University of Calgary Alumni Association
Affinity Community Terms of Reference
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Affinity Communities are groups of alumni, students and friends of the University of Calgary who are drawn together based on common interests and shared experiences. Interacting in person and virtually, Affinity Communities encompass all faculties, graduating classes, regions and professions.

Definition

Affinity Communities are self-organized groups of UCalgary alumni who have common interests. In addition to alumni, groups may engage students, parents and friends of the university. They support the growth and development of the UCalgary Alumni Association (UCAA) and its members by providing networking, education, mentoring, fundraising and/or career development activities and by leveraging the group's knowledge. The role of an Affinity Community is to complement, not compete with, other UCalgary alumni, faculty, and/or UCAA activities and events.

Affinity Communities can be representative of the following areas:
- Geography (regional and international)
- Professional network
- Academic major or programs of study
- Student clubs (transitioned to alumni clubs)
- Class year
- Shared interest
- Shared identity

Guiding Principles

Affinity Communities are volunteer-led groups that build upon the UCAA's assertion that an engaged alumni population enhances the reputation of the university, contributes to the lives of our alumni, and reinforces the connection between the university and the community. Affinity Communities can promote professional and personal development and continuing education through intellectually stimulating programming, volunteerism and fundraising to support university initiatives.

Formation

- The first step in becoming a recognized Affinity Community is to submit an application to the Affinity Communities Committee of the UCAA. If a similar Affinity Community has already been formed and recognized by the UCAA, the applicant will be notified and encouraged to join.
- Complete applications will include a mission statement that is consistent with the overall mission of the UCAA and demonstrate a relevant impact in one of four focus areas: professional development; personal development; pride, spirit, tradition; and strengthening the UCalgary network.
- In addition to a mission statement as described above, applications to establish an Affinity Community should include the following:
  - Name of the proposed Affinity Community
  - Brief description of the Affinity Community and the geographic location(s) in which it intends to operate
  - Names and contact information for at least three to five alumni. including one

designated as the lead person
- o Benefits this Affinity Community will provide UCAA and its members
- o Proposed initial activities
- o Relevant history concerning the group or related groups
- All applications will be reviewed by the Affinity Communities Committee of the UCAA. The committee will recommend approval or denial of the application to the Alumni Association Board of Directors, which has the discretion to officially approve or deny any application.

Naming Affinity Communities

The name of an Affinity Community should reflect the area in which it represents (region, faculty or interest). The following guidelines should be considered when choosing a name for the group:
- The group name must contain "UCalgary Alumni"
- The group name should not include the word "Association," as it may get mistaken for the greater UCalgary Alumni Association (UCAA)
- The group should use a term that best describes the group:
  - o Regional-based alumni groups are referred to as **Chapter**
  - o University (faculty/department)-based alumni groups are referred to as **Council** or **Network** or **Alliance**
  - o Interest-based alumni groups are referred to as either **Club** or **Group**

Roles & Responsibilities

Affinity Communities will:
- Be responsible for driving their own programming, development and growth
- Communicate with members regularly and host at least one initiative annually
- Communicate regularly with the UCalgary Affinity Community liaison to share information and participate in an annual questionnaire and surveys
- Seek out documents, tools and guidelines in the Affinity Community Tool Kit, as needed
- Comply with the policies and procedures of the University of Calgary, where applicable

UCalgary Alumni will:
- Engage with communities to ensure they have the support, tools and education they need to be successful
- Maintain the Affinity Community Tool Kit with up-to-date documents, tools and guidelines for program development and growth
- Provide recruitment support for Affinity Communities, as needed
- Be available to answer questions, offer guidance and keep Affinity Communities informed of relevant opportunities and events
- Assist in growing online presence (Facebook, etc.) by connecting groups to an in-house social media specialist

Benefits, Resources and Support

The Alumni Engagement Team and the UCAA are responsible for facilitating the growth and strength of Affinity Communities. Affinity Communities will have access to the following benefits and resources:
- Access to **staff expertise**. An Affinity Community Liaison will be assigned to all Affinity Communities to serve as the group's primary point of contact and offer personalized guidance

on programming and governance during the initial start-up phase of the group. The liaison will conduct business with and on behalf of the university, and provide support for volunteer recruitment, events and communication.

- Access to **funding** to support initiatives and events – Affinity Community Assistance Program (ACAP).
- Exclusive invitation to the annual **Leadership Summit for Alumni Volunteers**. Leaders of each Affinity Community will be invited to participate.
- Access to the program **Tool Kit** offering a suite of tools including: best practices, templates, forms and other resources.
- Access to **meeting spaces** on either main campus or at the downtown campus (based on availability. Reservations must be made no later than five business days prior to the meeting date).
- Access to UCalgary Alumni **swag**, as required.
- The opportunity to **connect** with other alumni and professionals in the group's region.

Access to Funding

A recognized Affinity Community may apply for funding through the Affinity Community Assistance Program (ACAP), which is supported by the Alumni Engagement Office and administered by the Affinity Communities Committee of the UCAA. The program provides financial assistance to Affinity Communities of up to $2,000 per initiative, to a maximum of twice per year; the funding year runs from April 1 to March 31. Funding for events and programs is limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The Affinity Communities Committee may deny any request for funding based on a Community's failure to adhere to the below guidelines, or any action by a Community that is not consistent with the mission and purpose of the UCAA.

Funding Guidelines:
- The group has been recognized as an Affinity Community by the UCAA
- Applications must demonstrate how the project will help achieve the goals of the university and the UCAA in one of the following ways:
    - Reinforcing the UCalgary brand
    - Showcasing UCalgary faculty and their research
    - Strengthening the UCalgary network
- Programs in partnership with university departments, faculties or student organizations, or that tie into and highlight the university's strategic priorities, will be given preference.
- Funding does not cover the cost of intoxicants or any operating costs.

To request funds for any event or program, you must submit a completed Affinity Community Assistance Program request form.

Additional Considerations
- **Legal relationships:** Affinity Communities are recognized entities of the UCalgary Alumni Association. The UCAA operates under the auspices of the University of Calgary, and is subject to the authority thereof.

- **Contracts and agreements:** Affinity Community members and leaders are not permitted to enter into any contracts or agreements on behalf of the university, UCAA or Affinity Community. Any necessary contracts or agreements will follow University of Calgary policy and be facilitated by the group's staff liaison.
- **Style guide and UCalgary logo:** All usage of the university logo must be approved. The staff liaison will facilitate the approval process. Usage should follow guidelines put forth in the university style guide. https://www.ucalgary.ca/brand/identity-standards
- **Alumni contact information (FOIP):** The university is not permitted to release alumni contact information due to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). All mass communications, including emails and hard copy mailings, to Affinity Community members should be co-ordinated with the group's assigned staff liaison. Any alumni contact information collected at Affinity Community events must be immediately submitted to the staff liaison for database updates. Affinity Communities are not permitted to maintain shadow databases of members or other alumni. Doing so is grounds for suspension and/or dissolution of the group.
- The UCAA has the right to withdraw its approval and authorization from any Affinity Community, should the group fail to adhere to UCAA or university guidelines, or its actions are not consistent with the mission and purpose of the university and the UCAA. Affinity Communities should operate within the guidelines set forth by the university's Code of Conduct: https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/code-of-conduct.pdf

Questions? Contact Us:
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