Affinity Groups and Networks
Operating Principles
Alumni Association
Letter From The Executive Director

Since the Alumni Association’s inception almost 35 years ago, the Kennesaw State University Alumni Association counts on the support of alumni volunteers in order to build positive, long-term relationships among the University, the surrounding community, and the more than 130,000 living alumni worldwide. As an affinity group leader, we value your diverse perspectives from both sides of the KSU and SPSU legacy. You all are truly the lifeblood of our organization, and we are excited to see how each affinity group soars to new heights.

We are pleased to provide you with this handbook to assist you in your alumni engagement efforts. Please refer to it when planning affinity activities, events, and communications throughout the year. Of course, the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement is always here to support you and your alumni groups.

Our team appreciates all that you do as we take flight with new opportunities. Your contributions are a key component to the continued success of KSU and its students.

Frances Beusse
Overview

Affinity Groups

Kennesaw State University (KSU) Alumni affinity groups serve as official groups of alumni that are linked by a common identity or interest to advocate, advance, and support the Kennesaw State Alumni Association. Ideal affinity groups show a balance and share vision between affinity groups and the university. Volunteers and KSU Alumni staff provide opportunities for alumni to connect to the affinity groups through programs and events throughout the year.

Alumni Networks

Kennesaw State University Alumni networks serve as official groups of alumni linked by common experiences as a part of a Kennesaw State college or program and serve to advance and advocate for the current college or program. Alumni networks work alongside alumni staff, college network advisors, and the institution to provide opportunities for alumni to connect back with campus throughout the year.

Governance

Each KSU Alumni affinity group and network is governed by KSU affinity group and network operating principles. Affinity groups are formed by a charter granted by the KSU Alumni Association Board of Directors. Affinity group executive officers must sign a letter of intent at the beginning of each fiscal year with KSU Alumni staff. Affinity networks are formed by signing a letter of intent at the beginning of each fiscal year with KSU Alumni staff and college network advisor.

Strategic Objectives

» Engage KSU Alumni and constituents through volunteer opportunities, active social media, programs, and events
» Serve as ambassadors of Kennesaw State University and assist in the execution of KSU Alumni goals of educating alumni, creating awareness, and engaging our diverse alumni base
» Capture key engagement information for KSU Alumni Association staff to strategically use
» Increase the number of graduates who engage with the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement
» Improve ACE partnerships with campus and community units by demonstrating the impact of alumni activities

Support

Being a KSU Alumni affinity group or network comes with resources to support day to day operations. The Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement (ACE) staff is here to provide dedicated staff support to ensure the success and growth of your group. Outlined below is some of the support provided by ACE.

Organizational Support

» Staff support in annual planning of events and activities, including ideas, templates, timelines, and other resources
» Volunteer recruitment and development, including assisted succession planning
» Alumni data to support planning
» Access to funding for events and activities, which can be requested through a grant funding process (see below)

Event Support

» Staff support in event planning including tasks lists, timelines, and helpful advice
» Reserve both on and off campus venues, handling contracts and vendors
» Event speaker recruitment
Marketing Support

- KSU Alumni-supported webpage
- Promotion of events on KSU Alumni calendar of events
- Creation and distribution of emails and articles in Wingspan
- Volunteer recruitment emails
- Marketing tools including surveys and email reports

### O.W.L.S. Expectations and Resources

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<tr>
<td>Black Alumni Society, KSU Young Professionals, SPSU Alumni Society</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The Marching Owls” Alumni Society</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, with Network Advisor</td>
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<td>Association for Latino Alumni</td>
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<td>Schools and Colleges Networks</td>
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#### KSU Alumni Dedicated Resources

| Market Data | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Dedicated KSU ACE Staff Member | Yes | Yes | Yes, with Network Advisor |
| KSU Branded Email and Social Templates | Yes | Yes | Yes |

#### Structure

| Minimum Number of Eligible Alumni | 2,000 | 500 | 100 | 100 |

#### Officially Chartered

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

#### Full Leadership Council

| Yes | Yes | No | Suggested |

#### President and Vice President only

| No | No | Yes | Yes, if no Leadership Council |

#### KSU Alumni Board Liaison

| Yes | Yes | No | No |

#### 1:1 KSU Alumni Staff and President Meeting

| Monthly | Monthly | Semesterly | Semesterly, with Network Advisor |

#### Attend Volunteer Leadership Trainings

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Recommended |

#### Leadership Succession Plan

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

### Programming and Events

#### Number of Signature Events*

| 2 | 1 | None | None |

#### Eligible for Grant Funding

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

#### Electronic Event Registration

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Suggested |

#### Yearly Calendar of Events

| Mandatory | Mandatory | Suggested | Suggested |

#### Post Event Attendance List

| Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
Affinity Groups

Officially Chartered Groups

» Black Alumni Society
» “The Marching Owls” Alumni Society
» SPSU Alumni Society
» Association for Latino Alumni
» KSU Young Professionals

Structure

Leadership

The executive officers consists of:

» Immediate Past President
» President
» Vice President
» Secretary

An up to 10-person Leadership Council consists of:

» A KSU Alumni Association Board Liaison will be assigned to each Leadership Council. This liaison will attend one meeting a semester and serve as an advisor and resource to the President and Chairs.
» Committee Chairs
» At-Large Leadership Council Members
An effective Affinity Group Leadership Council fosters volunteer training and development to establish a pipeline of future leaders. Leadership team members preferably must:

» Have a history of demonstrated engagement with KSU
» Exemplify strong leadership and relationship building skills
» Philanthropically support KSU. Suggested in the amount of $120 annually or $10 monthly
» Be dedicated to advancing the goals and objectives outlined by the KSU Alumni Association and Affinity Group Executive Board
» Serve up to three years
» Serve at least one year on Affinity Group Leadership Council to run for an executive officers position or can be recommended with the approval of ACE staff and current executive officers.
» Be approved by KSU Alumni Association Board of Directors and ACE staff

Release from Duties

All Affinity Networks Leadership Council members or executive officers are subject to release from duties by the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement or college and/or program for non-compliance with the KSU Alumni Association Operating Principles or Affinity Network Handbook. KSU Alumni volunteers who engage in behavior or activities that do not represent Kennesaw State University in a positive or professional manner are also subject to release from duties at the discretion of the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement.

Recruitment and Selection Process

— July

» Volunteer Terms begin the first day of the Fiscal year, July 1.

— August

» Review Meetings: ACE staff meets with council members who have completed their first year on council to discuss previous year, future goals, and future council intentions/desires (roll off, officer positions, etc.)

— October-December

» Leadership Council applications are released, promoted, and accepted until Dec. 31
» Marketing in Wingspan, on social media accounts and in handouts at events

— January

» Executive officers elections are held
» Leadership Council applications are reviewed by selection committee (ACE staff, Alumni Association Board, immediate past president), and new council members are selected through March.

— February/March

» New Leadership Council members are announced and start July 1
» New Leadership Council orientation

— April

» Transition meetings occur between current executive officers and future executive officers
» Committee chair elections take place by June 1
— June

» Final month of fiscal year and council term
» Annual philanthropic commitment due by June 1
» New Leadership Council members have a 1:1 meeting with ACE staff before beginning term

Elections

Elections for president, vice president, and secretary are held annually consisting of Leadership Council members in good standing to begin their term on July 1 and end on June 30. Any member of the Leadership Council from the current fiscal year may be eligible to hold these offices. If a current Leadership Council member does not meet the listed criteria or does not accept the nomination to run, the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement may nominate executive officers with the help of the Kennesaw State Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Executive Officers Nominating Process

Any Leadership Council member in good standing may be nominated for president, vice president, and/or secretary by any KSU alumnus, constituent, or staff member. Self-nominations are acceptable and encouraged. Notification of nomination will be sent to each candidate by KSU Alumni staff, and if the nominee does desire to hold office, the written consent for the candidacy must be sent to KSU Alumni staff by a pre-determined date.

Executive Officers Election Process

KSU Alumni staff shall compile the list of candidates that have accepted the nomination for each position and distribute a ballot to Leadership Council. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In case of a tie vote, the KSU Alumni Association Affinity Group Committee will elect one of the candidates.

Elected officers and alumni constituency will be notified by the last week of January of the new executive board.

Things to Note

The Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement reserves the right to verify that applicants meet the criteria and reserve the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any applicant for any reason.

Roles

President

» Serve as primary liaison with the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement
» Convenes, sets agendas and presides over all meetings
» Assumes responsibility for the success of each activity/project
» Serves as chief representative if/when requested by the KSU Alumni Association Board of Directors, campus units, or schools and college boards
» Works carefully with their successor to discuss duties, responsibilities, and continuity between administrators
» Serve a one-year term
» Has no voting privileges, unless to break a tie

Immediate Past President

» Provides guidance and counsel to current president and executive officers
» Has no voting privileges

Vice President

» Assumes duties of president in their temporary absence
» Works directly with committee chairs on their goal setting and achievement progress, collects committee reports, and shares with officers and ACE staff
» Handles arrangements for programs and meetings by submitting online events request form to Alumni staff
» Assists executive officers at group functions in order to become familiar with and promote all operations
» Serve a one-year term
Secretary

» Coordinates, with the president, the agenda of all meetings and records pertinent information from these meetings
» Prepares notices of all meetings and supplies meeting information to Alumni staff
» Oversees all banking and financial reports with assistance from KSU Foundation
» Provides creative content to Alumni office and maintains Affinity Group social media (if applicable)
» Serve a one-year term

Leadership Council

» Hold monthly meetings for committees that they actively serve in
» Actively assist in the identification and recruitment of new council members
» Work with executive officers on upcoming events or initiatives set by executive officers with assistance from Alumni staff
» Submit events/programs at least three months in advance of event to officers for approval by full council before approval by ACE

Examples of committees:
— Student Engagement
— Alumni Giving
— Networking Events

» If a council member resigns or is removed during their term, the vacancy will be filled at the discretion of the ACE staff.

Alumni Association Board Liaison

» Provides guidance and counsel to executive officers
» Advocates for affinity group on Alumni Association Board

Alumni Networks

Structure

Leadership

The executive officers consists of:

» Immediate Past President
» President
» Vice President
» Secretary

An up to 10-person Leadership Council consists of:

» Committee Chairs
» At-Large Leadership Council Members

An effective Alumni Network Leadership Council fosters volunteer training and development to establish a pipeline of future leaders. Leadership team members preferably must:

» Have a history of demonstrated engagement with KSU and college or program
» Exemplify strong leadership and relationship-building skills
» Philanthropically support KSU. Suggested in the amount of $120 annually or $10 monthly
» Be dedicated to advancing the goals and objectives outlined by the KSU Alumni Association and Affinity Network Executive Officers
» Serve up to three years
» To run for an executive officer position, candidates must serve at least one year on Affinity Group Leadership Council or at the discretion of ACE staff and current executive officers
» Be approved by Affinity Network program advisor and ACE staff

Release from Duties

All Alumni Networks Leadership Council members or executive officers are subject to release from duties by the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement or college and/or program for non-compliance with the KSU Alumni Association Operating Principles or
Alumni Network Handbook. KSU Alumni volunteers who engage in behavior or activities that do not represent Kennesaw State University in a positive or professional manner are also subject to release from duties at the discretion of the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement.

Recruitment and Selection Process

— July

» First month of fiscal year; everyone begins their term on July 1

— August

» Review Meetings: Network Advisor meets with council members who have completed their first year on council to discuss part year, future goals, and future council intentions/desires (roll off, officer positions, etc.)
» ACE staff meets with larger group at first meeting to get to know network leadership

— October–December

» Leadership Council applications are released, promoted, and accepted until December 31
» Pushes in Wingspan, social media accounts, and handouts at events

— January

» Executive officers elections are held
» Leadership Council applications are reviewed by selection committee (Network Advisor, ACE staff, immediate past president) and new council members are selected through March.

— February/March

» New Leadership Council members are announced and start July 1
» New Leadership Council orientation

— April

» Transition meetings occur between current executive board officers and future executive officers
» Committee chair elections take by place by June 1

— June

» Final month of fiscal year and council term
» Annual philanthropic commitment due by June 1
» New Leadership Council members have 1:1 meeting with network staff to get to know you before beginning their term

Elections

Elections for president, vice president, and secretary are held annually consisting of Leadership Council members in good standing to begin their term on July 1 and end on June 30. Any member of the Leadership Council from the current fiscal year may be eligible to hold these offices. If a current Leadership Council member does not meet the listed criteria or does not accept the nomination to run, the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement and network advisor may nominate executive officers.

Executive Officers Nominating Process

Any Leadership Council member in good standing may be nominated for president, vice president, and/or secretary by any KSU alumnus, constituent, or staff member. Self-nominations are acceptable and encouraged. Notification of nomination will be sent to each candidate by network advisor, and if the nominee does desire to hold office, the written consent for the candidacy must be sent to network advisor by a pre-determined date.
Executive Officers Election Process

The network advisor shall compile the list of candidates that have accepted the nomination for each position and distribute a ballot to Leadership Council. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In case of a tie vote, the KSU Alumni Association Affinity Group Committee shall elect one of the candidates. The slate of elected officers will be sent to the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement for approval and record-keeping. Elected officers and alumni constituency will be notified by the last week of January of the new executive officers.

Things to Note

Should a network not have a full Leadership Council to pull from, networks may nominate from the general alumni base or college advisory boards. Proven leadership and engagement in the college or program preferred. The network advisor or Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement reserves the right to verify that applicants meet the criteria and reserve the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any applicant for any reason.

Roles

President
» Serve as primary liaison with the network advisor
» Convenes, sets agendas and presides over all meetings
» Assumes responsibility for the success of each activity/project
» Serves as chief representative if/when requested by the KSU
» Alumni Association Board of Directors, campus units, or schools and college boards
» Works carefully with their successor to discuss duties, responsibilities, and continuity between administrators
» Serves a one-year term
» Has no voting privileges, unless to break a tie

Immediate Past President (optional)
» Provides guidance and counsel to current president and executive officers
» Has no voting privilege

Vice President
» Assumes duties of president in their temporary absence
» Handles arrangements for programs and meetings by coordinating with network advisor
» Works directly with committee chairs on their goal setting and achievement progress, collects committee reports, and shares with officers and network advisor
» Assists executive officers at group functions in order to become familiar with and promote all operations
» Serves a one-year term

Secretary
» Coordinates, with the president, the agenda of all meetings and records pertinent information from these meetings
» Prepares notices of all meetings and supplies meeting information to Alumni staff and network advisor
» Provides creative content to Alumni office
» Serves a one-year term

Leadership Council
» Work with executive officers on upcoming events or initiatives set by executive officers with assistance from network advisor
» Submit events/programs at least three months in advance of the event to officers for approval by full council before advertising
» Examples of committees:
  — Student Engagement
  — Alumni Giving
  — Networking Events
» If a council member resigns or is removed during their term, the vacancy will be filled at the discretion of the ACE staff and network advisor

Network Advisor
» Serve as primary liaison with the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement
» Guides executive officers in vision setting, goal creating, and hitting target metrics
» Works carefully with their successor to discuss duties, responsibilities, and continuity between administrators
» Assists event leader with events request form submissions to Alumni staff
Events

Signature Events

Signature events are events solely funded by the Kennesaw State Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement. These events further the mission of the KSU Alumni Association and the University. Signature events are discussed with KSU Alumni staff at the start of each fiscal year.

Grant-Funded Events

Groups or Networks can request funding through the KSU Alumni Association grant process. The process includes submitting a written application and projected budget for the event.

Things to Note

» Raffles are not permitted
» Online sales through platforms, such as PayPal and Eventbrite, are not permitted
» Applying for outside grants is not permitted
» Sponsorships are not permitted for events hosted on campus
» If you would like to pursue outside sources of sponsorship, please talk with ACE staff before you approach any prospective donors/sponsors. We will work with you to secure approval to contact your potential donors. Efforts that overlap with Alumni Association business/priorities should gain written approval from the ACE staff.

ACE Programming Ideas

Ambassador – Programming opportunities for increasing awareness and affinity to the University

» Serve as a panelist volunteer with campus departments
» Social media takeovers
» KSU Day of Service volunteer

Community – Programming opportunities for leveraging and expanding professional networks

» Networking events
» Scrappy hours/tailgate parties
» KSU receptions
» Affinity group open meetings

Educational – Programming that promotes lifelong education such as social and cultural development, skill building, and community-based education

» Affinity-specific events
» Speaker series
» “Life After the Nest” series
» Virtual programming

Events Assistance Form

Affinity groups and networks are asked to complete this form for each event to track alumni engagement and request staff or marketing assistance. The Event Assistance form alerts ACE staff to upcoming events and initiates the marketing support and registration creation processes. This form is required and must be completed 6-8 weeks before your proposed event time. Events must be approved by ACE staff before planning can begin.
Communication

Social Media

Social media is a tool that should be utilized to further engage your audience and spread awareness of programming. Content should be in line with University brand standards and is subject to review/approval by both Kennesaw State University Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement and the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing.

The Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement will have access to all social accounts including username, handles and password credentials. If posts have not been vetted through the proper channels prior to posting or violate brand standards, it will be subject to removal. Content submission should be done in a timely manner so any feedback from the University can be implemented prior to posting.

Social content and captions will be submitted on a cyclical basis as determined by the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement. Content should rotate between event information, alumni spotlights and group information in order to ensure engaging and fresh material. A mixture of both graphic and photographic content is encouraged. Social media volunteers are encouraged to be mindful of accurately depicting Kennesaw State’s diversity in age, race, religion, etc. If a social media volunteer has a question about any University policies, they should not hesitate to ask a staff member for help and/or clarification.

Quick tips

» Captions should start with a hook to draw the audience’s attention and then transition into post information.

» Hashtags #Foreverowl, #KennesawState, #KennesawStateuniversity have high engagement and visibility in alumni audiences.

» Images lifted from online resources tend to be granular or poor quality. Take advantage of University resources like Photoshelter to find images that are high resolution.

» Tagging alumni who are featured in posts is a great way to raise reach and engagement on posts. Make sure to tag the alumni and Kennesaw State University accounts on posts that are relevant!

» Instagram Collaborations with fellow alumni accounts can be extremely beneficial to both parties. We strongly encourage our groups to utilize this feature with the Alumni Instagram account as part of their regular content submission process.

» Instagram and Facebook have applications within their sites that give users access to engagement metrics. Data collected from audiences show information such as age demographics, optimal posting times, and best/worst performing posts. Utilizing this information will help account holders develop a strategic social media approach.

Post Examples

Event Invitation Example

Event posts should have event name, dates, and venue (if possible) front and center on the design. Verbiage should be limited so as not to crowd the graphic and overwhelm the audience. More event details can be included in the caption.

Alumni Spotlight Example

Alumni spotlights should have a high-resolution image of the alum. Professional headshots or images are encouraged.
Group Information Post

Information regarding your group’s anniversary, successes, recent meetings, etc.

Forever Owl Friday

For use of the Alumni Accounts ONLY. Each Friday, the KSU alumni Instagram and Facebook page post a Forever Owl Friday spotlighting the achievements of graduates. Groups are strongly encouraged to submit information to the alumni team to highlight the success of members. Submissions should include the graduate’s name, achievement and a high-resolution photo.

Brand Standards

All content developed should adhere to Kennesaw State University’s brand standards. A digital copy of the guidelines can be found by visiting the following URL: https://styleguide.kennesaw.edu/.

Please note that all manipulation of a University logo, including the Kennesaw State University master brand logo, the alumni mark, and affinity group marks, is strictly prohibited. If a volunteer has a question about any University brand standards, they should not hesitate to ask a staff member for help and/or clarification.

Email Communication

Email communication to Kennesaw State alumni must be facilitated through the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement. In partnership with the Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing and the Division of University Advancement, the Alumni office maintains email communication through Raiser’s Edge NXT. This platform utilizes a database of alumni that allows for strategic segmentation through a variety of different attributes. Through NXT, there is capability to target alumni in a methodical manner to increase engagement and awareness of KSU alumni events.

Appropriate subject matter for email communication includes upcoming event information, volunteer recruitment efforts, and group awareness. All email content must adhere to the Kennesaw State University brand guidelines. If a volunteer has a question about any University brand standards, they should not hesitate to ask a staff member for help and/or clarification.

Email copy and content must be submitted to the alumni office two weeks prior to the desired delivery date. Any request for alumni email communication is subject to approval or rejection by the Alumni Office based on factors including but not limited to frequency, content matter, purpose and audience.

Wingspan

On the last Thursday of each month, the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement sends out an alumni newsletter titled Wingspan.

In each addition of Wingspan, the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement features upcoming campus and alumni events, alumni spotlights, alumni and University success stories and donor features. Groups are highly encouraged to submit content they would like to promote to the Alumni Office one week prior to Wingspan’s send out date. Visual content should be 1080 x1080 px and no larger than 2MB. Photographic content should be high resolution with a minimum 72 dpi.
Training

Monthly Topics

Every second Tuesday of the month, ACE staff will host one-hour training sessions on relevant topics to effectively lead your affinity group or network. Training can also be found in the online toolkit for Affinity Leaders. You are responsible for the information in these training courses every month.

Things to Note

» Communication plans must align with University brand standards and be given to staff in a timely manner.
» Leadership Council members must make sure they are receiving the Wingspan newsletter and must not unsubscribe from KSU Alumni correspondence.
» Affinity groups and networks must go through the Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement, along with Strategic Communications, to send out any official email correspondence to their constituency. Shadow lists or third-party mailing platforms are not permitted.
» Submit Wingspan content one week prior to send out date. Visual should be high resolution and be 1080x1080 px.
» Volunteers should not act as an official spokesperson, providing statements or opinions as they can be construed as the University’s or the Alumni Association’s stance on a particular topic. All media requests should be directed to ACE Staff and Strategic Communications.

Leadership Council Orientation

Through an evening retreat in March, newly selected Leadership Council members will attend a two-hour orientation. Topics include:

» Who and what is the KSU Alumni Association?
» Networking with other Leadership Council Members and Alumni Association Board of Directors
» Team dynamics and get-to-know-you’s
» Expectations and resources — ACE processes — Events — Grant funding
» Goal-setting for the next year

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I update my contact information?
Alumni and friends are encouraged to update their contact information to receive news on upcoming events and News from the Nest through our Wingspan Newsletter.

How do I become a member of the KSU Alumni Association?
All graduates of Kennesaw State University, Southern Polytechnic State University, and any iteration of those institutions are considered “members” of the KSU Alumni Association. There are no dues requirements, although some events or programs may include a registration fee or giving component.

How can I learn about upcoming affinity group events?
The best way to learn about upcoming events is to check out the KSU Alumni webpage at https://alumni.kennesaw.edu/ or by following KSU Alumni on social media @alumniksu.

What are some signature events of the University?
We welcome all alumni back to campus for Homecoming in the fall, KSU Night at the Braves in the summer, and various programs in the spring.

Stay up to date on university happenings on https://calendar.kennesaw.edu/