

# **Alumni Affinity Groups:** From Launch to Engagement and Fundraising

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Georgetown University & University of San Francisco  
July 2025

# Presenters



*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*



UNIVERSITY OF  
SAN FRANCISCO



**Kelly Dempsey**

Director, Alumni Alliance  
Engagement



**Yasmeen Mayes**

Associate Director, Alumni  
Affinity Programs and  
Engagement



**Elizabeth Verduzco**

Assistant Director, Alumni  
Professional and Career  
Engagement



**Matilda Tavares, EdD**

Director of Alumni  
Engagement and  
Affinity Networks

# Quick Facts

## The Basics

- Founded in 1789, Georgetown is the nation's oldest Catholic and Jesuit university
- Approximately 20,000 students across three campuses and 11 schools

## Alumni Association

- The Georgetown University Alumni Association (GUAA), founded in 1881, is a standalone 501(c)(3) organization
- Serves a global network of over 230,000 alumni
- Largest alumni markets: Washington D.C., New York City, Northern California, Boston, and Los Angeles

## Staffing

- ~55 full-time staff members work on the Alumni Relations team under the AVP for Alumni Engagement
- 5 staff members work on alliance/affinity programming
  - The team was developed as a new pathway for alumni engagement beyond traditional class/regional engagement structures

# GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



# Quick Facts



# UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

## The Basics

- Founded in 1855
- Undergraduate Students Total: 5,729, Graduate Students Total: 3,483

## Alumni Association

- 111,231 University of San Francisco Alumni living across the globe.
- One alumni association that is open for all alumni
- Our Alumni Association lives in the larger Development Division's Programs

## Basic Demographics (as of 2024)

- Alumni Engagement Team of 7 Full-time Staff and AVP of Engagement in the larger Engagement Vertical in Development/Advancement
- 4 work on affinity/identity programming in our office with affinity/identity programming as partial component of different roles



# Session Overview

- What is an Affinity Group? (5 min)
- Launching an Affinity Group (10 min)
- Sustained Engagement and Community-Building (10 min)
- Building Engagement to Support Fundraising (10 min)
- Q&A (10 min)

# What is an Affinity Group?

- At Georgetown, we use two terms: **Affinity** and **Alliance** Groups.
  - **Affinity Groups**
    - Alumni groups organized around a **shared identity** such as race, gender, culture, or orientation.
    - **Active Groups:** Black Alumni Council (est. 2022) and Women of Georgetown Initiative (est. 2012)
    - **In Process Groups:** Hoyas with Pride (est. 2023) and Asian & Pacific Islander Alumni Council (est. 2023)
  - **Alliance Groups**
    - Alumni groups organized around a **shared professional field or industry**.
    - **Active Groups:** Wall Street Alliance (est. 1995), Georgetown Entertainment & Media Alliance (est. 2002), Georgetown Technology Alliance (est. 2009), Georgetown Entrepreneurship Alliance (est. 2012), and Georgetown Angel Investor Network (est. 2023)
    - **In Process Groups:** Hoyas in Health (est. 2023), Hoya Social Impact Alliance (est. 2023), and Hoya Sustainability Network (est. 2024)
- **Affinity** at USF includes:
  - Identity Groups (Race/ethnicity/gender/sexuality/religion)
  - Professional Networks (Based on area of study/career/place of employment)

# Ask the Audience

- How developed are the alumni affinity group offerings at your college or university?
  - Answer at [slido.com](https://www.slido.com), code #3201052



# Launching an Affinity Group

## Affinity & Alliance Team

Established in 2022 to support and scale identity- and industry-based alumni engagement.

- **Julia Farr**, Executive Director, GUAA
- **Stephanie Seitts**, Senior Director, Alumni Alliance and Affinity Engagement
- **Kelly Dempsey**, Director, Alliance Engagement
- **Kate Schuster**, Director, Affinity Engagement
- **Yasmeen Mayes**, Associate Director, Affinity Programs and Engagement
- **Merle Anselm**, Special Assistant, Alumni Alliance and Affinity Engagement

## Black Alumni Council (BAC): A Case Study

First officially chartered GUAA affinity group (2022). Represents **13,000+** Black alumni.

### Formed by combining:

1. Georgetown African American Advisory Board
2. Soul Hoya Alumni Group
3. Black Alumni Summit Leadership

### Key Milestones:

- **1975** – First documented outreach to Black alumni
- **1989** – Informal Black alumni dinners begin
- **1992** – Patrick Healy Dinner formally recognized
- **2001** – African American Advisory Board
- **2009** – Soul Hoya Alumni Group
- **2015** – Black Alumni Summit
- **2022** – BAC officially launched



# Launching an Affinity Group

## **Mission of the BAC:**

To foster a culture that supports the inclusion, engagement, and connectivity of Black alumni across the Georgetown University community; enhances relations between alumni and students, faculty, and staff who share this mission; and to facilitate outreach from the university to the broader community.

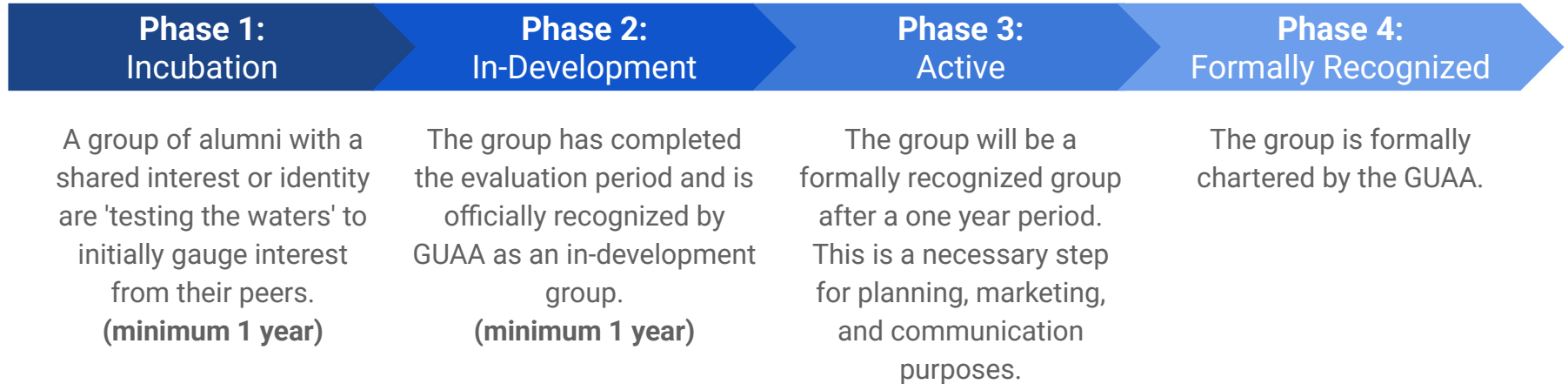


**BLACK  
ALUMNI  
COUNCIL**

*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*  
Alumni Association

# Launching an Affinity Group

- **Then:** groups created under different teams and different circumstances, usually as a result of one or more highly committed volunteers
- **Now:** a transparent process for group creation under one team



# Launching an Affinity Group

- **Considerations for prospective groups**
  - Value-add
  - Differentiation from existing groups
  - Addressable market (i.e. industry has broad appeal)
  - Exemplars from other institutions
  - On-campus partners
- **Benefits to a phased process**
  - Time to plan for staffing needs
  - Time to develop a strong understanding of the alumni base for the group
  - Encourages self-sufficiency and sustainability over time by demonstrating a long-term commitment
- **Challenges of a phased process**
  - Different standards for existing groups vs. new groups
  - Patience!



# Sustained Engagement and Community-Building

- **USF Affinity and identity groups include:**
  - **Identity Groups:** Asia Pacific Alumni Network, Black Alumni Society, Latinx Alumni Society, Pride Alumni Group, Women in Leadership & Philanthropy, Jewish Alumni Network, *Planning for a Native Alumni Group*
  - **Professional Networks:** Entrepreneurship, Public Health, *Planning for a Veteran's Alumni Network*



# Sustained Engagement and Community-Building

## USF key strategies:

- **Volunteers inform and lead** programming
- Building **strong partnerships** with related departments, faculty/staff groups, student groups
- Offering **unique affinity/cultural experiences** and **recognizing important celebrations** throughout the year
- Highlighting **community stories**
- Participating in **USF and Bay Area/other regional community events**
- Provide direct **alumni-to-student volunteer opportunities**



UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Alumni Professional Network Entrepreneurship



# Sample Calendar of Events

June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024
<i>Regional Engagement: USF in Philippines, Japan, and Taiwan</i>	<i>Berkeley South Asian Walking Tour</i>	<i>AAPI Orientation</i>  <i>Sign-up for the Alumni Mentor Program</i>  <i>Lumpia &amp; Libations Networking Happy Hour</i>	<i>Cross-Affinity: What I Wish I Knew My Senior Year Panel</i>	<i>Post-Grad Kababayan, Pilipinx History Month Alumni Panel</i>  <i>Alumni Weekend: Dim Sum with the Asia Pacific Alumni Network</i>	<i>Cross-Affinity: How I Got Here Mental Health Panel</i>
December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025
<i>Virtual Author Talk with Kathryn Ma</i>	<i>Regional Engagement: Hawai'i Alumni Picnic</i>  <i>USF AAPI Night Dons Basketball</i>	<i>On-campus Lunar New Year Celebration</i>	<i>Cross-Affinity: Board Meeting</i>	<i>Asian Pacific American Spotlight Series Talk Curtis Chin</i>  <i>APAN VIP Tours of California Academy of Sciences</i>	<i>IPOC, Mena, and Interwoven Cultural Graduations Ceremonies &amp; Solicitation</i>  <i>Regional Engagement: NYC Event with Vicky Nguyen</i>

# Building Engagement to Support Fundraising






*Seeing alumni engagement staff as fundraisers and programs as integral to the fundraising process.*

- **“Prospecting”** volunteers for alumni groups
- **Identification** intake meetings
- **Pipelining** volunteers as prospects and building donor strategies
- Aligning groups with **campaign priorities** and **fundraising designations**
- **Cultivation** opportunities through volunteering and events
- **Fundraising training** for volunteers as advocates
- **Multiple asks** throughout the year via **annual giving solicitations**, **event solicitation** during registration and events, **in-kind donations**, **sponsorships**, and **board giving requirements**



# Sample Fundraising Calendar



June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024
<p><i>Juneteenth Tabling with Donation Asks and Revenue Sales</i></p> 	<p><i>Asks for Partial and Full In-kind Donations and Sponsorships for Welcome Black Community Gathering</i></p>	<p><i>Registration Ask for Welcome Black Community Gathering</i></p>  <p><small>BAS THIS SUMMER</small></p> <p><small>This month in May, the Black Alumni Society, Student Life, and BASC hosted a concert to welcome USP's newest Black-identified students and their families. Over one hundred people gathered for food, music, and games.</small></p>	<p><i>"How to Fundraise" training for board members.</i></p>	<p><i>Registration and in-person asks and identification during Black Community Reunion with Post-event Email Ask and Swag Sales</i></p>	<p><i>New Volunteer Identification Meetings</i></p>
December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025
<p><i>GivingTuesday Calendar Year End Ask in Black Alumni Society Newsletter</i></p>  <p><small>Dec. 3 is GivingTuesday — a global day dedicated to generosity and supporting the communities and causes that matter most to us. This year, we invite you to celebrate GivingTuesday by contributing to the Black Alumni Society.</small></p> <p><small>Your gift directly supports the growth and impact of the Black Alumni Society, enabling us to organize bigger and more meaningful events and initiatives that uplift USP's Black alumni, students, faculty and staff.</small></p> <p><a href="#">Make Your Gift &gt;</a></p>	<p><i>New Volunteer Identification Meetings</i></p>	<p><i>Email Solicitation for the Black Alumni Society Fund &amp; Black Academic Success and Engagement</i></p> <p><i>Black Joy Festival Tabling with Donation Asks &amp; Swag Sales</i></p>	<p><i>Day of the Dons Giving Day Board Social Solicitations of Networks</i></p> 	<p><i>Mandatory Annual Board Donations Due</i></p>	<p><i>Email Solicitation for Black Graduation Ceremony &amp; Swag Revenue Sales</i></p>  <p><small>Dear Alumni,</small></p> <p><small>At the University of San Francisco, we believe that life's most significant moments deserve celebration with the people we love, via the traditions that mean the most to us.</small></p> <p><small>Our End-of-the-Year Ceremonies hosted by the Cultural Centers are designed to highlight the outstanding work our historically underrepresented students have accomplished in the areas of service, academics, and leadership, while affirming the unique challenges and experiences they share. This year, over 400 graduates participated — nearly half as first-generation college students — and shared these special moments with their families, mentors, and friends.</small></p>



# Building Engagement to Support Fundraising

- **Georgetown University Patrick Healy Scholarship Dinner**
  - Annual event that celebrates the achievements of Georgetown's Black alumni, students, faculty, and staff. Proceeds benefit the Patrick Healy Scholarship Fund.
- **The Patrick Healy Scholarship Fund**
  - Established to promote diversity by supporting undergraduate students with financial need.
  - Endowed in 2004; funded by individual donors and event proceeds.
  - 19 students have received support through the fund.
- **Volunteer & University Collaboration:**
  - Strong partnership with Georgetown's Annual Giving team.
  - Use of digital and print campaigns to drive support.



# Building Engagement to Support Fundraising

- **Georgetown University Wall Street Alliance Scholarship Dinner**
  - Started in 2001
  - Second largest endowment scholarship fund benefitting Georgetown University
    - Market value of over **\$22 million**
    - Has awarded **350 scholarships** supporting nearly **200 students**
  - Dinner in NYC attracts **500+ attendees** each year
  - High profile honorees serve as fundraising partners



# Building Engagement to Support Fundraising

- **Georgetown Entrepreneurship Alliance Founders' Circle**
  - Alumni join by pledging to make a gift to Georgetown if they have a liquidity event (non-binding commitment, no required percentage or dollar amount)
  - Goal is to **engage**, **cultivate**, and **steward** alumni entrepreneurs and investors surrounding their entrepreneurial success



# Key Takeaways

- **Various definitions of “alumni affinity”** → how does your University define it?
- There are many benefits to a **phased and transparent process for starting a new affinity group**
- Recommend utilizing a **mix of strategies for engagement** of alumni, inclusive of different generations, cultures, different regions, career stages, and interests
- **Fundraising can be integrated** into events, programming, and volunteer roles

# Q&A

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# Thank you!

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Yasmeen Mayes - [yasmeen.mayes@georgetown.edu](mailto:yasmeen.mayes@georgetown.edu)

Kelly Dempsey - [kelly.dempsey@georgetown.edu](mailto:kelly.dempsey@georgetown.edu)

Elizabeth Verduzco - [everduzco1@usfca.edu](mailto:everduzco1@usfca.edu)

Matilda Tavares - [mtavares@usfca.edu](mailto:mtavares@usfca.edu)