, and location of the activity.

Club leaders are expected to consider event-related risks and take reasonable precautions when appropriate. Depending on the activity, these precautions may include obtaining signed liability waivers for higher-risk activities, communicating event expectations and potential risks in advance, confirming venue or vendor requirements, planning for emergencies, monitoring weather and other environmental conditions, and following applicable safety guidelines.

This is intended as guidance rather than a formal checklist. Club leaders should use their best judgment to determine what precautions are reasonable and appropriate for their specific event.

Alumni club board members, as reported annually, are covered under the NAA's insurance umbrella.

Finances

Each alumni club is entirely self-financing. Each club collects and manages its own membership fees and event revenue. Clubs are required to report balances to the NAA twice per year along with the name of the account holder and where the account is held. There are times when the NAA does financially support events in part or in full. If a club incurs expenses for an event the NAA is helping support, all receipts must be submitted for reimbursement to be processed. All reimbursements will be processed in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Club Spending Guidelines

Alumni club funds should be used to support events and member engagement in alignment with the club's mission. Allowable expenses include event costs, marketing tools, member engagement, and administrative costs. All spending must be documented, follow the approved budget, and reviewed annually for accountability.

Local US-based alumni clubs must adhere to the following:

- Not file as their own 501c3/7 organization.
- Work with a dedicated staff liaison to create and manage an annual budget.
- Partner with the support team to build emails and events for your club. All revenue is documented and distributed to clubs on a regular basis.

Affinity alumni clubs must adhere to the following:

- Not file as their own 501c3/7 organization.

- Work with a dedicated staff liaison to manage the annual budget along with all contracts and payments via university-held accounts.
- Partner with the support team to build emails and events for your club. All revenue is returned to clubs via their chart string with each event registration.

International alumni clubs must adhere to the following:

- Abide by all local governmental laws and requirements for locally held bank accounts.
- Sign an affiliation agreement at the request of the University, if the club is officially incorporated under the laws of their country.
- Work with the support team to build emails and events for your club sale of Merchandise.
- Alumni clubs must not sell items for their benefit. In addition to strict licensing and trademark policies, sales of items result in unrelated business income and business income tax for the University.
- Alumni clubs must not sell items to support fundraising efforts, including sales of merchandise through silent auctions. In addition to strict licensing and trademark policies, donors may not receive anything in exchange for a financial gift.
- Alumni clubs may purchase items to give away, as long as all branding, licensing, and trademark guidelines are followed.

Fundraising Policies

The Alumni Relations and Development (ARD) department is the official fundraising arm of the University. All fundraising processes must adhere to ARD policies and comply with IRS regulations. No online fundraising activities are permitted outside ARD platforms or the University giving website. This is to ensure that money raised by alumni clubs is correctly receipted and tracked, and that we are compliant with University and IRS financial policies and legal regulations. In addition, alumni clubs should not fundraise for other organizations outside of the University.

All fundraising campaigns must be approved prior to promotion. The use of any type of charitable gaming for fundraising is not permitted. If you have questions about the implementation of any fundraising activities, please contact your club staff liaison.

Club Scholarships

The NAA partners with the ARD Annual Giving team to help alumni clubs increase fundraising support for club scholarships. Northwestern's undergraduate scholarship program is need-based and the Financial Aid office matches eligible students with available funds.

Sponsorship Policies

While sponsorships are not encouraged, sponsorship of activities, programs, or events by non-University entities can, when conducted in an appropriate manner, be beneficial to NAA alumni clubs, as well as to the sponsoring entity and to the University. However, it is also necessary to recognize that the University's

reputation and image must be protected and that it must not serve to unduly advance the interests of one non-University entity or organization over another. In addition, alumni clubs should be mindful of the significant value to non-University entities that results from the exposure and association with the University that a sponsorship relationship provides. Sponsorships that promote alcohol, tobacco, or religious or political affiliations are not permitted.

These guidelines are intended to establish processes and provide guidance to alumni clubs that seek corporate sponsorship opportunities for events, programs, or other activities.

Guidelines include the following:

- Acceptable/unacceptable corporate sponsorships
- Arranging sponsorships
- Acknowledgements
- Termination of excess funds

All sponsorships must be approved prior to promotion. If you have questions, please contact your club staff liaison.

Termination

The University may terminate this agreement for any reason and at any time, without liability to alumni clubs, by giving written notice to the president of the alumni club.

If the nature of the alumni club changes in a way where the purpose of connecting alumni to the University and to each other is no longer the intent, the alumni club must notify the NAA immediately in writing. This agreement will automatically terminate upon receipt of such notice.

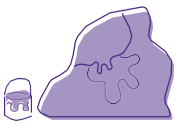
On the termination of this agreement for any reason, all rights granted under this agreement shall cease, and the alumni club must cease all use of the NAA and University's marks and brand, as well as all alumni club activities. Termination of this agreement shall not affect any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities of the parties that have accrued up to the date of termination, including the right to claim damages in respect of any breach of the agreement that existed at or before the date of termination.

LEADING STRATEGY MODEL

In addition to the expectations the NAA has of alumni clubs and their leadership, all alumni clubs are asked to follow the Leading Strategy Model and meet the baseline level annually. Failure to meet the Leading Strategy Model baseline requirements risks the club being considered for deactivation by the NAA.

At the start of the fiscal year, alumni club leaders and NAA staff liaisons will connect to set goals for the year. Throughout the year, alumni clubs and NAA staff liaisons will communicate about the work being done to complete tasks in each tier and to check off accomplishments. Staff liaisons may ask alumni clubs to stretch to reach the next tier.

(Scroll to the next page.)



ROCK LEVEL

Alumni Club Baseline Requirements (US$500)

Required to maintain active charter status

Board Management

- ☐ Maintain a minimum of three active club board members.
- ☐ Ensure that at least 75 percent of board members, including the club president, make a philanthropic gift to Northwestern University at a level they consider meaningful.
- ☐ Develop or update a board recruitment and succession plan.
- ☐ Actively communicate with and involve the Alumni Regent in club activities (if applicable).

Club Management

- ☐ Participate in biannual meetings with your NAA staff liaison.
- ☐ Maintain current bylaws, reviewed at least every three years and submit a copy to the NAA.
- ☐ Host a minimum of four events annually (virtual or in-person), providing the attendee list and completing an event recap form for each event.
- ☐ Actively manage at least one social media platform.

Key Due Dates

- ☐ Submit a complete board roster and signed Memorandum of Understanding. Due October 5, 2026.
- ☐ Submit an annual budget and a calendar or plan for programs and events to your NAA staff liaison. Clubs with an off-campus bank account must also submit a current bank statement. Due October 31, 2026.
- ☐ Complete the mid-year review for evaluation by the NAA Board. Due March 26, 2027.
- ☐ Complete the annual review for evaluation by the NAA Board. Due August 31, 2027.



WILDCAT LEVEL

Alumni Club Excellence Recognition (US$1000; must complete at least 10)

Must meet all Rock (baseline) requirements to be eligible

Governance and Leadership

- ☐ Maintain a minimum of five active club board members.
- ☐ Liaise with a representative from the Alumni Admission Council.
- ☐ Ensure at least one board member attends the Leadership Symposium (October 11–12, 2026).
- ☐ Have participation of at least one board member in the NU Club Leaders Forum or other staff-led virtual presentation (e.g. Pulse Survey).
- ☐ Develop or update a membership recruitment goal and outreach plan.
- ☐ Conduct a survey of the alumni club population.
- ☐ Submit nomination(s) for NAA Service and Club Awards.
- ☐ Manage club digital forum (e.g., chatter group in *Our Northwestern* alumni portal, BrightCrowd book, or messaging app)

Philanthropy and Fundraising

- ☐ Ensure 100 percent of club board members make a philanthropic gift to Northwestern University at a level they consider meaningful.
- ☐ Participate in or serve as an ambassador for at least one annual giving campaign (e.g., CATSGiveBack) through the club or a designated club leader.
- ☐ Award scholarship funds annually (for US and affinity clubs with active University-managed scholarships or funds).

Events and Programming

- ☐ Partner with NAA on at least one signature event (e.g., New Chapter NU Neighbors, Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, Northwestern Connects, End-of-Year Celebrations).
- ☐ Participate in or organize a community service initiative.
- ☐ Partner with another Northwestern community or alumni group (e.g., Ivy+ or Big Ten alumni networks).
- ☐ Host a minimum of eight events annually (virtual or in-person), providing the attendee list and completing an event recap form for each event.