

# CLUB LEADER HANDBOOK

*A Guide to Leading an Alumni Club*



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY®  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Overview.....	2
What is an Alumni Club?.....	2
How to Start a Club/Become a Club Leader.....	3
Requirements of Club Leaders.....	3
Event Protocol.....	4
Budget/Expenses.....	5
Social Media.....	5
Resources.....	5

## OVERVIEW

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All Grand Valley State University graduates are automatically members of the Grand Valley Alumni Association for life. Membership is just another part of being a Laker for a Lifetime, helping alumni stay informed, get involved, give back, and have Laker pride. One way that alumni stay involved with their alma mater is through clubs.

The Alumni Relations office and Grand Valley State University (GVSU) value our alumni clubs, and are grateful for your leadership and involvement. The information provided in this handbook is designed to provide our Club Leaders with the information and tools to be successful.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact your staff liaison, Courtney Geurink, at 616.331.3593 or email [geurinkc@gvsu.edu](mailto:geurinkc@gvsu.edu).

## WHAT IS AN ALUMNI CLUB?

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A group of Grand Valley graduates who live in a concentrated geographical area (at least 200+ alumni within a tri-county radius) and unite through periodic events to socialize, network, and participate in community service in order to stay connected to the university and each other. Clubs are recognized by, and accountable to GVSU Alumni Relations and are led by alumni Club Leaders who live in the designated area.

The purpose of a Club is to:

- advance the mission of the Alumni Association, which advances the mission of the university.
- be a GVSU presence in communities.
- promote the interests and welfare of GVSU and its constituents.
- provide at least one yearly opportunity for fellowship and networking.
- provide one yearly community service project during Community Outreach Week.
- support University Development and giving efforts.
- mobilize alumni to meet special needs of the university.
- contribute new ideas to the university about existing or possible programs.

## HOW TO START AN ALUMNI CLUB AND/OR BECOME A CLUB LEADER

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If there is no Club in your area:

- Reach out to the [staff liaison](#) to verify that your region meets the 200 or more alumni within a tri-county radius.
- Find help - clubs with multiple leaders find it easier to complete the planning process.
- Complete and submit the Club Leader Commitment Form.
- After the commitment form has been submitted, the Alumni Relations team will review it for consideration. Alumni Relations accepts new clubs based on alumni population size, strength of club leadership, and current budget. This process may take several weeks.
- Once approved, participate in orientation training with your staff liaison.

If there is a Club in your area:

- Email the current leaders and/or the [staff liaison](#) to learn more about the expectations and to express interest.
- Complete and submit the Club Leader Commitment Form.
- Once approved, participate in orientation training with your staff liaison.

## REQUIREMENTS OF CLUB LEADERS

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Club leaders are required to

- plan the required events, including a Community Outreach Week event in March;
- communicate consistently with the Alumni Relations staff liaison and inquiring alumni;
- manage and properly engage with alumni via the club's Facebook Page;
- make an annual financial gift to the university and encourage others to do the same;
- serve as an ambassador for alumni who live in or who are new to the region (answer questions about housing, restaurants, etc.);
- show enthusiasm for and support of GVSU, as well as a desire to further the interests and visibility of GVSU in the community, among the affinity base, and nationally;
- be able to devote the necessary time to the organization; and
- complete the Annual Report at the end of each fiscal year.

## EVENT PROTOCOL

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Club leaders are required to plan at least two events per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), one of which must be a [Community Outreach Week](#) event (end of March).

### Event Ideas

- Community Service
  - Collaborate with local organizations
  - Serve food at a shelter
  - Park/beach clean up
  - Conduct a toy/clothing/food/book drive

- Social
  - Happy hour
  - Beer/wine tastings
  - Food truck gatherings
  - Unique venues to your community
  - BBQ/picnic
  - Gatherings around local events (parades, concerts, art festivals, etc.)
  - Local tours (architecture, museums, bike, boat, etc.)
  - Escape rooms
  - Bowling
  - Arcades
- Athletic
  - Professional/semi-professional sports events
  - GVSU game watch parties
- Educational/Professional Development
  - Highlight alumni guest speaker
  - Networking nights
- Give Back
  - Host an event where donations are collected or a portion of the ticket price supports a related GVSU scholarship
  - Write encouraging cards to students during exams

### **Event Planning**

- Brainstorm and research your event's goals, date/time, location, and capacity. Remember to refer back to your Club Interest Survey if you've recently completed one for your area.
- Communicate with Courtney in GVSU Alumni Relations regarding your idea.
- Once given the go-ahead from Alumni Relations, complete the [Event Proposal Form](#).
  - This form needs to be submitted **at least eight (8) weeks prior** to the event for us to be able to provide promotion support.
- Work with the staff liaison to finalize details.

### **Promotion**

- Promptly communicate with your staff liaison throughout the event process.
- Promote the event via social media platforms and personal connections.
- If the Event Promotion Form was submitted at least eight weeks prior to the event, the staff liaison will coordinate with the Alumni Relations Communications Team to put your event in the Alumni Association newsletter, send out emails specifically to your region, create social media graphics, and send other promotional pieces.
- If the Event Promotion Form is submitted with less than eight weeks prior to the event, no promotional steps can be guaranteed.

### **At the Event**

- Attend and host the event. This includes but is not limited to: set-up, welcoming, talking points, collecting information from walk-ins and taking pictures.
  - The staff liaison will send you nametags, giveaway prizes, registration sheets, walk-in sheets, and other necessary items for your event.
- Engaging with attendees, learning about their GVSU experience and stories.

### **Post Event**

- Submit the walk-in sheet to your staff liaison no later three days post the event, including any pictures you took in the original form if you would like them to be considered for the GV Magazine and future enews blasts.
- Post photographs to the Alumni Club Facebook page.
- The Alumni Relations Communications team will create and send out a Thank You email to those who attended. This will include a brief survey, giving message, and link to the Facebook Page.

## **BUDGET/EXPENSES**

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### **Event Costs**

To help offset the costs of an event, if it is not a “pay-on-your-own” event, Alumni Relations will support and cover various expenses. This amount will be determined by the office, not to exceed \$15, in order to keep the ticketed price at a reasonable cost for event attendees.

### **Club Leaders**

Due to the costs and expenses generated for hosting Club events, as a thank you for your service, the Alumni Relations Office will cover the registration fees of the first two events per fiscal year for the Alumni Club Leaders.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

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A Facebook Page and official alumni club logo are created by the Alumni Association for each alumni club. Your staff liaison will add Club Leaders as administrators to the page. An Alumni Relations staff member must remain as an administrator for the group at all times. Club Leaders are encouraged to post regular updates and engage the GVSU alumni community following the expectations.

As an institution, GVSU recognizes the value of social media applications and supports their use. Because social media blurs the line between personal voice and institutional voice, GVSU has crafted [guidelines](#) to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media. Please review these guidelines. Links to the Alumni Association pages can be found [here](#).

If you should receive an unpleasant/disgruntled comment, please notify Susan Howard at [howardsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:howardsu@gvsu.edu) and she will handle it from there.

Additional information on GVSU’s marketing, messaging, or logo information may be found at [www.gvsu.edu/identity](http://www.gvsu.edu/identity). If you have any questions, please contact Susan Howard at 616.331.3591 or [howardsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:howardsu@gvsu.edu).

## **RESOURCES**

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[Alumni Association Home Page](#)

[Club Home Page](#)

[Club Event Proposal Form](#)