

2010-2011

# **AFFINITY GROUP OFFICERS HANDBOOK**



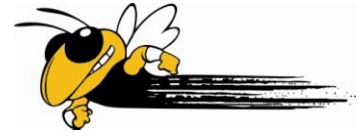
## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for your interest in creating an Affinity Group (AG). The Georgia Tech Alumni Association's (GTAA) definition for an AG is a collection of Georgia Tech alumni, with varied status, who actively engage in communicating and/or gathering around a central unifying purpose, mission, background, or activity beyond class affiliation or a regional proximity in support of the GTAA and Georgia Tech.

The GTAA considers AGs to be a vital component that connects alumni with each other and Georgia Tech. Therefore, an inherent element of the mission is to promote the welfare of Georgia Tech and to establish mutually beneficial relationships between the Institute and its alumni.

This manual is intended to provide general guidelines and information for alumni interested in establishing an AG and as a resource for currently existing AGs. Please note that this is a working, organic document and is subject to change. The manual is divided into three sections: AG Management; GTAA Support and Services to AGs; and Appendices of GTAA forms and other AG related materials. If additional information is needed or you have subsequent questions, please contact the Sr. Manager of Affinity Groups at 1-800-GTALUMS or 404-894-0779.





## **DEFINITION OF “AFFINITY GROUP”**

The Georgia Tech Alumni Association’s (GTAA) definition of an Affinity Group (AG) is any collection of Georgia Tech alumni who actively engage in communicating and/or gathering around a central unifying purpose, mission, background, or activity beyond class affiliation or regional proximity.

The GTAA considers AGs to be a vital component that connects alumni with each other and with Georgia Tech. Therefore, an inherent element of its mission is to promote the welfare of Georgia Tech and to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the Institute and its alumni. The GTAA encourages peer-to-peer interaction with the provisions delineated below, and formally supports the existence of AGs; in addition to its ongoing support of the regional Georgia Tech Clubs. The GTAA does not charter groups based on political affiliation, religion or ideology.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

The GTAA provides certain benefits (outlined in Section III ) that will support an AG that demonstrates commitment and continued adherence to each of the following Operating Principles:

- A. Adhere to the Institute’s policy in regard to the use of the Georgia Tech name and insignias.
- B. Comprehend that the GTAA’s responsibility is to remain neutral on all political and religious issues both inside and outside the Georgia Tech community, as dictated by GTAA policy.
  1. AG’s operate as a component of the Alumni Association.
  2. All positions of the AG must be qualified with comprehensible language that states:  
“The [Group] does not represent Georgia Tech or the Georgia Tech Alumni Association.”
- C. Refrain from discrimination of any kind.
- D. Avoid fundraising practices of any kind or purpose that are not related to the AG’s core mission. AG’s may only fundraise within their membership and only for the sole purpose of the organization’s stated mission.
  1. AG’s may not fundraise for unrelated charitable organizations. AGs may fundraise to generate membership dues, scholarships, and operating expenses.
  2. AG’s must obtain written approval from the GTAA to conduct fundraising for any purpose that may overlap with the Institute’s priorities. i.e. accepting corporate support, funding from academic chairs departments, and the creation of student scholarships.
- E. AGs involved in hosting events may solicit for corporate sponsorship but only in an amount that does not exceed:
  1. The expenses accrued of a particular event, or

2. The AG's annual operating expenses  
Requests for and/or acknowledgements of corporate sponsorships must clearly state: The projected contribution is intended for the AG and not Georgia Tech or any of its affiliates.
- F. The AG must remain as an independent organization; it may not become a chapter for any non-Georgia Tech organization.
  - G. The AG must not represent less than half of its Georgia Tech alumni membership.
  - H. The AG must refrain from starting or investing in any commercial enterprise.
  - I. The AG must refrain from admitting individuals to its membership who are not current members of the Georgia Tech community.
    1. Members of the GT community include: Alumni and their spouses/partners, students, faculty, staff, parents, and visiting fellows.
    2. Non-GT members may participate in AG events at the discretion of the AG.
  - J. The AG must be governed primarily by alumni, i.e. the governing body must be comprised of at least three-fourths of alumni.

The GTAA reserves the right to determine the degree of adherence of the AG to these operating principles. The GTAA may endorse and facilitate partnerships between AGs and Georgia Tech Clubs and between AGs and any parallel student-based organization or club on a case-by-case basis.

## **BENEFITS**

Support from the GTAA will include the following:

- A. Guidance: the provision of an operating manual that entails the requirements, benefits, and services provided by the GTAA
- B. Access to an updated annual list of alumni and their postal contact information
- C. Web site listing of the AG on the GTAA's Web site providing:
  1. Access to Web site hosting services and
  2. Recruitment tools

## **ESTABLISHING AND CHARTERING AN AFFINITY GROUP**

In the beginning, the success of a new group most often depends on a small nucleus of dedicated and interested alumni. It takes commitment from these individuals to ensure the group organizes itself in such a way as to guarantee continuity. The Alumni Association is eager to assist interested alumni with the establishment of new Affinity Groups. Many resources are available to provide guidance.

**Contact:** Debra Thompson, Senior Manager, Affinity Groups  
 Georgia Tech Alumni Association  
 190 North Avenue, NW, Atlanta, GA 30313  
 (404) 894-0779 or 1-800-GTALUMS  
[debra.thompson@alumni.gatech.edu](mailto:debra.thompson@alumni.gatech.edu)



**Below are a few helpful suggestions in establishing your new Affinity Group.**

1. Obtain a complete list of names and addresses of all the alumni who may have an interest in joining your group from the GTAA.
2. Establish a list of interested alumni willing to volunteer to serve on your AG's steering committee.
3. The first meeting must be coordinated with and acknowledged by the Senior Manager of AGs at the GTAA.
4. **IMPORTANT!**  
At the first meeting, general discussion must take place to:
  - a) Establish a general purpose and mission of your group
  - b) Establish the selection of officers and the adoption of bylaws.
5. In electing officers, consideration should be given toward qualifications and the obligation of extensive time in establishing and maintaining the group.
  - a) The AG's president should be elected (not only for his or her standing in the community, but due to the amount of time and unselfish interest it takes in establishing and maintaining the group's affairs)
  - b) The president should be an alumnus or alumna of Georgia Tech
6. Each group must:
  - a) Go to [www.irs.com](http://www.irs.com) to download application form SS-4, once the group receives the tax ID number (EIN) the group can open a bank account in the group's name.
  - b) Open its own bank account at a local bank (this is to ensure all accounting and financing is simplified)
7. **IMPORTANT!**
  - a) The Alumni Association must obtain and keep an up-to-date copy of your proposed and accepted bylaws and a current list of your AG's officers; this is to ensure your AG is chartered.
  - b) The by-laws must be approved by the Alumni Association's Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; this ensures your AG receives official recognition.



# AFFINITY GROUP FINANCES

## **Affinity Group Financial Statement:**

Each AG is required to provide the GTAA an annual Financial Statement of their past year's activities (July 1 - June 30). This is outlined and per compliance of GTAA's yearly audit requirement and assists the GTAA to keep current financial records of each group.

The annual Financial Statement (FS) form can be found in the 'Forms Section of this handbook. The FS form should be submitted by the AG to the Senior Manager of Affinity Groups no later than July 15<sup>th</sup>, of each year.

## **Affinity Group Finances:**

- Each AG's club should open a checking account in its name only.
- Accounts must be of a non-interest bearing nature.
- Accounts must require two signatures per check, i.e. President and Treasurer
- Balances must be consistently monitored. (A balance of \$1000 or more per year may warrant suspicion by the IRS).
- The GTAA is considered a nonprofit organization under Federal regulation 501 c(3) - Organizations for the Advancement of Education. AGs are considered nonprofit under Federal Regulation 501 c (7) - Social Recreational Clubs. As such, AGs are considered to be their own entity and have the responsibility to possess their own tax ID number (EIN). Neither the GTAA nor the AGs are tax exempt organizations and must pay sales taxes per IRS guidelines.
- **The AG's Treasurer must submit all bank account numbers and tax ID number (EIN) to the Georgia Tech Alumni Association.**

## **A. Concept Proposal and Alumni Petition**

It is the policy of the GTAA to not share lists of alumni with individuals not otherwise affiliated with the Institute's Alumni Association (except with the alumni volunteer officers of AGs and clubs). Thus, alumni, as well as other members of the Georgia Tech community, must clearly identify themselves as having an interest in the mission of an AG. Therefore, the development of any such group will initially rely on an explicit' volunteer-driven grassroots effort.

An AG must be comprised of individual graduates or a collection of alumni seeking to establish an AG. The AG must produce and submit a Concept Proposal that includes:

1. A petition with a minimum of 50 Roll Call Donors' (alumni, faculty/staff, or friends) names and signatures, their school (i.e. Ivan Allen), and their year of graduation (i.e. 2005).

2. Their Certified Proposal established by the founding members and pledged by the adjoining AG members. (Specification should be made of those AG members who will be responsible as primary contacts reporting to the GTAA.
3. Updates should be submitted regularly regarding member information and any changes to the Concept Proposal.
4. The AG's officers will receive a copy of the Operation Manual that includes guidance for establishing a Constitution and Articles for the incorporation of the new' AG.
5. The Concept Proposal should be sent to:

Senior Manager of Affinity Groups  
Georgia Tech Alumni Association  
190 North Avenue, NW, Atlanta, GA 30313.

## **Constitution and Articles of Incorporation**

After receiving the Officer's handbook, your AG must draft and submit Articles of Incorporation (AOI) that contain a broad overview of the AG's nature and purpose as well as a constitution. The Constitution must outline in detail the AG's Operating Procedures as well as a clear and precise statement denoting the group's overall purpose.

The constitution must include the following:

- 1) Operating Principles: Each AG must acknowledge these [Section II] as part of the body of their constitution.
- 2) Draft of a policy: Regarding the usage of the Georgia Tech name and insignias, AGs must include standard language on the use of Georgia Tech name and insignias, as provided by the GTAA.
- 3) Nomenclature: The name of the AG must not include the word Association or Fund.
- 4) Governance: Each AG operates as an independent volunteer-driven entity under the guidance of the Alumni Association. The GTAA may suggest a basic governing structure that has worked for other groups.
- 5) GTAA Limitation of Liability Disclaimer: Neither Georgia Tech nor the GTAA is responsible for the group's practices and reserves the right to deny the AG any and all benefits of affiliation at any time should the AG be in breach of the agreement.

**The Proposal, Constitution, and Articles of Incorporation, along with a copy of the AG's Tax ID letter, must be submitted to the GTAA and will be reviewed by both the GTAA staff and the Executive Committee of the GTAA Board of Directors.**

- A. If approved, a letter of notification will be issued as soon as possible designating the proposal's acceptance. In addition, a current up to date list of interested or available members will be provided to the officers of the AG.
- B. Each officer's name and contact information will be submitted to the GTAA; each member (petitioner) joining the organization will have their contact information put into the GTAA's database reflecting their membership with the new or existing AG.
- C. If not approved the proposal will be returned with a letter of explanation and possible recommendations to have it resubmitted.

**Things to Remember:**

- 1. The Constitution and Articles of Incorporation must be renewed every three years from the date of approval by the GTAA.
- 2. An application for renewal must be submitted 90 days prior to expiration.
- 3. An Annual Report must be submitted by each AG to remain in good standing.
- 4. The Annual Report must include the names of all members and a summary of the AG's activities within that year (i.e. samples of any materials produced by the AG).
- 5. The Annual Report form can be found in Appendix A.

Any appeal generated regarding the provisions of the Operating Principles or the Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining an AG may be made to the Executive Committee. The appeal must be in writing, and be clear in stating the reasons for the Request for Non-Adherence.



# AFFINITY GROUP STANDARDS

The GTAA has adopted standards for the Affinity Groups. These outline an established set of responsibilities which, when fulfilled, will entitle your group to support of the GTAA as well as a number of services. The development of the "AG Standards" was a collaborative process of various members from the GTAA Executive Committee, GTAA staff, and the current AG officers.

**Below are the established set of responsibilities that must be fulfilled, in addition to the demonstration of commitment and an ongoing adherence to the Operating Principles outlined in the Affinity Group Policy.**

1. Fiscal Annual Report (July 1 – June 30)  
Deadline June 30<sup>th</sup> (Appendix A)
2. Affinity Group Directory update  
Deadline June 30<sup>th</sup> (Appendix B)

## **Affinity Group's Support from GTAA**

AGs, in good standing, are eligible for the following GTAA services:

1. Guidance:
  - a) interpretation of the operating manual requirements
  - b) on how to gain the benefits
  - c) on how to apply for services
2. Access to the annual alumni list of names and addresses
3. Advertisement of the AG on GTAA's web site:
  - a) providing an AG's goal and/or mission is clearly stated; a list of criteria to become members, a calendar of events, and contact numbers.
4. Access to alumni e-mail marketing
  - a) All AG's must submit a request to the Senior Manager of Affinity Groups at least 2 weeks **before** the designated deadline.
  - b) Only one request per month
5. Electronic Newsletter
  - a) Newsletter must be submitted to the GTAA at least 4 weeks **before** the designated deadline. GTAA reserves the right to edit newsletters as deemed necessary.
6. Event Supplies
  - a) Nametags and registration cards
  - b) GT pins and brochures

**IMPORTANT:** Support expires at the expiration of the AG's third year of inauguration. An application for renewal must be submitted **90 days** prior to expiration date. (Appendix C)

# STARTING AN ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP

## I. PROPOSAL TO START AN AG

1. An Affinity Group must consist of an individual graduate or collection of alumni seeking to establish an AG.
2. A Petition for Concept Proposal must be submitted
  - a) a petition must include a minimum of 50 Roll Call donors
    - 1) names and signatures, school, and year of graduation

Those in support of the proposal must become certified founding members and pledge to join the group. The formation of the AG must initially rely on a volunteer basis, and efforts must consist of a grassroots nature; members must be within the Georgia Tech community and clearly identify with the mission of the AG.

**Important! The AG must not be organized to promote political, religious or ideological views or agendas.**

Once the AG Proposal is submitted the officers will receive an Operating Manual that includes instructions on establishing 1) a constitution and 2) articles of incorporation for the group.

Proposal should be sent to:       Senior Manager of Affinity Groups  
  Georgia Tech Alumni Association  
  190 North Avenue, NW, Atlanta, GA 30313

## II. CONSTITUTION and ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

After receiving this manual, the AG must draft and submit Articles of Incorporation (Appendix D), which outline a broad overview of the AG's nature and purpose. In addition, the AG must draft and submit a Constitution (Appendix E) detailing the AG's purpose in regard to:

- A. Operating Principles: Each AG must acknowledge the GTAA's OPs (as delineated in Section II of this guide) as part of the body of its constitution.
- B. The Usage of the Georgia Tech name and insignias: AGs must include standard language within the frame of their Constitution, which acknowledges the policy regarding the use of the Georgia Tech name and insignias. (Refer to the AG Trademark Policy.)
- C. Nomenclature: The name of the AG may not include the word "Association" or "Fund"

- D. **Governance:** Each AG is considered as an independent entity driven primarily by volunteer management. (Suggestions may be given by the GTAA governing structure).
- E. **GTAA Limitation of Liability Disclaimer:** Neither Georgia Tech nor the GTAA is responsible for the group’s practices and reserves the right to deny the AG any and all benefits of affiliation at any time, should the AG be in breach of the agreement. This includes the group’s bylaws.

**III. APPROVAL PROCESS**

The Proposal, Constitution, and Articles of Incorporation will be reviewed by both the GTAA and the Executive Committee of the GTAA Board of Directors (ECBD). GTAA’s ECBD meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Once a decision is reached, a letter of notification will be sent to the AG.

- A. If the proposal is accepted:
  - 1. the letter will be accompanied by a list of updated contact information for the signers of the proposal (postal addresses only)
  - 2. each petitioner’s name will be coded in the Institute’s database as being a member of the new AG; and
  - 3. coding will be maintained as new members of the Georgia Tech community join
- B. If the proposal is not accepted a letter will be sent with an explanation and recommendations for future action

**Affinity Group’s Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Alumni served:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Location: (City & State)** \_\_\_\_\_





## **Article I**

### **Name and Purpose**

#### Section I

The name of Your AG

#### Section II

The AG must:

1. Be organized for nonprofit
2. Be operated exclusively for educational, civic, and other charitable purposes
3. Be maneuvered to unite and organize GT alumni and friends
  - a) The AG may sponsor and conduct activities, which promote fellowship and social contact between its members; however at no time shall the AG or any member benefit from any net earnings due to the sponsorship or hosting of any event.
4. Assist and support Georgia Tech's overall mission by:
  - a) Promoting GT within the AG's community
5. Assist the GTAA's mission by hosting activities such as:
  - a) Recruitment events
  - b) Volunteering to work for Roll Call (GT Annual Giving)
  - c) Club scholarships/sponsorships
  - d) Community relations and student assistance programs
6. Assist the Athletic Association to achieve its mission through activities such as
  - a) Fundraising, promotions and other programs
7. Provide an opportunity for all alumni within a region to gather at a local site within the community for the purpose of promoting social and intellectual enrichment, in addition to networking opportunities
8. Provide alternative educational and civic activities deemed to be advantageous to the membership of the AG
9. Enhance the public image and presence of the Institute

## **Article II**

### **Affiliation**

#### Section I

Your AG will be affiliated with the Georgia Tech Alumni and Athletic Associations in the manner and degree prescribed by said Associations and the overall Georgia Tech AG's mission statement.

The Georgia Tech name and associated logos are trademarks of the Institute and may be used for approved purposes only. If the AG desires to create its own logo, it must be approved through the Alumni Association and the GT licensing department.

To gain the designated benefits of the GT affiliation, your AG must cooperatively work with the GTAA and GT Athletic Association. These cooperative activities must be approved by the GTAA's Steering Committee. Failure to submit the annual GTAG's financial report can result in the revocation of charter and withdrawal of support of the AG from the Alumni and Athletic Associations.

### **Article III Membership**

#### *Section I*

Membership is limited to the following candidates:

1. Graduates, former students, or friends of Georgia Tech
2. Administrative officials or faculty of Georgia Tech

### **Article IV Duties of AG Officers**

#### Section I

President: He/she must be a Georgia Tech alumnus. He/she shall preside over the meetings of the club when the Executive Committee is present. He/she shall appoint special committees to ensure the functions and duties of the organization are completed as mandated. Term of office is normally two years. Additional duties include the mentorship and development of a new successor.

#### Section II

Vice-President: He/she must be a Georgia Tech alumnus. This officer acts as second in command and provides support to the President and the AG. In the event, the President is unable to serve the entire two-year term, the vice president will succeed to this position for an undetermined period.

#### Section III

Secretary: Duties include the generation of minutes of each AG meeting held; informing the Steering Committee regarding all activities and the mailing of all notices. Members records are to be kept up-to-date, which should include names and addresses, school, and year of graduation. The submittal of the Annual Report and individual reports of every event sponsored or hosted by the AG.

#### Section IV

Treasurer: Duties include the collection of assessments and fees; the deposit of monies accrued and the submittal of mandated information regarding the compliance of records to the Steering Committee within 30 days of any event. A completed financial report shall be submitted to the Alumni Association annually by July 15 of each year.

#### Section V

Steering Committee: The affairs of the AG shall be determined and directed by the elected AG Steering Committee (AGSC). Membership of the AGSC must consist of a minimum of four members. All members are elected by paid members, with the exception of the Yellow Jacket Representative, who is appointed by the Athletic Association. Members of the AGSC serve for a one-year period pending re-election. These members can serve beyond their stated terms until suited successors have been appointed. A quorum of the AGSC must consist of 51percent of the members.

Steering Committee meetings shall be called by the President or by a majority of the members of the Steering Committee and shall be held at such time and place as designated. The Steering Committee must provide a resolution for a method of payment, assumption of liabilities and any other legal documents accrued as expenses.

#### Section VI

The election of officers shall be held at an Annual Meeting. A Nominating Committee must consist of the current President and two past presidents. If no past presidents are available, the current President may appoint two members at large from the general membership, exclusive of current officers. This committee shall present a slate of nominees to the members, however, floor nominations must be admissible for vote as well. Term of office is one year.

#### Section VII

The fiscal year of the AG shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

#### Section VIII

A quorum for meetings shall consist of those members present.

## **Article V**

### **Meetings**

#### Section I

Meetings may be held at the discretion of the AG with the exception of the Annual meeting requirement. No restrictions apply.

#### Section II

Notification of meetings shall be made within a 14-day period. Notification must be in writing but can vary between e-mail and the U.S. Postal Service, subject to the guidelines of the GTAA.

## **Article VI**

### **Dues**

#### Section I

The amount of annual dues, if any, shall be determined by the Steering Committee and may be changed without amendment to the bylaws.

## **Article VII**

### **Revision of the Bylaws**

#### Section I

Bylaws may be amended at any annual meeting or at a designated meeting called for that purpose; a vote must be made by the majority of the members present. Advance notification of this meeting must be made within ten days prior to the meeting.

All amendments to bylaws are subject to the approval of the GTAA's elected board of trustees.



## AN AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE FOR ON-LINE CLUB RESOURCES

[www.gtalumni.org](http://www.gtalumni.org)  
[www.ramblinwreck.com](http://www.ramblinwreck.com)  
[www.gatech.edu](http://www.gatech.edu)

Georgia Tech Alumni Association  
Georgia Tech Athletic Association  
Georgia Institute of Technology

### Information

<http://www.gtalumni.org/pages/affinitygroups>

Georgia Tech Affinity Groups

### Develop your Own AG Web site

The Georgia Tech Web Services department offers AG web site templates for those AG officers interested in maintaining an online presence. The template contains AG contact information, event listings, and membership information.

