Defining an Effective Board Structure

Alumni Communities
Training Module 2009

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This information aims to help Stanford club volunteer leaders connect alumni to each other and to Stanford in the most effective manner.
Q: How do clubs organize their boards?
Board Structure

Board structure is often determined by size of club and alumni population:

- Smaller clubs with only a contact person
- Medium-sized clubs with board members
- Larger clubs with large boards
Small Clubs

- The smallest clubs may have only one contact person. Responsibilities include:
  - Coordinating local alumni events
  - Liaison with SAA
  - Ambassador and resource for local Stanford alumni
  - Responsible for annual club report to SAA
  - Searches for other volunteers and successor

- There are approximately 100 small Stanford clubs in the U.S. Examples are:
  - Stanford Club of Madison
  - San Diego Book Club
  - Orange County Breakfast Club
Medium-Sized Clubs (1 of 3)

- Medium-sized clubs have small boards that may include the following roles*:
  - **President (required)**
    - Seeks new volunteers/officers
    - Runs board meetings
    - Serves as point person for SAA
    - Responsible for annual club report to SAA
  - **VP/President-Elect**
    - May share leadership responsibilities with president
    - Ideally identified six months to one year before president’s term ends

*Board members may hold more than one role
Medium-Sized Clubs (2 of 3)

- **Treasurer**
  - Responsible for financial report to SAA, including any information that goes to the IRS
  - Responsible for club banking, including bank signature card, reimbursements and accurate record keeping

- **Membership Chair**
  - Maintains and updates the club’s database
  - Manages the membership module’s communication tool
  - May produce membership directory annually
  - Provides SAA with updated membership list
  - Informs SAA of changes in local alumni contact info
Medium-Sized Clubs (3 of 3)

- **Web Master**
  - Establishes and maintains club’s web presence
  - Communicates actively with board to keep content current
  - Keeps content fresh and engaging

- **Other Board Members-At-Large**

  - There are approximately 50 medium-sized Stanford clubs in the U.S. Examples are:
    - Stanford Club of The Big Island
    - Stanford Professional Women of Orange County
    - Stanford Black Alumni Association of Northern California
The largest clubs may have full boards with some or all of the following roles:

- Past president
- Specific event chairs
  - Big Game, Frosh Send-offs, etc.
- Young alumni chair
- Publicity chair
- Community service chair
- E-mail list moderator
- Hospitality or newcomer chair
- New volunteer chair
- Newsletter editor
- Board members-at-large
Large Clubs (2 of 2)

- Call for all board members to have an active role (e.g., organizing an event or holding an office)
- Maintain institutional knowledge by finding roles for past leaders (e.g., past presidents committee)
- There are approximately 20 large clubs in the U.S. Examples are:
  - Bay Area Cardinal Young Alumni
  - Stanford Women’s Club of the East Bay
  - Rocky Mountain Stanford Association
Board Members-At-Large

**Roles may include:**

- Undergraduate admissions volunteer
- Liaisons from other local clubs
- Ivy Plus contacts
- GSB chapter leaders
- Other local club leaders
- SAA liaison
- Ex-officio members who were former officers
Follow-up Tips For All Clubs

- Keep board members engaged and level the workload by assigning everyone an active role as either an officer or event chair.
- Find roles for past leaders (e.g., past presidents committee) to help maintain institutional knowledge.
- Check to see that SAA contact is on club board e-mail list.
Next Steps

- Define your board structure
- Codify your club culture by creating binders for board members
- Establish good lines of communication with your SAA contact
Questions and Comments?
Other Training Modules

- Choosing an Effective Membership Model
- Guiding Principles Lead to Great Decisions
- Marketing Your Club to Alumni
- The 4 R’s of Volunteering
- Working with Other Clubs