

Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Alumni Group



Club and Society Leadership Symposium
The Ohio State University Alumni Association



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



Today, we will talk about...

- Providing access at events
- Onboarding new volunteers
- Fostering a safe and inclusive community
- Offering diverse programming
- Questions and discussion

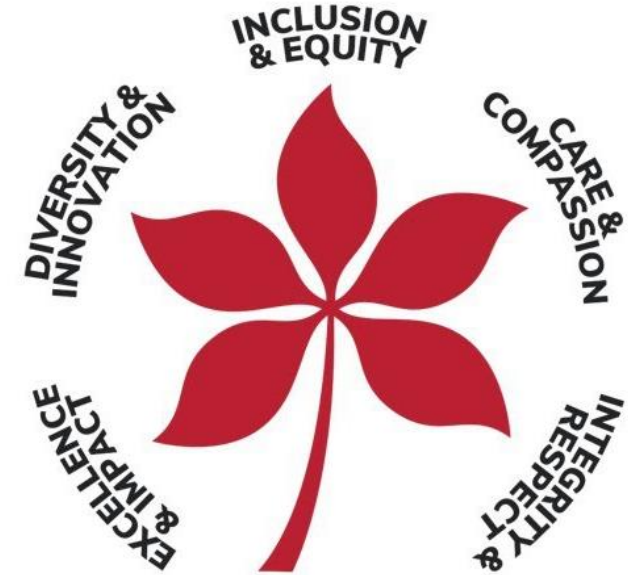
What is the biggest challenge you face in creating inclusive engagement in your group?



The Importance of Inclusivity

As alumni club and society leaders, you are the face of Ohio State in your sphere of influence.

- An inclusive approach to club and society operations aligns with Ohio State's [shared values](#)
- Inclusivity benefits everyone by creating a welcoming, respectful environment to engage and bond over shared experiences
- Inclusivity ensures your group can stay relevant and attractive to new generations of Buckeye alumni
- Groups that are not inclusive end up limiting engagement and shrinking over time as populations change



**Ohio State
Shared Values**

osu.edu/shared-values

Creating Accessible Events

Events are the top way that alumni in clubs and societies engage with one another - making them accessible is an excellent strategy for increasing engagement.

- Vary event times (weeknights vs. weekends, time of day)
- Provide (or signal boost) virtual event options where possible
- Ensure live events are held in ADA compliant venues
- Consult the [Inclusive Event Planning Guide](#)



Creating Accessible Events

Events are the top way that alumni in clubs and societies engage with one another - making them accessible is an excellent strategy for increasing engagement.

- Be clear about time, date, venue and other pertinent information (don't assume everyone already knows)
- Ask ahead of time if people will need accommodations (captioning, an interpreter, etc.)
- Use inclusive language in any marketing and communications around your events



Onboarding New Volunteers

When new volunteers come into the fold, it is critical to both welcome and orient them appropriately so that they feel empowered to help lead your group.

- Provide club-specific volunteer handbook + "need to knows" (history, mission, policies, etc.)
- Schedule the appropriate trainings to ensure all new volunteers have the appropriate baseline knowledge
- Set them up with a "buddy" for mentoring and support



Onboarding New Volunteers

When new volunteers come into the fold, it is critical to both welcome and orient them appropriately so that they feel empowered to help lead your group.

- Seek out their input via meetings, surveys, and 1:1 conversations
- Demonstrate openness to new ideas or ways of doing things
- Take time to explain why the group chooses to move in a certain direction



Fostering Safety and Inclusivity

Fostering meaningful engagement with the alumni in our groups means making space for people to (safely) share their perspectives and views.

- Share sample community guidelines that promote respect, inclusion and open-mindedness
- Be proactive in monitoring online forums and social media posts
- Train volunteer leaders on active listening and diffusing tense situations



Fostering Safety and Inclusivity

Fostering meaningful engagement with the alumni in our groups means making space for people to (safely) share their perspectives and views.

- Model appropriate behavior by using inclusive language and calling out microaggressions (respectfully)
- Take concerns seriously and be proactive in addressing them
- Share fair and thoughtful responses to issues (feel free to reach out to OSUAA staff for support)



Offering Diverse Programming

The final key to creating increased engagement is to offer a wide array of programming – think beyond game-day celebrations and delve into other programming options alumni enjoy.

- Survey member interests at least once yearly
- Offer a mix of social and professional events
- Don't forget the families! Family-friendly events help solidify the future student pipeline



Offering Diverse Programming

The final key to creating increased engagement is to offer a wide array of programming – think beyond game-day celebrations and delve into other programming options alumni enjoy.

- Partner with campus groups to co-host events around academics, cultures or careers (in-Ohio)
- Partner with local young professional or civic organizations (in and outside of Ohio)
- Varied programming provides something for everyone and cultivates an inclusive, active club



What other ideas do you have for fostering inclusive engagement in your alumni group?



Questions?

