Guiding Principles Lead to Great Decisions
This information aims to help Stanford club leaders and volunteers reach, serve and engage local alumni in the most effective manner.
What We Will Cover

- Mission statement
- Bylaws
  - Succession Plan
  - Term Guidelines
  - Elections
- Who can participate?
- Next steps
Q: What guides your club’s activities and decisions?
Mission Statement

- Gives guidance when deciding whether to take on new projects and when issues or disagreements arise
- Articulates your club’s goals

As an example, our department’s mission statement is:

The Alumni Communities department seeks to strengthen Stanford’s alumni communities and foster alumni relationships in order to connect alumni intellectually and emotionally to Stanford and to provide the University with goodwill and support.
Sample club mission statement:

- Stanford Professional Women of Orange County, Orange County Chapter was re-established, fall 2005. Members include alumni, mothers and spouses of students and alumni, and supporters. Our purpose is to organize events of professional and personal interest to members and supporters in order to foster friendship, philanthropy, and a sense of community.
Q: What practices have evolved that support your club’s goals?
Bylaws

- Outline a set of standard practices
- Give guidance when questions arise about policies and procedures
- Provide a foundation and structure over time
Bylaws

- Bylaws also define the following:
  - Succession Plan — Who will take over
  - Term Guidelines — How long officers serve
  - Elections — Sets guidelines for nominations, elections and installation of officers

A sample of generic bylaws can be found in the Stanford Club Leaders Handbook and online at: www.stanfordalumni.org/leaders/handbook
Bylaws: Succession Plan

- Is clear and concise; prevents stagnation; establishes a culture of innovation; guides the club/board
- Resides within bylaws; is applied at the intervals specified
- Allows for officer overlap/training
- Fosters institutional knowledge
Bylaws: Term Guidelines

- Identify length of service
- Give officers a chance to train successors
- Allow for new officers, fresh ideas and annual planning
- Establish a culture of thanking and celebrating volunteers before they burn out
- May allow for officers to serve more than one term
Bylaws: Elections

- Are recommended to take place every year or every other year
- Support any alum who wishes to run
- Are often informal and may include only a club board vote rather than the entire membership
- Should cultivate a board equipped with diverse interests and innovative thinking

Note: Board positions may be filled by election or appointment but the bylaws should specify the process for each position.
Who Can Participate?

- Clubs must be open to all alumni
  - But it is okay to have targeted communication to members only
  - Member-only events and advance notice of events for members are okay as long as everyone can join

- 90% of the membership must be Stanford-affiliated
  - Alum
  - Spouse of an alum
  - Parent of a Stanford student or alum

- President must be an alumnus
Next Steps

- Determine if your club’s activities would benefit from a mission statement
- Write down your club’s practices as bylaws
- Ensure that board members are familiar with mission statement and bylaws
- Send a copy to your SAA contact
Questions and Comments?
Other Training Modules

- Choosing an Effective Membership Model
- Defining an Effective Board Structure
- Marketing Your Club to Alumni
- The 4 R’s of Volunteering
- Working with Other Clubs