

# Student Organizations

## Engaging with Alumni



### **Engaging with Alumni: Harvard Alumni Association & Harvard College Fund Resources**

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) is the official association of all alumni of Harvard University including more than 400,000 alumni. The HAA maintains and enhances a highly engaged, vibrant community of alumni and friends worldwide. The purpose of the HAA is to promote the welfare of Harvard University and to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between Harvard University and its alumni.

YOU are a member of the HAA! Visit [alumni.harvard.edu/college/undergraduates](http://alumni.harvard.edu/college/undergraduates) for more information.

The Harvard College Fund (HCF) fosters a community that raises critical funds for a range of priority endeavors across the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), with an emphasis on creating a sustainable, annual income stream of flexible, current-use funds, all in support of Harvard College's students and its mission of inclusive excellence. This community encompasses donors (over 30,000 every year, giving at all levels) and volunteers (nearly 2,000, who ask their peers to join them in making a gift) and is made up of students, alumni, parents, and friends.

For nearly 100 years, the Harvard College Fund (HCF) has supported everything you love about Harvard: financial aid, Classroom to Table, House life, career services, and much more. Visit [alumni.harvard.edu/college/college-giving/hcf](http://alumni.harvard.edu/college/college-giving/hcf) for more information.

Together, the HAA & HCF make up Harvard's Alumni Affairs and Development (AA&D) office. Alumni Affairs and Development inspires and galvanizes alumni, friends, and members of the University community to support Harvard through philanthropy, governance, and active engagement.

### **Connect with Alumni from Your Organization**

You'll want to start by engaging with alumni. Alumni who had been members of your student organization when they were Harvard College students represent a wealth of information that can directly benefit your organization's members and offer insights into further organizational development. By growing this network and keeping your alumni informed about current organization news, you can leverage the experiences of prior members to help your organization grow and function well.

### **Build Your Network**

The first step to building your alumni network is the creation of a database featuring names and contact information. Synchronizing this process with the HAA will allow you to make full use of the services that they provide to connect you with your former members, and you will not have to actively maintain a database outside of the current year's membership. When student organizations provide membership lists, the HAA will update their records in their database to note that they were members of your organization. As alumni share updated contact information with the HAA, you will then be able to reach them there, rather than having to separately get their new information. The steps below outline how to get started:

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- Check with the HAA first at [haa\\_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu](mailto:haa_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu) to see if they already have alumni tagged as being members of your student organization (i.e. they might have alumni from some years but not more recent ones).
- Based on guidance from the HAA, compile all existing records of previous student group members. It may be useful to reach out to former leaders of your group for contact information.
- Format your database in a spreadsheet format with columns as follows (HUID, First Name, Last Name, Class Year, Email [@college if current student or other if you have one and the person has already graduated], Role).
- Compile information for current members as well, especially graduating seniors.
- Send the database via email to [haa\\_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu](mailto:haa_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu) so that the HAA can tag your newest members. **The standard time for tagging alumni is approximately 10 business days for lists under 100 members and 20 business days for larger lists. If your list does not include HUIDs, you should expect to wait 4 weeks for tagging to occur.**
- After sharing your initial list, plan to annually share your list of newest members.
- Note that due to data privacy policies, the HAA cannot share alumni contact information with you, but can send messages to your alumni on your behalf.

### HAA Email Marketing

Email represents one of the most effective ways to keep in touch with your alumni and to maintain connections. Unlike email services like Outlook, Gmail, or Yahoo (which limit the number of recipients you can email at once and put your email at greater risk to be classified as SPAM), the HAA can send a message to many alumni. Your email will be delivered in a way that prevents the recipients from seeing who else has received the same email, not only keeping email information private, but avoiding 'reply-all' mistakes from occurring. The HAA offers email marketing to registered student groups who maintain an alumni database with them.

If your organization is interested in asking the HAA to send your email out to your alumni, **please reach out to the HAA at least two weeks before you would like your emails sent.** Please remember that if your alumni are not already tagged, this process will take longer. Once the required information is received, the HAA will build your email and share it for your approval before sending it to the recipients.

### Email Best Practices When Working with the HAA

- Frequency: Don't send updates too frequently. Quarterly or biannual updates to your alumni should keep them aware of relevant changes and news.
- Text: Text should be succinct and get the intended point across quickly.
- Subject lines: Subject lines should be short and descriptive and pique the interest of your alumni.
- Content: The content of your email newsletter should be interesting to alumni. Content could be:
  - Updates about current activities and events
  - Relevant articles or discussions based on group focus
  - Student or alumni spotlight
  - Advertisement for upcoming alumni functions

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## Required Information

- Recipients: The population you'd like to receive the email (i.e. all alumni from Crimson Key Society)
- From Name: The sender(s)/signer(s) of the email (i.e. Mike Smith '17, or Crimson Key).
- Reply-to Email Address: This could be a personal email address or a group email address.
- Subject: The subject line (50 characters or fewer (i.e. "2017 Spring Newsletter" or "Attend our upcoming Reunion"))
- Preview Line: This short line appears at the very top of the email, and will also show up in the preview section on a mobile device; if the subject line is the email's title, think of the preview line as the subtitle.
- Customizable Group Name or Banner Image: This text or image can be included at the top to brand your messaging (i.e. "Crimson Key Society.")
- To: You may address the recipients by their first name at the beginning of the email. You may also address them as a group ("Tom Smith" vs. "Crimson Key Alumni")
- Text: The body of the email. Should be fairly simple text. Customized templates, including multiple images or other formats are not accepted.
- Signature: Sender of email, which must also include class year and title of sender

The HAA reserves the right to edit or reject email content in accordance with University policies and best practices.

## Soliciting Alumni

Harvard Alumni Affairs and Development Office (AA&D) can send out e-mail solicitations on behalf of registered student groups who maintain an alumni database with the HAA. If your organization is interested in asking AA&D to send your solicitation email out to your alumni, please first follow the steps in the "Build Your Network" section above to tag your alumni and/or confirm that your alumni are tagged.

You also will want to be sure you have established where the funds you want to raise will go, how you will access them, and how you will solicit them (online, via mail, etc.) Olivera at the DSO can answer questions about fund status and process:

Olivera Saric Knezic  
Assistant Director of Finance and Administration  
Dean of Students Office, Harvard College  
olivera@fas.harvard.edu

Once you have established your distribution list and established where the funds you will raise will go, please follow the guidelines set forth in the "Email Best Practices When Working with the HAA" section in crafting your message. All fundraising messages will be approved by AA&D before sending. Please allow 10 business days for message approval. Messages will be sent on a schedule determined by AA&D so as not to conflict with other institutional messaging. In order to ensure your message can be sent in a timely fashion, significant advance planning is recommended.

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## Website and Social Media

If your organization has a website, a page devoted to alumni engagement can be a great resource for former members looking to get involved. Content for this page can include:

- Information regarding social media channels
- Events calendars
- Material featured in email newsletters

There are also many ways to connect with your alumni on social media! Some examples are:

- A Facebook page for your organization is a good way to establish a clear organizational source of information.
- A Facebook group is a useful tool to allow organic interaction between current members and students with your alumni. In your group, you can post relevant content and allow members to directly connect with alumni of similar interests.
- An Instagram account for your organization is a great way to share images and videos of your initiatives and events.

You can also follow @HarvardAlumni on [Instagram](#) and check out the [Harvard Alumni Association](#) and [Harvard College Alumni](#) pages on Facebook.

## Checklist for Alumni Engagement

- Is your alumni list tagged and up to date?
- Do you have a simple message drafted along with the other required email information?
- If you are planning an event, do you have a registration page, detailed event timelines, and relevant information for pricing, accommodations, and who to contact in the case of questions or last-minute issues?
- Are you leaving enough time between the drafted message, the send, and the actual event or action?
- Remember to email the HAA at [haa\\_collegealumni@harvard.edu](mailto:haa_collegealumni@harvard.edu) for record keeping and updating lists, as well as email communications.