



Starting an Affinity Group

Create a purpose statement

- What is the need for/purpose of this particular group?
- What benefits or services can the group provide to fellow alumni members?
- In what ways can this group assist the College and its students?

Example:

Military Alumni of Wooster Affinity Group Statement of Purpose & Objectives

Mission: The mission of the Military Alumni of Wooster is to connect members of the alumni community who are serving in or have served in a branch of the uniformed services, to honor those alumni and to provide resources and a network for the exchange and dissemination of information.

Objectives:

- Recognize and share the accomplishments and experiences of alumni who have served or are serving in the uniform services.
- Connect alumni who are currently service or have served in the military to one another and develop a system of support for the affinity group as a whole.
- Provide counsel, advice, and mentorship for current Wooster students and alumni who are interested in joining or are currently serving in the military.
- Highlight the many and varied military missions executed in both periods of peace and conflict.

Define and identify the group's membership

- Will your membership be defined by a career field (health care)? A shared common Wooster experience (Scot Band)? A common personal identity (Latinx)? The nature of your group will determine what resources will be most effective in identifying new members.
- The Office of Alumni & Family Engagement can help with some initial lists!
- Groups are encouraged to reach out to other departments on campus for assistance and use platforms like LinkedIn and Fighting Scots Career Connections.
- A group must have at least 50 members to be recognized and supported by the Office of Alumni & Family Engagement

Example:

Membership Requirements - The Military Alumni of Wooster welcomes all alumni of the College associated with any branch of the uniform military, active or reserve,

as well as others who are affiliated with non-uniformed Department of Defense services (e.g. DoD Civil Service, US Public Health Service).

Assemble a Steering Committee

- As you search for new members, a few people may volunteer to help lead the group. Make note of who they are!
- A steering committee of 4 or 5 alumni, from across the decades, is an excellent way to get a group moving forward. The diversity of perspectives is useful and having a committee of leaders helps balance the workload.
- A steering committee should plan on phone calls/meetings at least 3 or 4 times each year to assess goals, outcomes, next steps, etc. for the group.

Set two achievable goals each year to support the group's purpose

- Groups often have big-picture goals such as: “to provide mentorship to current Wooster students” or “to network with like-minded alumni”. Such large goals need to be broken down into smaller, more actionable steps.

Examples:

- The Black Alumni Council will write notes of encouragement and support to all Black graduating seniors who have opted in with their names and campus mailing addresses.
- The LGBTQ+ Alumni will work to have at least 50% of its members sign up to be career advisors on Fighting Scots Career Connections
- Create newsletter for your group to send out twice a year to members

Organize one social/networking/educational event each year

The Office of Alumni & Family Engagement can help with promoting your event and providing financial support. The event could be for alumni or students, off-campus or on-campus.

Examples:

- A panel discussion on-campus with students
- A networking happy hour for alumni
- A service project related to the group's mission