

# A Guide for Starting LGBTQA Alumni Chapters

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The following is a list of steps to take when working to create a new LGBT alumni affinity group on your campus. We mapped these steps after a series of discussions and informal interviews with individuals who are or were responsible for creating, maintaining, and pushing their alumni groups forward on their college campuses. It is preceded by a more formal guide adapted from the Alumni Channel.

Our hope is that this will sustain a dialogue within the Consortium about the creation and maintenance of such groups. We hope that many more individuals and institutions will add their thoughts, ideas, and feedback to this document so that it truly becomes a comprehensive guide to creating an LGBT alumni network for those who seek assistance.

-Paul and Catherine

## **Chapter 1: Here's what Your Colleagues Have To Say**

### 1. Determine if there is a need for a group

Understanding who is interested, why they are interested, and what the ultimate goals and mission of the group are, is key to determining the need for creating an affinity LGBT alumni group on your campus. Have you been contacted by alumni asking how they can give back? Are current students wondering if there is a way to keep in contact once they graduate? Are you looking for a way to generate additional revenue for programming? Are you interested in creating a more formal social network for graduates new and old? How do you generate enough interest for the group to be successful and sustainable? All of these questions are valid, and they raise another point: once your group is created, who will be there to maintain it?

### 2. How do you attract membership?

Because there are relatively few, if any, systems in place to code LGBTQ students, it makes reaching out to those students all the more difficult. Here, you have a couple of options. First, you can contact your alumni office for options on getting information out through a general alumni mailing about your group's formation. However, many of you may come across alumni associations, or specific persons within the alumni office, who are unwilling or unable to assist you in your efforts. This leads to the second option, which involves some old fashioned outreach, with a social media twist. The existence of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and the like, has made searching for and contacting former students and alumni easier and more cost effective than traditional mailings.

#### Indiana University

For our initial outreach we went the grassroots mobilization route. We used magazine advertising, we identified "key players" of the GLBT community from IU and we also started a letter writing/phone campaign. Now it would be the equivalent of using social media to get people involved. As to the key players on campus, it was as primitive as asking leaders to write up a list of people they could contact. The group we started with were the movers and shakers-they were the people who had contacts. We asked them because each had their own list of friends who were IU grads. It was that basic. With the internet we were able to go that much more widely with listservs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. We didn't say no to any way of doing it. There was no pattern to our outreach, though a big part of it was protecting anonymity. Nothing "gay" or LGBTQ acronym related was put on the outside of envelopes. Chapters of the affiliate group now exist. We have groups in New York, Washington DC, and San Francisco. We wouldn't avoid anyone because, you know, we are everywhere. Just politely ask and be prepared to be declined.

-Doug Bauder

#### University of California: San Diego

An alumni list was generated in 2001 by going back through all the old club registrations since the 1970s. We then pulled the names of all the principal members and then went to the alumni database and did an email and paper mail asking if they wanted to be a part of the LGBT alumni group. From that got 150 people or so and now the list has about 300 people on it. In 2009 we started the formal LGBT alumni council. This is made up of a small group of alumni that have a passion for UCSD development; there are only a dozen or so people on it. You really need the right alumni at the right time that has the right energy that wants to do it.

-Shaun Travers

### 3. Work with your Alumni Association

It is important and necessary to create a solid working relationship with your alumni association as they will be responsible for recognizing your group as a sanctioned affinity group. In most cases, they will also be responsible for maintaining member databases and contacting members about your events, as well as helping to get word out to potential new members. Understand, however, that there may be some roadblocks to your success because of personal, political, or religious views upheld by those responsible for helping you to create your group. Do not let this discourage you.

#### Indiana University

"It is crucial to work through the Alumni Association. When we were working on joining we were told that there would be people who would leave the Alumni Association because of our group admission and a few certainly did, the Alumni Association received a few letters and lost their memberships. But the significant thing was that people started donating who never donated before who were allies or LGBT. The Alumni Association will lose some but will gain a lot more from this. It's the right thing to do, for us it was 15 years ago it was a different climate on this campus but still, Alumni Association will be more conservative than the campus they are supporting. Having an Alumni Association representative or staff person on our board to help us through the process and to continue our progress was very very helpful".

-Doug Bauder

#### University of the Pacific

The formation of our LGBT alumni club was an alumni-led effort. The alumni association had previously followed the regional club model, and we had not had much experience organizing affinity-based alumni groups. Getting our first affinity groups off the ground turned out to be a great way for the University to collaborate closely with our alumni and it also presented new challenges. We (the alumni association staff) quickly discovered that in a way what we were doing could become quite "political," because once you organize and empower alumni who have a mission and a vision for changing and improving the institution, and who will raise issues no one else will raise, there is always chance for resistance and push-back. And yet, the university needs to realize how important alumni are to the institution's growth and to our educational mission of serving current students. As the alumni association, we were the bridge between the alumni and the university, and we had to be careful to facilitate that communication between them and not be afraid of conflict and of challenging the university to face our history and our future with an open mind. If you have enough allies in the institution and contacts at all the levels, you can make your case; you're doing something for the betterment of the entire

institution. Otherwise, alumni feel like they are on the outside rattling the gates. By establishing the alumni club, the university was recognizing that the alumni are inside the gates working for change.

-Corrie Martin

#### Emory University

When you look at university alumni groups there are city or region based groups and then there are interest groups. This second type of alumni group has typically started from the ground up. In other words, alumni ask to form an interest group rather than have official sponsorship from the university development office, etc., While it is important to gain the support of the official alumni association, the momentum for this group is driven by alumni. We had elections for an executive committee for the first time this year and as part the process was to develop a mission statement and governance documents.

-Lilly Correa

#### Georgia Tech

It was quite an ordeal getting our group started. Over the past 15 years, I had met other LGBT graduates and there were frequent discussions about starting an alumni group, but they rarely went beyond talk. When they did, our efforts seem to flounder, in part due to a lack of motivation. This time, however, the editor of the Tech's alumni magazine called to interview me as a gay alum for an article on alumni diversity. We had the interview, she wrote an article, but it was rejected for publication. That rejection was the spark that motivated our group to get our act together and create the group. I called a supportive friend on Georgia Tech's Alumni Association Board and she helped arbitrate discussions between our group and the Association. Although we did all the legwork ourselves, I can't overstate the role of allies in the political aspects of the process.

-Colin Wright

#### 4. Creating leadership

It will be integral to your group's success for you to work with interested alumni in setting up an executive board or other governing body. This board will take ownership of the alumni group once it is off the ground and will ultimately be responsible for the continuation of strong leadership. The hope is that your leadership team will be able to work harmoniously with the alumni association, the LGBT office or center, and with current and former students alike.

#### Indiana University

One official member of the board has to be from the Alumni Association. This will help with official policies, coordination, and all around ease of entrance and communication with the Alumni Association. The LGBT Center leader should consider being an Ex Officio member as well. Alums should serve as the majority of the board but it may be helpful as well to have a student member or two for perspective.

-Doug Bauder

#### Michigan State University

The director of MSU's GLBT student center sits on the board of directors and a non-voting member and

attends monthly board meetings. We also sometimes work with the GLBT staff association to share information.

-Chris Higgins

## 5. Philanthropy and Social Activities

Your mission statement will determine the nature of your group. Some established groups have focused their efforts on soliciting donations to be used for the resource center on campus. Others have found ways to incorporate social activities, as well as mentorship programs, with their philanthropic activity to support current students through socials and scholarship. Below are some means through which other alumni groups are maintaining links with fellow graduates as well as improving current campus climate.

Alumni Brunch

Alumni chapter induction ceremony at Rainbow/Lavender Graduation

Alumni weekends

Athletic Tailgates

Board participation

Documentation of LGBTQ history at the university

Donations to campus LGBTQ Life

Film and Documentary series

Homecoming events

LGBTQ Day at sporting events: rival's combined LGBTQ tailgates

Local or Regional Pride events

Mailing lists: monthly email and quarterly physical mailings

Mentorships

Networking

Online communities

Organize and advocate to/for the university

Panels for education and/or awareness

Regional meet- ups

Resource compilation and donation

Retreats

Scholarship fund

Sponsorships

Spring reunion weekend

Student-alumni dinner

Indiana University:

“Our group leader developed a significant partnership with the athletic director who is a great ally and we now have an LGBT Fan appreciation football game! There are reduced rates for concessions for whoever signed up and there are announcements posted on the marquee. Forming relationships and people being open and progressive has been one of our most significant achievements and helpful practices. It’s a great partnership. We also have a booth at Indy Pride where raffle tickets are sold and there are IU representatives from admissions and athletics there as well. All of this campus wide support shown at Pride and at IU got us press in The Advocate.”

-Doug Bauder

#### Emory University

- January--an annual fund raiser for our GALA Leadership Award (awarded to a student annually) and the Emory Pride Awards. This award is the result of an endowment that was funded by GALA members to provide \$2500 per year to an undergraduate student. The Emory Pride Awards have always been partially supported by this fund raiser also.
- March - We co-sponsor the Emory Pride Awards with the GALA Leadership Award and other awards from the Office of LGBT Life presented at a reception. In 2012, we will be sponsoring the 20th Anniversary of the Office of LGBT Life celebration during the Pride Awards.
- May - We had a Spring Social which is a crossover ceremony for students who are graduating. We officially welcome them into the alumni group. This was the first year we tried this event and we hope to continue it as an Emory tradition in the future. And hopefully build attendance.
- July- We had an intercollegiate summer social with Harvard and Princeton LGBTQ groups. We have also started inviting the Emory LGBTQ faculty and staff group to our events and it has been very successful.
- September - Fall Homecoming Week kicks off with our annual Blue Jeans Brunch. We are also holding an alumni dinner to raise money for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Office of LGBT Life. The dinner will be something we haven't tried before so we are working on speakers that will include those students, administrators and staff that were responsible 20 years ago for starting the office.
- December- Holiday social, one of our most well-attended events.
  - Panels on "Out at Work" and "Greek Life" had alum participation also.

-Lilly Correa

#### University of California: San Diego

If the university wants to fund us for socials without the development component, then by all means we can do it. Social is fine but only if it's connected to a philanthropic component. If there's not the opportunity to give, you haven't really done your work. This is the bigger purpose and bigger picture that should drive alumni groups.

-Shaun Travers

#### 6. Pitfalls and Hurdles

As with any newly formed group or organization, there will be obstacles to overcome and it is important to acknowledge them from the beginning. Once a group sets out to be officially recognized and increase its visibility, especially one regarding the LGBTQ community, there may be a certain amount of push back, questioned motives, and misunderstandings. Below are some of the most commonly reiterated themes found in our interviews. Issues of transparency, representation, communication, and resource management were mentioned in detail.

#### University of Pennsylvania

[The creation of our group] occurred almost 30 years ago at the same time as Penn's LGBT Student center was established. They were done in tandem with significant support from the University. So [the process was] not

hard, though there have been bumps along the way. My advice would be to establish a strong and accurate list of affiliated alumni who identify as LGBTQA. That's our biggest challenge – figuring out who is a “member” of our community. Make sure graduating students immediately join your group.

-Lex Ruby Howe

#### University of the Pacific

One of the main challenges we face is that people are really spread out. In regional clubs, people are all in one place so communication and coordination are easy. With affinity groups you have people all over the country and coordinating across time zones was difficult. Nothing beats face-to-face interaction, so meeting at least once a year to make contact has been key. I really wish there was a way to facilitate communication though. Just having one person dedicated to that one club- a staff person dedicating 10 hours a week to organize, facilitate, market, and plan the club- that would make a huge difference especially in the first few years. One other challenge has been identifying people for the organization. We rely on people coming forward on their own. In the beginning we only had a handful of really active members, and I don't think any of them had been out when they were actually in school, and they themselves recognize that they really don't know for sure who was out. That has been one of our strategies: make the establishment of the club as visible as possible. The alumni magazine, website, emails broadcasts to the entire alumni contact list, e-newsletters, etc. all had something about the formation of the organization and the events that we had planned. At the alumni reunions, we wanted to include a club event not only to get people together, but for the visibility to the whole alumni community that we exist. It takes a long time for an effort like this to gain traction, and commitment to the long-term goals is crucial. You have to take pride and satisfaction in each of the small steps.

-Corrie Martin

#### Indiana University

I advise against starting too big and spreading resources too thin, slowly building is not a bad thing. Some suggestions I have are to create goals and mapping plan, follow through on commitments, be public and visible, and to work with the campus GLBT center to create a collaborative event/fundraising project. Our alumni group does our homecoming event during January with a Pride Film Festival and creates social events around the film screenings. Partnering with other groups and departments is also important.

-Doug Bauder

#### Georgia Tech

Georgia Tech is a fairly conservative institution. However, given that there were already 19 other affinity groups for alumni, the political climate was somewhat neutral for adding a 20<sup>th</sup> group for LGBT alumni. Our efforts revolved around analytical research about LGBT groups to present a factual and apolitical presentation to the Alumni Association's Executive Committee. We researched the Alumni Association's 20 biggest corporate donors and cross-referenced it with a list of corporate employee resource groups (ERGs), determining that 14 of the businesses had LGBT ERGs. We also researched the 20 schools that Tech considers its peer institutions for benchmarking purposes. Of the 20, 10 had chartered LGBT alumni groups, 2 had informal groups, and only 8 had nothing. We used this information to convince the Executive Committee that they weren't going out on a limb by approving our group, and that other schools and employers were moving in the same direction.

-Colin Wright



## **Chapter 2: Best Practices from Current Successful LGBTQA Alumni Groups:**

As mentioned earlier, Lilly Correa of Emory University stated three things that she would do as a newly formed group. Setting goals like these for your organization is an important step in maintaining organization and focus as well as a way to mark your progress and formation achievement. Below is a list of best practices from each of the schools' representatives interviewed:

### Emory University

What we need to remind ourselves about is that we not only want to enjoy social and business networking as alums, but it is also really about the students. There is important work going on in the Emory Office of LGBT Life that we want to support and encourage as is clear in our mission statement. The emphasis placed on the student experience at Emory seems central to our alum group. For many alums it's really important for LGBTQ students to have a better experience at Emory many of us did in the 60s, 70s and 80s. We participate in different panels (Greek alumni panel, Out at Work Panel) to provide a sense of how Emory has changed, what's different about the experience now, and how it can be improved even more so.

-Lilly Correa

### University of the Pacific

Our alumni group mission is to connect with and support the younger generation, so the older members are thrilled that more and more of the younger students and younger alumni are becoming involved. We have some interesting generational differences; everyone is at a different place in terms of how "out" they are and to whom. Different groups and boundaries are definitely still in place. Our more experienced alumni have been back to campus and have connected with current students through panel discussions and workshops on issues such as being out at work, the coming out process, social change and more. Ours is a small, somewhat conservative campus, but times are definitely changing. When they come together and tell their stories, it is clear that young people still battle bias and discrimination, and the older generations are very supportive.

-Corrie Martin

### University of Southern California

**Developing a partnership and relationship with the campus resource center is also key. It's actually that as my center grows and increases the alumni group's numbers grow and increase. The alums from 20+ years ago had a horrible experience here. Now recent alums have had a great experience thanks to the programming and support on campus. There are a lot of young alum on the alumni group's board. Things are changing.**

-Vincent Vigil

### **Chapter 3: Alumni Channel's Introduction to Starting an Alumni Association**

*The following information was provided by the Alumni Channel*

So you're interested in starting an Alumni Association? The purpose of an association is to foster a spirit of loyalty and to promote the general welfare of your organization. Alumni associations exist to support the parent organization's goals, and to strengthen the ties between alumni, the community, and the parent organization.

#### **What are the Initial Requirements to starting an Alumni Association?**

The two initial requirements to start or re-activate an alumni association are:

- The enthusiasm and willingness of several individuals who are willing to take on the organizational initiative and sustain it.
- The interest of a reasonable nucleus of alumni and friends of the organization to participate in the association's activities.

#### **Who Should Take on the Leadership Role of an Alumni Association?**

In addition to being an alumnus/ae of the organization (or an employee), the leader of an alumni association should also have the following characteristics:

- Willingness to work with the University
- Willingness to contribute time
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to motivate and engage alumni

When necessary, and if available, the Development and Alumni Relations office can help with the selection of a leader. (The leader could be one person, or a committee — size can vary by organization.)

#### **Formal or Informal Alumni Association?**

An association can be a formal organization with officers, a set of objectives, subscriptions, a newsletter, and perhaps — though not necessarily — a constitution. There is no standard constitution for associations. Indeed, many operate very effectively without one. In some countries, however, there are legal requirements to register a constitution, the form and content of which are decided by the association itself.

In areas where alumni concentrations are relatively small, an informal association nominally led by one or two individuals might gather socially from time to time. Whether or not the association is formally structured, the key to success is the ability of its leaders to motivate others to join in.

Besides associations (formal or informal), some people choose to serve simply as a **Contact Point** for alumni or prospective students who wish to learn more about the organization and to hear from someone's personal experience.

**Proposed Organizational Structure for Alumni Associations**

**Informal:** One person should be designated the association's key point of contact and a few people willing to help with the organization of the association need to be identified. The contact would be in regular communication with the parent organization and would be responsible for circulating the details of events and other significant organization news to the alumni via e-mail lists or at meetings.

**Formal:** Download a PDF of [Proposed Organizational Structure for Formal Associations](#).

## **Chapter 4: Steps to Creating an Alumni Association**

### **Step 1 – Form an Interest Group**

- Meet informally with alums to obtain names
- Use the existing alumni organization
- Obtain a geographic listing of members from your headquarters office
- Telephone and personally meet with alums
- Directly ask for their participation in starting the association

### **Step 2 – 1st Special Mailing**

- A letter should be mailed to all alumni, introducing them to the leader, requesting them to update their contact information, and inquiring if there are any interested volunteers for the committee
- Write a letter to the alumni who make up your interest group

### **Step 3 – Getting Organized**

A meeting should be convened of interested alumni to agree upon the association's objectives and form a committee. A sample agenda might include: Call to order

- Introductions
- Review general concepts and goals of the Alumni/Alumnae Association
- Outline Alumni/Alumnae Association functions
  - A. Communication (newsletters, mailings, directories, etc.)
  - B. Activities
  - C. Fund raising
  - D. Scholarships and fellowships
  - E. Assistance in Alumni/Alumnae coordinator programming
- Identify short and long term needs
- Establish projected expenditures and dues structure
- Solicit areas of interest and capabilities
- Nomination and election of Alumni/Alumnae Association officers
- Appointment of a committee to draw up the by-laws or organizational outline
- Appointment of other committees and delegation of responsibilities
- Set date, time and location for follow-up meeting
- Adjourn

### **Step 4 – Prepare By-Laws**

Have a committee prepare by-laws for adoption at the next meeting. The adopted by-laws need to be sent to the fraternity/sorority headquarters for the chapter-alumni/alumnae files.

Sample Outline of Alumni/Alumnae Association By-Laws:

- Objectives
- Membership
- Officers; duties and powers of officers
- Regular committees; duties and functions of committees
- Meetings and programs; general timing of meetings
- Dues; members to association, control of funds
- Scholarship and fellowship funds, control and operation
- Communication – regular; content and timing of newsletters
- Major activities and work projects; chapter assistance, social functions, traditionally-sponsored events

#### **Step 5 – The Follow-Up Meeting or Event**

A launch event should be organized with broad appeal to attract as many alumni as possible, preferably when a senior administrator of the organization is available to attend.

- This meeting is crucial. If the alumni can see results, they will continue to serve on the Alumni Association.
- Other alums and new contacts who could not attend the first meeting should receive invitations through the mail.
- The Association by-laws should be adopted at this meeting as well. It is also important that the chapter officers attend this meeting.
- The meeting should serve to orientate first-time alumni attendees.

#### **Step 6 – Financing an Alumni/Alumnae Association**

The question of financing can be a major obstacle for a new Alumni/Alumnae Association.

Generally, finances for an Alumni/Alumnae Association can be provided in three different ways:

- By an annual dues program for Association members
- By contributions received by alums for a specific Association program
- By a combination of the above methods

Other financial considerations:

- Capital Fund Raising Campaigns
- Association-Sponsored Scholarships

#### **And Don't Forget...**

Communications:

- Newsletters
- Postcards/Flyers (to promote special events – ballgames, golf outings, etc.)
- Association Directory

- Telephone

Events:

- Association Meetings
- Monthly Luncheons/Dinners
- Special occasions (Homecoming, Founders Day, etc.)
- Other outings (chapter work day, philanthropies, holiday receptions, etc.)

**Eliminate Misconceptions**

- “I used to be a \_\_\_\_\_.” (membership doesn’t expire when you graduate – it’s designed to last a lifetime)
- “I don’t have time.” (we’re all volunteers)
- “I won’t know anybody.” (members from other eras can help by welcoming newcomers)
- “All they want is my money.” (the main effort needs to show that money’s not the primary concern)

*This information was provided by the Alumni Channel (Content adapted from Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity, and Boston University Office of International Alumni Programs) [http://alumnichannel.com/blog/?page\\_id=4](http://alumnichannel.com/blog/?page_id=4)*

## **Chapter 5: Overview of Select Topics in the Suggested Bylaws**

### **Membership: Contacting Former Students**

It is important to start with a strong list of dedicated and committed alums in order to create an active and successful alumni group. From there it is easy to build and expand upon the strong base. Some areas of campus that you may look into contacting would be the following:

- Campus LGBTQA Resource Center
- Student Organizations (queer groups, political, social, religious)
- Women’s, Gender, or LGBT/Queer Studies Programs
- Greek Life
- Residence Life (Themed housing)
- Campus and local affirming religious centers
- Campus and local health care providers
- Local LGBTQA friendly businesses or restaurants
- 

### **Officers, Duties and Powers:**

*The following was taken from AlumniChannel.com a site for “Online Alumni Communities”:*

Whether an association is newly forming or already established, it is important that the association has strong leadership. In an effort to continue the association’s growth and vitality, it is suggested that there be a continual process of renewal among the leadership. It is recommended that there be set terms of office for every association officer and job descriptions spelling out duties and expectations.

The number of committee members and elected officers will vary depending on the size and needs of the association’s membership. The Office of International Alumni Programs suggests an organizational structure with some or all of the following roles:

#### **Patron**

Some associations find it useful to have a senior alumna/us or friend who can lend name and status to the organization, as well as contacts. This person usually does not attend committee meetings.

#### **President**

Duties might include:

- Presiding at all meetings of the association and committee.
- Representing the association in its dealings with other organizations or people outside the association.
- Serving as the association’s liaison with the Office of International Alumni Programs and the University.

#### **Vice-President**

Duties might include:

- Performing the duties of President in his or her absence and assisting as needed.
- The committee may wish to consider designating this post later as President.

### **Secretary**

Duties might include:

- Responsibility for all correspondence and recording of minutes of meetings, communicating them to each committee member and to the Office of International Alumni Programs.
- Preparing agendas for meetings in consultation with the President.
- Ensuring that notices of meetings are sent to association members as required.

### **Treasurer**

Duties might include:

- Responsibility for the finances of the association, for maintaining accurate records and for preparing an annual statement of the association's accounts.
- Setting up systems to deal with the association's finances.
- Overseeing annual membership subscriptions if applicable in conjunction with the Membership Secretary.

### **Membership Secretary**

Duties might include:

- Maintaining records of association members and liaising with the Office of International Alumni Programs for data exchange.
- Devising and implementing strategies for increasing membership and participation.

### **Events Organizer**

Duties might include:

- Suggesting possible activities and events to the committee, investigating costs and venues.
- Responsibility for event planning and coordination.

### **Communications Officer**

Duties might include:

- Writing and editing the association's newsletter and/or other means of communicating with the membership.
- Placing association and Boston University press releases in local media.
- Making use of other available communication channels (e.g. links with Alumni website).

### **Age Groups**

Where possible, a mix of age groups is advisable so that senior alumni can provide the contacts and status needed, while younger member apply their enthusiasm and energy to organizing the association's activities. (*Alumni Channels. 2008*)



**Dues; members to association, control of funds**

Some alumni associations charge membership dues while others rely on donations. Obviously there are pros and cons to an affinity group charging dues. It will be dependent upon the goals and mission of your group.

**Major activities and work projects; social functions, traditionally-sponsored events**

An LGBTQ and Ally Alumni Group is significant in showing and continuing your support of your university academically, professionally, socially, financially and politically through mentoring, scholarships, resources, relationships with the university groups as well as those who have graduated. Below are some means through which other alumni groups are maintaining links with fellow graduates as well as improving current campus climate.

Alumni Brunch

Alumni chapter induction ceremony at Rainbow/Lavender Graduation

Alumni weekends

Athletic Tailgates

Board participation

Documentation of LGBTQ history at the university

Donations to campus LGBTQ Life

Film and Documentary series

Homecoming events

LGBTQ Day at sporting events: rival's combined LGBTQ tailgates

Local or Regional Pride events

Mailing lists: monthly email and quarterly physical mailings

Mentorships

Networking

Online communities

Organize and advocate to/for the university

Panels for education and/or awareness

Regional meet- ups

Resource compilation and donation

Retreats

Scholarship fund

Sponsorships

Spring reunion weekend

Student-alumni dinner

## **Chapter 6: Making It Official with Your Alumni Association**

Making your chapter official with your alma mater's alumni association will be a rewarding though potentially difficult task. The benefits of official recognized affiliate status are standardized membership lists and record keeping, official name and status recognition by the university and other institutions, facilitated means of mailing and communication, access to the institutions alumni center and facilities, access to wider alumni events, increased visibility and support for recruitment, connectivity and funding.

Some of the hurdles and hoops to jump through will vary by institution. The most common one that you may encounter, however, has to do with the Association's willingness to work with you to develop an affinity group. Many groups are location or region-based as members can more easily meet up and organize. Other groups based on race, nationality, religion, or other affiliation are harder to organize and therefore harder to maintain. This may provide a reason for hesitation with the alumni association and is why the group must be organized and efficient. You must have a strong start and impress upon the parent organization that you are ready to do more than put out feelers for a general sense of interest. As Lilly Correa of Emory University explained: "the three things that I would do as a newly formed group: 1. Prepare a mission statement 2. Work on governance documents and 3. Survey your membership lists to see what they want from the group." Once you have these basic background preparations completed you can then approach the alumni association and begin to work on formalizing your group.

Another cause for hesitation from the alumni association may be the fact that LGBTQ related issues and politics are quite touchy- especially with the older generations. Many organizations are happy to extend membership to affinity groups but may hesitate when they begin to feel the pushback from other alums. It is important to remind the alumni association that though they may lose some memberships they must think of all they will gain from past years and especially from the years to come. You aren't asking the alumni association to take an official stand on matters, but you are asking to be recognized as a group of dedicated and potentially active alumni.

### **Questions to be sure to ask your Alumni Association**

- Is the record keeping function maintained by the alumni association?
- How are you maintaining confidentiality within your record keeping?
- How do you navigate confidentiality in your paper mailing system?
- Is there a difference within your record keeping for paid members or does it include potential members as well?
- What kind of control over the group do the directors or leaders have versus the alumni association?

### **Defending your right to form an affinity group**

It may be the case that your alumni association will try to prevent your group's entrance as an affinity group of the parent organization. Listed below are some of the statements and standpoints you may use to defend your position.

- Undergrads and graduate students are future alumni; if needed start a list of dedicated future members and/or supporters.

- Be sure to have a counter argument ready to defend the position that you are not a “political/ideological” affinity group.
- Research the top corporate partners or donors to the university and cross reference them with the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index.
- Cross reference a list of top corporations who have LGBT employee groups and use them as examples of forward thinking and institutional support/recognition.
- Research your university’s peer institutions or those that they use for benchmark rankings on the areas of LGBTQ inclusion and support.
- Remind the alumni association that even though they may lose members due to their acceptance of your group, they will gain many more members from allowing it.
- Individuals that did not previously feel an attachment to campus due to their less than ideal experiences there may feel that participation is now worthwhile to make current students’ experiences better.

## **Chapter 7: Helpful Resources**

### **Active LGBTQA Alumni Associations**

This site, put together by the Fund for Reunion is the Bisexual, Transgendered, Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association (BTGALA) of Princeton University, lists active LGBTQA Alumni Associations by college.

<http://tigernet.princeton.edu/~ffr-gala/links.html>

### **Creating Alumni Organizations for the 21st Century**

Dartmouth Life: The Newspaper for Dartmouth Alumni and Parents

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dartlife/archives/15-1/alumni.html>

### **How to Start / Create an Alumni Association**

Alumni Channel Blog topic

[http://alumnichannel.com/blog/?page\\_id=4](http://alumnichannel.com/blog/?page_id=4)

### **LGBTQ Architect**

“This website will guide you through documentation for campus administrators working with LGBTQ populations. Use these documents to construct a program for yourself. Materials include sample funding proposals, position descriptions, outreach strategies, programming resources for small and large events, introductions to climate assessment, and many other useful tools for starting and/or furthering the work of campus-based resource programs. These resources, compiled from campus resource programs across the country, are free as part of a grant-funded project sponsored by the Calamus Foundation, the LGBT Student Resource Center at Penn State University, and the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals.

<http://architect.lgbtcampus.org/>

Organizing clubs and volunteer positions

**“Alumni live all over the world, and clubs support this vital extended community. Establishing or reviving an alumni club in your region will put you in touch with other Chicago alumni, bringing new friendships and expanded interests. Here are some steps to follow in building a local alumni club ‘from scratch.’”**

<http://alumniandfriends.uchicago.edu/site/pp.aspx?c=mjJXJ7MLIsE&b=4737775>

Proposed Organizational Structure for Formal Associations

**Alumni Channel Blog topic**

<http://www.alumnichannel.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/proposed.pdf>

## **Chapter 8: Contacts**

The following people are willing to speak about their best practices and experiences with LGBTQA Alumni coordination.

### **Doug Bauder**

Indiana University: Coordinator, IUB GLBTSSS Office

The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals Founding Member

[dbauder@indiana.edu](mailto:dbauder@indiana.edu)

### **Lilly Correa**

Emory University: Co-Chair GALA

[Lillyatl@gmail.com](mailto:Lillyatl@gmail.com)

### **Catherine Cotrupi, Author**

Virginia Tech: LGBTQ Campus Coordinator

UC Riverside: LGBT Resource Center Summer Intern 2011

[Cotrupi@vt.edu](mailto:Cotrupi@vt.edu)

### **Paul De Stefano, Author**

Rutgers: Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities

UC Riverside: LGBT Resource Center Summer Intern 2011

[paul.destefano@gse.rutgers.edu](mailto:paul.destefano@gse.rutgers.edu)

### **Alexis Ruby Howe**

University of Pennsylvania: Co-Chair PennGALA

[alexisrh@alumni.upenn.edu](mailto:alexisrh@alumni.upenn.edu)

### **Corrie Martin**

University of the Pacific: Director, Women's Resource Center

[cmartin1@pacific.edu](mailto:cmartin1@pacific.edu)

### **Shaun Travers**

UC San Diego: Director, LGBT Resource Center

[stravers@ucsd.edu](mailto:stravers@ucsd.edu)

### **Vincent E. Vigil, Ed.D.**

University of Southern California: Director, LGBT Resource Center

[vincenev@usc.edu](mailto:vincenev@usc.edu)

### **Colin Wright**

Georgia Tech: President, GT Pride Alumni

[Colin.Wright@McKesson.com](mailto:Colin.Wright@McKesson.com)

## **Appendix 1: Sample Alumni Association Petition Letter- Clemson University**

Petition to the Clemson Alumni Association for formal recognition of the Clemson Alumni Society for Equality (CASE)

November 3, 2008

We are the Charter Members of CASE. We seek to form an official interest group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning alumni, and LGBTQ-friendly allies who are alumni, and other friends of Clemson. We hereby submit this Petition to the Clemson Alumni Association requesting formal recognition of the Clemson Alumni Society for Equality (CASE). The names of our alumni forming the Leadership Committee, a list of the Charter Members of CASE, and a copy of our Bylaws are attached.

CASE is part of the great history and tradition of Clemson University, which includes the following milestones:

- The admission of **Margaret Marie Snider** in 1955.
- The admission of **Harvey Gannt** in 1963.
- The student recognition of the **Lambda Society** in 1991-92.
- The formation of the **Clemson Gay-Straight Alliance (CGSA)** in the early 2000s.
- The creation of the **Safe Zone Program** in 2003.
- The formation of the **CASE interest-group** in early 2005.
- The addition of "sexual orientation" in the University's **nondiscrimination policy** in the summer 2005.

We, the Charter Members of CASE, wish to continue in this great tradition in at least the following ways:

- a. Providing **professional networking and social activities** for LGBTQ alumni and allies who are alumni.
- b. Working with and supporting the **CGSA**.
- c. Forming a **scholarship fund** for the benefit of LGBTQ students.
- d. Working with the University in implementing its **nondiscrimination, harassment and related policies** to include sexual and affinity orientation.
- e. Helping Clemson achieve its goal of becoming a **Top 20 National University** by promoting equality for all students, faculty and staff.

We look forward to your response and look forward to achieving our goals with the Alumni Association.

(Clemson CASE 2008)

## Appendix 2: Emory University's Alumni Groups Name Guide

Below is part of the research that Mel Marsh, a member of Emory's GALA Planning Committee, prepared for their alumni group as they looked at peer universities that had LGBTQ alumni groups. Lilly Correa may be contacted for the use of this material.

Name of College	Name of Alumni Group
American University	InCircle Alumni group
Amherst College	AmherstGALA
ANY CATHOLIC COLLEGE	Gay Lesbian Alumni/ae -of Catholic Colleges, Universities, and Seminaries
Boston College	Lambda Law Student Association (law only)
Boston University	Alumni Network for LGBT
Brandeis University	GLBT Affinity Group
Brown University	Brown TBGALA
Bryn Mawr	LGBTQ Alumni Group
Colgate University	LGBT Alumni Network
Colorado State University	GLBT Alumni Alliance
Columbia	Columbia Pride
Cornell	CUGALA
Dartmouth	DGALA
Duke	Duke LGBT Alumni/ae Network
Emory	Emory GALA
George Washington University	LGBT Alumni Association
Georgetown University	Georgetown GLBT Alumni Group
Georgia Tech	Pride Alliance Alumni
Harvard	Harvard Gay and Lesbian Caucus
Haverford	Lambda
Indiana University	IU Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Alumni Association
Johns Hopkins	may only have a student group
Kellogg	Gay and Lesbian Management Alumni
Kenyon College	Kenyon GALA
Lehigh University	LU Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association
Miami University	1809 Lambda Alumni
Michigan State University	MSU GLBT Alumni Association
Middlebury College	MiddGALA
Military Service Academies	SAGALA
MIT	BGALA
Mount Holyoke	Lion's Pride
New York University	NYU LGBT Alumni Council
Northwestern	NUGALA
Oberlin	Oberlin Lambda Alumni Group
Ohio State University	Ohio State University Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Alumni Society
Ohio University	Ohio University Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Society of Alumni and Friends
Penn State	Lambda Interest Group
Princeton	BTGALA

Purdue University	GLBTA
Rice University	Rice GALA
Skidmore College	part of Pride Alliance
Smith	Smith LGBTQ Alumnae Alliance
Stanford University	Stanford Pride
Stony Brook University	Part of Pride@SBU
Syracuse University	Syracuse University LGBTQA Alumni
Texas A&M	Aggie Pride
The Citadel	Citadel GALA (unofficial)
Trinity College	LGB Alumni Association
Tufts University	Pride on the Hill
Tulane University	Green Pride
U S Military Academy West Point	Knights Out
UC Berkeley	Cal Alumni Pride
UCLA	UCLA Lambda Alumni
US Air Force Academy	Blue Alliance
United States Naval Academy	USNA Out
University of Michigan	U-MGALAS
University of Central Florida	GLBT Alumni Chapter
University of Chicago	University of Chicago LGBT alumni
University of Georgia	LGBTQ Alumni Group
University of Minnesota	GLBT Alumni Group
University of Nebraska	UNLGALA
University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College	GALA-ND/SMC
University of Pennsylvania	PennGALA
University of Southern California	Lambda Alumni Association
University of Texas at Austin	Gay Texas Exes (unofficial)
University of Virginia	Serpentine Society
University of Wisconsin	GLBTAC
Vanderbilt	appear to have several student groups but no alumni group
Vassar	LAGAVC
Virginia Military Institute	VMI GALA (unofficial)
Washington University St. Louis	Gaylumni Network Initiative
Wesleyan	LGBTQ Alumni Network
William and Mary	WM GALA
Williams College	BiGLATA
Yale	Yale GALA



### **Appendix 3: Alumni Groups Names from Consortium Survey 2011**

The following names for alumni groups are responses from the 2011 Consortium Survey of directors of campus LGBT resource centers. 60% (82 of 136 campuses responding to the survey) indicated they have an active LGBT-related alumni group.

1. 1809 LGBT Alumni
2. Alumni Network
3. BGALA
4. BiGLATA
5. BSU Pride
6. Cal Alumni Pride
7. Columbia Pride
8. CUGALA - Cornell University Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association
9. DGALA, Dartmouth Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alumni/ae Association
10. DPU LGBT Alumni (via Facebook)
11. Emory Gay and Lesbian Alumni
12. Fund For Reunion BTGALA.
13. GALABI
14. Gay and Lesbian Alumni (GALA)
15. GLBT Alumni Alliance
16. GLBT Alumni Association
17. GLBT Alumni Association
18. GLBT Alumni Chapter
19. GLBT Alumni Constituency Group
20. GLBT Alumni Society
21. GLBTA Alumni Network
22. GMU Lambda Alumni
23. GW LGBT Alumni
24. Husker Pride LGBTQA Alumni Group
25. LAGAAVC
26. Lambda Alumni Association

27. Lambda Chapter
28. Lambda Pride
29. Lavender Luncheon
30. Lavender Slugs
31. LBTQA Alumni Association
32. LGBT Affinity Group
33. LGBT alum Network
34. LGBT Alumni Affinity Group
35. LGBT Alumni Affinity Group
36. LGBT Alumni Association
37. LGBT Alumni Chapter
38. LGBT Devils' Pride
39. LGBTA Alumni
40. LGBTA Alumni Interest Group
41. LGBTA Society of Alumni and Friends
42. LGBTIQA Alumni Network
43. LGBTQ Alumni
44. LGBTQ Alumni Group
45. LBTQA Alumni Association Organization
46. LUGALA - Lehigh University Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Association
47. NUGALA
48. NYU LGBTQ Alumni Network
49. Out After Carleton
50. OUTspoken Alum
51. PennGALA
52. Pride on the Hill
53. Q & A: GLBT Queer Alumni and Allies
54. Rainbow Alumni
55. Reunion Weekend
56. RUBiGLATA (Rutgers University Bi, Gay, Lesbian, & Transgender Alum Association)

57. Serpentine Society
58. SOU LGBTQ Alumni
59. Stanford Pride
60. TBGALA
61. The LGBT and Q Alumni and Friends Group
62. Towson LGBTQ Alumni Group
63. Tri-Points
64. UC Riverside Pride
65. UMGALAS
66. UMKC LGBT Alumni
67. University of Chicago LGBT Alumni Association
68. UVM Pride Alumni

## Appendix 4: UC San Diego's Letter to Past Campus Group Members

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

BERKELEY · DAVIS · IRVINE · LOS ANGELES · MERCED · RIVERSIDE · SAN DIEGO · SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA · SANTA CRUZ

LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER RESOURCE OFFICE

9500 GILMAN DRIVE  
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92093-0023

«name»  
«addressline1»  
«addresscity», «addressplace\_value» «addresszipcode»

Dear «salutation»:

UCSD is having an Alumni Homecoming and Open House! As a part of the festivities, a group of alumni that have been associated with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues are coming together for a breakfast on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

Because of your historical involvement with the student organization(s) that supported LGBT people on the UCSD campus, you may be interested in attending this alumni breakfast.

Our earliest records indicate that the name of the organization was the Gay Student Association (GSA), which transitioned into GSU (Gay Student Union), then on to Gay Students at the University of California, San Diego (GSUCSD). Next came the Lesbian and Gay Organization (LAGO), then the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Association (LGBA), and now the current configuration, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Association (LGBTGA).

The records indicate that at some point you were on the recognition forms as a principal member. However, I am sure there are many alumni who were active with LGBT issues with whom we have lost contact. If you still have connections with your classmates, feel free to pass on this information to them.

If you are interested in attending the breakfast on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, please contact me. For more information on the activities for the day, please visit <http://openhouse.ucsd.edu/>

If you received this letter in error, I apologize. Please let the Resource Office know, and we will be sure to send no further information.

Sincerely,

Shaun Travers  
Director, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Office  
University of California, San Diego  
(858) 822-3493, [stravers@ucsd.edu](mailto:stravers@ucsd.edu)  
<http://lgbtro.ucsd.edu>

(Travers 2001)

## Appendix 5: UC San Diego's Mission and Objectives

# Mission and Objectives of the UC San Diego LGBT Alumni Council

### Mission

The LGBT Alumni Council is a small, committed group of LGBT alumni and supporters who have a passion for UC San Diego, philanthropy and making an impact on LGBT young people's lives.

### Annual Objectives

1. Bring in ten classmates and friends into the LGBT Alumni Chapter
2. Welcome new graduates immediately following Rainbow Graduation
3. Serve as the hosts for the annual LGBT Alumni Brunch
4. Host events (meet and greets, social event, house party) in your immediate region for LGBT alumni
  - a. Talk about the work of the council
  - b. Ask folks to give to the Center
5. Attend regional events in your area on behalf of LGBT Alumni (freshman send-offs, regional alumni gatherings, etc.)
6. Philanthropic work
  - o 100% participation from the Council, this is giving
  - o Development liaison will meet one and one to discuss your giving capacity and potential
  - o Giving structure:
    - Supporting members, up to 5 years (\$25+/month - \$300+/year)
    - Associate members, 5-10 years (\$50+/month - \$600+/year)
    - Sustaining members, 10 years and up (\$100+/month - \$1,200+/year)
  - o What does \$1,200 do? - keeps us open in the evening one night a week for a quarter, funds 25% of an undergraduate intern
    - Where else the money goes:
      - Allows for growing our holdings in our resource library
      - Maintains the funds to keep us open every night
      - Ensures the funds to keep our intern program strong and fostering its growth
      - Supports our education, social justice and community building programs
      - Expands our interns into high schools to affect change
      - Potentially endows events so they do not disappear
      - Potentially endows the directorship so the Center leadership does not disappear
      - Potentially allows for naming opportunities for the Center itself, its rooms, and our programs

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