

SECTION IV

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Organizational structures are in place to promote coordination and communication among alumnae and Smith College. Outlined are the club models and responsibilities of officers, the role of regional coordinators who help strengthen the club structure, and the resources offered by staff and board members of the AASC.

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Organizational Structures: Affinity Groups, Smith Clubs and Groups

All alumnae of Smith College, undergraduate and graduate, are automatically considered members of the Alumnae Association of Smith College and are eligible for membership in Smith College clubs. Alumnae are defined as former Smith students who have completed at least one semester as an enrolled student.

Affinity Groups

The Alumnae Association of Smith College (AASC) fosters opportunities for alumnae to connect with the college and each other in alternate ways beyond classes, clubs, and geographic boundaries. Alumnae who share a common interest, goal, or characteristic that furthers the mission and traditions of the college and interests of her alumnae, may organize groups by following the guidelines and procedures stated below or may submit proposals for short-term projects or programs that may be of interest to the designated group.

Guidelines for affinity and special interest groups:

- The purpose of the group advances the interests of AASC, Smith College, and her alumnae.
- The group is open to all Smith alumnae.
- The group is encouraged to work with local Smith clubs.
- The group demonstrates an awareness of the mission of AASC and affirms support of the purpose of AASC by developing volunteer leaders.
- The stated mission of the group does not conflict nor compete with that of the AASC and/or Smith College.
- AASC may host Special Interest Group conferences annually.

The Affinity/Special Interest Committee (ASIC), an advisory committee appointed by the AASC Board of Directors, provides oversight, support and guidance for groups. The ASIC committee chair holds a seat on the AASC Board. One member of the Affinity/Special Interest Committee serves as a liaison to the Regional Club Coordinator Committee (RCC). AASC plans and hosts events evaluated by ASIC to enhance college priorities.

Smith Club

A Smith club has 75 potential members within its defined geographic area and is open to all alumnae. It has adopted a formal set of bylaws and elected a full board of officers. Clubs submit an annual report and an annual financial report to the AASC. The club president, or president-elect, should attend the clubs leadership conference held biennially in Northampton. It is suggested that clubs send one newsletter or postcard annually to **all alumnae** within its defined region, and not just to dues-paying members (unless this puts a strain on the club's finances). The elected officers may choose to obtain tax-exemption for the club under section 501c(3) of the IRS tax code. The officers may also choose to collect dues for an operating budget.

Please note that this traditional model has become less suitable for many groups and alumnae. One of the results of the Clubs Task Force in 2008-09 is that the AASC develops alternative models for local groups to adopt and adjust to best fit the needs of alumnae in

your community. That work is in progress right now and will be shared with you as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact the clubs office with any questions.

Smith Group

A Smith group has at least 30 alumnae within its defined region. It is less formal than a Smith club. Bylaws are not required and the group has few elected officers. A Smith group has a designated contact person for all communication with the AASC and a treasurer to handle its money. It files an annual report and an annual financial report with the AASC. It has one annual communication with group members; this may be either a newsletter or a meeting. A group does not necessarily collect dues for an operating budget, but may, instead, charge a fee to cover program costs.

Organizational Models for Affinity Groups

(1) ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP: Self-identified groups may establish an online discussion group by contacting the AASC

Benefits and services provided by AASC:

- Online discussion site on the AASC web site
- AASC staff monitoring of discussion group site
- Promoting the Online Discussion Group to encourage alumnae participation. Marketing vehicles may include E-News, E-blasts, Smith Alumnae Quarterly, AASC website, and/or ASIC website

Written proposal requirements:

- No written proposal required
- Click [here](#) for Online Discussion Group Module

Online Discussion Group responsibilities:

- Designate an alumna moderator for the online discussion site who also serves as the liaison between the Online Discussion Group and AASC staff
- Agree to abide by the Terms and Conditions, Terms of Use and Privacy Policy for AASC Online Communities (click [here](#) for the terms and conditions)

During a six-month probationary period, the Online Discussion Group's online discussion site will be monitored by the alumna moderator and AASC staff to assess interest and viability. Viability is defined as participation of 40+ alumnae in online discussions.

The group may continue as an Online Discussion Group or elect to become a Community after fulfilling the Community written proposal requirements.

(2) COMMUNITY

Benefits and services provided by AASC:

- Online discussion site on the AASC web site
- AASC staff consultations
- Promoting the Community to encourage alumnae participation. Marketing vehicles may include E-News, E-blasts, Smith Alumnae Quarterly, AASC website, and/or ASIC website
- AASC hosted web site maintained by alumna designated by Community
- Annual newsletter distribution (may be electronic or hardcopy)
- Partial funding may be available for an event planned in collaboration with AASC
- Email lists

Written proposal requirements:

- Mission statement
- A list of at least 40 alumnae who have indicated a willingness to participate in the Community

Community responsibilities:

- Designate an alumna moderator for the online discussion site who also serves as the liaison between the Community and AASC staff
- Present an [annual report](#) to the AASC outlining achievements and financial accounting. (Click here for the annual report guidelines.)

During a six-month probationary period, the Community's online discussion site will be monitored by the alumna moderator and AASC staff to assess interest and viability.

Viability is defined as participation of 40+ alumnae in online discussions.

(3) AFFINITY GROUP

Benefits and services provided by AASC:

- Online discussion site on the AASC web site
- AASC staff consultations
- Promoting the Affinity Group to encourage alumnae participation. Marketing vehicles may include E-News, E-blasts, Smith Alumnae Quarterly, AASC website, and/or ASIC website
- AASC hosted web site maintained by alumna designated by Affinity Group
- Annual newsletter distribution (may be electronic or hardcopy)
- Partial funding may be available for an annual event planned in collaboration with AASC
- Email lists
- Training in AASC online services
- Start-up funds for programs and activities designed in consultation with AASC staff
- Funding for special projects, by application
- AASC may host Affinity Group and career-oriented teas as part of the on-campus student tea program
- AASC hosted Affinity Group and career-oriented weekend conferences on alternating years

Written proposal requirements:

- Mission statement
- A list of at least [x #] of alumnae who have indicated a willingness to participate in the Affinity Group

Supplemental Documents for AASC Board approval:

A constitution or bylaws consistent with the stated mission of the AASC and should not in any way outline activities that would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the AASC under section 501c(3) of the tax code. A partial listing of requirements includes the following:

- The group will operate exclusively for charitable or educational purposes.
- No part of the group's earnings may benefit any member, director, officer, or other private individuals.
- No activities of the group will consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.
- The group cannot participate in or intervene in any campaign for public office. ([Click here for bylaws guidelines and recommended format](#))
- A one-year program plan ([click here for the one-year program plan guidelines](#))

Affinity Group responsibilities:

- Designate a liaison to work with AASC staff. AASC staff serves as alumnae relations advisor. ASIC also serves as a resource to the Affinity Group.
- Maintain a membership list of at least 50 alumnae.
- Designate an alumna moderator for the online discussion site.
- Undergo a one-year probationary period. At the end of the probationary period, the Affinity Group will be reviewed by ASIC to determine whether the Affinity Group is meeting its goals and remains in compliance with these Affinity and Special Interest Groups Guidelines and the group's bylaws. During the probationary period, the AASC will hold the Affinity Group's treasury.
- Solicit dues, if desired, but not interfere with the development efforts of the college, nor solicit funds or engage in other work on behalf of the college except in conjunction with, and with the approval of, the specified college department.

- Present an [annual report](#) to the AASC outlining achievements and financial accounting. (Click here for the annual report guidelines.)
- Participate in AASC sponsored training, including sending the president and one board member of each Affinity Group to the biennial All Volunteer Large Conference weekend.
- Encourage members to participate in the recruitment and admission efforts of the college in conjunction with and guidance from the Office of Admission.
- Become financially self-sustaining.

AASC Board's right to dissolve Affinity Group:

The AASC Board of Directors (Board) reserves the right to dissolve an Affinity Group if the leadership of the group requests that the group be dissolved, or if the Affinity Group is found by the Board not to be in compliance with its own bylaws or these guidelines. Such a finding may be made only after the group is afforded the opportunity to appear before the Board or its designate.

Proposal Submission and Approval Process

- Individuals interested in organizing a Special Interest group should contact alumedu@email.smith.edu to discuss information needed for the written proposal. Proposal requirements vary, depending upon the organizational option selected.
- Proposed group leader(s) electronically submits proposal alumedu@email.smith.edu
- ASIC members review proposal
- AASC and/or ASIC works with the proposed group leader(s) to make changes to proposal, if necessary
- ASIC Chair electronically sends proposal approval notice to group
- Group seeking "Affinity" designation submits supplemental documents to alumedu@email.smith.edu for AASC Board approval

Organizational Models for Smith Clubs and Groups

The AASC has established three models for Smith clubs (A, B, C) to provide structure, but offer flexibility. Each model offers the club the opportunity to serve the college, while taking into account different resource levels. Considering your group's resources (volunteers, time, money, energy), choose one of the following models, or adapt the structure and activities to reflect the needs and goals of alumnae in your region. Remember, it is always possible to exceed the suggested programming, but avoid burnout — don't overextend your resources. Focus on friendship and fun! Keep it simple!

Definition of Terms

Outreach denotes programming designed to increase alumnae affiliation to Smith and to one another. Outreach programming includes social events, the AASC Speakers Program, other educational programs, newsletters, web pages and directories.

Admission events promote Smith to prospective candidates and assist the Office of Admission in identifying qualified prospective students. This includes the book award program, representation at college fairs, and social occasions for prospective students such as informal teas and send-off parties for new students.

Smith Image events promote positive images of Smith and its alumnae. Smith image events are largely focused on public service and volunteering and increasing Smith's name recognition.

Career Development work helps to support and strengthen the internship programs for current students (Praxis and SCIP) by helping to locate internships and recruiting alumnae mentors for students.

Club Model A

Annual newsletter

One outreach event

One admission event

Example

Small or far-flung constituencies

Goals

Socializing

Broadening intellectual horizons

Activities

Holds a faculty or distinguished alumna lecture luncheon

Hosts prospective teas and send-off parties for new and returning students

Club Model B

Annual or biannual newsletter

Two outreach events

Two admission events

One of the following:

Career development work

Fundraising

Smith image event

Example

Suburban communities or small cities

Goals

Keeping area alumnae connected to each other
Assisting with admissions

Activities

Hosts a speaker from the college
Creates directory for club members
Sends a newsletter twice a year
Finds volunteers to represent Smith at area college fairs
Holds one social event annually, held in a different area of the region each year

Club Model C

Two or more newsletters annually
Three outreach events
Two admission events
One career/networking program
One Smith image event
Career development work
(Fundraising is optional)

Example

Major metropolitan area

Goals

Creating networking and career opportunities for Smith alumnae

Activities

Hosts a speaker from the college
Sponsors "Career Panels" first Monday of the month in downtown location
Hosts annual potlucks and holiday parties
Volunteers as a Smith contingent in breast cancer walk or at a soup kitchen
Tours museum show with notable alumna

Inactive Status

Smith organizations may at sometime see interest in their organization fade and may not be able to recruit alumnae to assume officer positions or to organize regional events. At that point, the organization may choose to assume inactive status and should notify the AASC of its decision. Inactive status puts the organization "on hold" for one to two years. The organization is not expected to run programs or mail out newsletters. A club or affinity group on inactive status may, if it has interested alumnae, send a delegate to the clubs leadership conference.

When inactive status is assumed, the treasurer should send the AASC any remaining funds in the organization's account. The AASC will deposit the funds into a holding account named "Smith College Club of _____". The funds will remain in this account for two years. If, in that time, new volunteers step forward to reactivate the club, these funds will be redistributed to the new club officers for the club's use. At the end of two years, if no new leadership is found, the funds will be transferred to the AASC, and the club will receive credit for its gift.

Forming A Smith Organization

Getting Started

Any alumna or group of alumnae may ask the AASC for help in forming a Smith club.

To begin the process, contact the alumnae outreach department to request

A geographic printout of all alumnae in your area (contact the AASC for the list)

A list of all alumnae sharing a common characteristic

Names of specific alumnae from the area who have previously expressed interest in forming an organization

After receiving the list:

Examine the list to determine the demographics of the alumnae listed

Recruit (by phone or email) a core organizing group (3–10 alumnae) to talk about alumnae needs that could be met by the organization

the types of activities to plan

goals for the group

For clubs, decide what zip codes should and should not be included in your club area

Plan a first mailing (usually a cover letter and a survey)

If there is sufficient interest based on survey results, determine an organizational structure for the group, considering available energy and interest (see [Smith Organization Models, pages 5–6](#))

Project revenue and expenses and recommend an amount for dues (see [Revenue, Dues and Expenses, page 52](#))

After the meeting, call the alumnae outreach department to report plans and get help with mailing and programming. The AASC will connect your organization with the regional RCC for advice and support. New clubs are eligible for financial aid and production assistance with their first mailing (newsletter, postcard, survey).

Affinity and Special Interest Committee (ASIC)

Committee Member Responsibilities (in addition to the matters itemized above):

- Monitor progress/success of Online Discussion Groups and Communities.
- Monitor the status of each affinity group annually to determine whether the group is meeting its goals and remains in compliance with these stated guidelines and the group's bylaws.
- Participate in AASC sponsored training, including the biennial All Volunteer Large Conference weekend and, on alternate years, the All Volunteer Small Conference weekend.
- Additional duties, as agreed to or assigned by the ASIC chair.

Regional Club Coordinators (RCCs)

RCCs are volunteers appointed for a three-year term by the AASC to act as liaison between the clubs in a specific region and the association. RCCs are either current club officers or active club members who have served as club presidents in the past. There are currently 12 RCC/geographic regions in the United States and around the world, which parallels the NAAC structure.

The RCCs, as a committee, meet every year in Northampton. Every other year, the meeting is held in conjunction with the clubs leadership conference. RCCs communicate with the clubs in their region and report on club activities and concerns at the RCC meetings.

The goals of the RCC program are twofold:
to increase the AASC's support to clubs
to strengthen the link between the college and alumnae

RCCs help to guide the clubs in their area, and serve as resources for officers. Their input is critical to the planning of the clubs leadership conference.

We encourage all club presidents to be in contact with their RCC. Share concerns, issues or questions for her to relate during the RCCs on-campus meetings. In turn, we encourage RCCs to communicate with club presidents and be aware of club activities and issues.

RCC Responsibilities

The structure of this committee will remain flexible and be reviewed on a yearly basis. This will ensure that it is meeting the needs of clubs and providing a meaningful volunteer role for alumnae.

Goals/purposes of the Regional Clubs Committee and its members:

Attend

Club Leadership Conference every other fall
Committee meeting on campus each fall (or every other fall and conduct regional meetings in place of on campus committee meeting)
Regional meetings as scheduled.

Club meetings of the club(s) of which she is a member

Assist AASC staff with:

planning Club Leadership Conference every other fall
recommendations for topics of discussion and training at conference
revising club materials (e.g. handbook) as needed
coordinating cross-club and affinity group programming
facilitating communication about the college to alumnae
planning AASC sponsored events in her region

Each committee member is available to be a resource on demand by:

participating in a conference call for club officers on a specific subject
contacting a club officer to offer support, guidance, or advise
conferring with AASC staff member on her area of expertise
conferring with NAAC regarding recruiting efforts in her region

Some specific responsibilities may include:

contacting clubs in region yearly with a welcome call
share ideas and feedback from alumnae in the region
thank outgoing club presidents and officers

AASC Regional Coordinator (RCC) Chair

Responsibilities to RCCs

Maintains regular communication with 12 RCCs
Sends reports of AASC board meetings to RCCs
Chairs the RCCs meetings
Assists AASC staff in organizing, and participates in, the annual clubs leadership conference

Responsibilities to AASC:

Communicates and interacts regularly with responsible AASC staff (executive director, and assistant director for clubs and undergraduate programs)
Attends AASC Board meetings annually
Reports to AASC Board on RCC and club status and activities

Supporting Structures: The Alumnae Outreach Department

The foremost priority of the alumnae outreach department is to strengthen the role of alumnae in support of the college.

The alumnae outreach department of the AASC coordinates, organizes, and provides the following services and programs for alumnae:

Reunion

Club and class networks

Affinity groups, such as Black Alumnae of Smith College (BASC) and Association of Latina Alumnae (ALAS)

Club and class officer training conferences

AASC speakers program

Alumnae education programs, including symposia and regional events

Smith Travel Program

Lists, labels, broadcast email and newsletter production

The AASC web portal, including the online community (www.smith.edu/alumnae)

Other undergraduate programs (such as student teas and traditions)

Alumnae Art Gallery

Smith Alumnae Quarterly

See http://alumnae.smith.edu/mission/staff_directory.php for Who's Who on the AASC staff, 2007-08, and phone numbers for the AASC.