

Activities Chairs Onboarding Document

Thank you for signing up to volunteer as an activities chair for your class! As an activities chair, your main purpose is to bring classmates and alumni from surrounding classes together in their post-grad cities and regions, serving as key players in keeping College alumni connected to each other. Activities chair terms last for one year (running from July-June). Chairs may renew their membership by signing up again each year. Alumni who have previously served as activities chairs and are interested in starting again are also welcome to rejoin at any time.

The College Alumni Programs team of the Harvard Alumni Association has prepared this document to help you begin a successful year of class engagement. If you have any questions, please feel free to email haa_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu. Thank you for your service to your class!

Roles and Responsibilities

As a reminder, the main responsibilities of an activities chair include:

- Planning in-person or virtual gatherings that appeal to the class's diverse interests and foster a sense of community within an area
- Communicating with area classmates to publicize the annual Welcome to Your City event series and other HAA recent graduate events throughout the year
- Developing personal connections via email (a confidential list can be provided to you by HAA staff), class websites, the Alumni Directory, class/regional Facebook groups, and/or other social media channels
- Encouraging classmates to keep their contact information updated in the HAA [Alumni Directory](#)

Planning an Event

If you are looking for ideas for traditional events, you could consider some of the following in-person programs:

- Happy hours
- Harvard games or watch parties
- Community service projects
- Speaker events
- Book clubs
- Forming a team for a local sport league
- Community or professional theater performances or games
- Outdoor excursions such as hiking, picnicking, or visiting a nearby historic town
- Open mic nights

For virtual events, we encourage you to explore our [Virtual Engagement Toolkit](#). This covers the basics of virtual events like group discussions, happy hours at home, Netflix parties, book clubs, and open mic nights. The guide also has information on social media best practices to help market these events.

Activities Chairs Onboarding Document

Collaborating with Other Activities Chairs (and Class Committees)

In regions with more than one activities chair or Class Committee member, volunteers' names, class years, and email addresses will be shared with each other so that they can work collaboratively as a group within or across classes (specifically for the recent graduate cohort). Chairs can share administrative responsibilities, such as event planning and outreach support; they may also choose to assign specific roles to each person depending on the event or program.

Activities chairs should update the "About Me" section in their HAA Alumni Directory profile (at community.alumni.harvard.edu/person) to include that they are an activities chair volunteer for that year (for example, "Activities chair for 2021-2022"). This way, you and other activities chairs can find each other, as well as recent graduate Class Committee members, by searching the Directory. To learn more about how to update your profile and then find other recent graduate College volunteers, please see the separate document [Connecting with Recent Grad Volunteers](#).

Publicizing Upcoming College Alumni Events

Publicizing upcoming College alumni events is one of many ways an activities chair can build community with their local classmates and within the recent graduate cohort. We strongly encourage activities chairs to take advantage of your class's social media channels, including regional Facebook groups (if you have them) to reach classmates. Here is a suggested schedule for emails and/or social media posts that you can use to connect your regional classmates:

- September-October: Welcome to Your City regional event series
- November: Harvard-Yale game
- December-January: Networking 101 and Alumni Coffee Chats for current students
- January-February: Public Interested Conference
- March: Class Color Connect (depending on Class year)
- April: Class Families Event (depending on Class year)
- May/June: Harvard Alumni Day

You might consider planning a regional event around some of these options. Your Class Committee and HAA staff liaison can best advise on what might be possible.

Sending Email Communications

There might be occasions where you want to explore emailing regional classmates in addition to social media. We defer to each Class Secretary on what works best for your class. If you are interested in sending out an email, you can reach out to your Secretary for next steps. They may choose to send the email on your behalf, or they might connect you with an HAA staff member so you can receive a list of emails for regional classmates so you can send the email yourself.

If this happens, you will be asked to sign a volunteer data confidentiality agreement, and then will receive the list by a secure download link. Please save the list locally on your computer (i.e. not in a Google Sheet, cloud storage, or shared with others). If you hear from anyone about updated contact

Activities Chairs

Onboarding Document

preferences, or if for whatever reason they are on the list in error, please let the HAA staff member know, and they can make the updates on their end too. Note that the list is just for use during that year, so please plan to delete it by the end of June. Most importantly, please remember to send messages via BCC so you do not reveal names or contact information to others.

Budgeting and Funding

Events planned by activities chairs are intended to be no-cost/low-cost in order to be as inclusive as possible, although some will plan events that might require classmates to pay a small amount (i.e. buying their own food or drink at a restaurant or bar gathering or buying a ticket to an event). It is not an expectation that the activities chair has to spend any money to hold an event - you are really just the organizer. It's entirely up to you and what you know about the area, and what you think your classmates might want to do together.

In the rare case where an activities chair requests funds from the Class Committee to help subsidize an event, you should email the Class Treasurer well in advance of your event as you are starting to plan with the expense details to request approval to use class treasury money (with the First Marshal, Second Marshal, and Secretary cc'ed in the email for awareness). Depending on the budgeting priorities of the Class Committee and the remaining class treasury balance, the Treasurer might not approve all requests, or might propose an alternate expense amount. If the request is approved, make sure to save your receipt to be reimbursed after filling out paperwork with the HAA. Alternatively, if it's an expense that can go on a credit card in advance, then you can work with the HAA to have them pay that expense directly so that no one has to be reimbursed.

Collaborating with Harvard Clubs

While it is not an expectation that activities chairs also serve as Harvard Club volunteers (the activities chair role is a College class volunteer role) we certainly encourage you to learn about your local Harvard Club or regional Shared Interest Group (SIG) chapter (and hopefully become a member!). If you have questions about your local Club, you can find more information on the [Harvard Clubs directory](#). Activities chairs will often collaborate with Clubs and SIGs to market the Welcome to Your City event series.