Alumni Chapter and Affinity Group Leadership Manual

New Mexico State University Alumni Relations Office
Table of Contents

NMSU University Advancement Alumni Relations Staff 3
NMSU Alumni Association Mission and Goals 4
NMSU Alumni Chapters and Affinity Groups 5
Chapter Organization and Leadership 6
Chapter Meetings 8
Chapter Finance and Scholarships 8
Events and Programs 9
Event Support from Alumni Relations Office 13
Communications and Social Media 16
NMSU Branding 17
Appendix 18
NMSU University Advancement Alumni Relations Staff

**Primary Contact:** Ashlee Matlock—Alumni Relations Officer, Chapter Liaison
(575) 646-2853
ailshie@nmsu.edu

Leslie Cervantes—Associate Vice President for Alumni Engagement and Stewardship
(575) 646—3587
leslie86@nmsu.edu

Katherine Vandertulip—Assistant Director of Alumni Relations
(575) 646-7551
kwvander@nmsu.edu

Adrian Bautista—Assistant Director of Annual Giving Culture of Philanthropy
(575) 646-2552
fabrianb@nmsu.edu

Dolores Cardoza—Alumni Relations Officer
(575) 646-3618
dcardoza@nmsu.edu

NMSU Office of Alumni Relations University Advancement
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00-5:00
1305 N Horseshoe Drive, Dove Hall 2nd floor
PO Box 30001, MSC 3AS, Las Cruces, NM 88003
Phone: (575) 646-3616
Email: alumni@nmsu.edu
NMSU Alumni Association Mission and Goals

The mission of the New Mexico State University Alumni Association is to connect alumni and friends to the university to advance the university goals, to promote student success, and to promote Aggie spirit and pride.

The Alumni Association supports the NMSU Goals for Success with focus on the following goals:

Goal 1: Enhance Alumni Engagement
   Objective 1.1 Build and support the alumni volunteer network
   Objective 1.2 Use strategic communication strategies
   Objective 1.3 Increase visibility of the NMSU Alumni Association
   Objective 1.4 Provide valuable services and programs for alumni
   Objective 1.5 Build, promote, and sustain traditions

Goal 2: Increase Alumni Giving
   Objective 2.1 Increase Alumni Association involvement
   Objective 2.2 Support University Advancement/NMSU Foundation fundraising initiatives

The alumni chapters serve a vital role in the advancement of NMSU by helping the Alumni Association in achieving its goals through engaging alumni with events and educating people about New Mexico State University and the Alumni Association. The Alumni Association does not determine the goals of individual chapters, however, chapters are encouraged to establish their own goals in alliance with those of the university.
NMSU Alumni Chapters and Affinity Groups

NMSU’s alumni chapters and affinity groups are an extension of the Alumni Association with the aim to connect Aggies in their communities across the nation. The purpose of alumni chapters and affinity groups is to connect alumni, friends, and future students to other Aggies and to the university. Alumni chapters should promote Aggie pride, support the mission and goals of the Alumni Association and university, and increase the visibility of NMSU. Chapters and groups provide opportunities for alumni and friends to interact through events, to recruit future students, and to promote NMSU in their local communities.

Alumni Chapters are based on population of alumni living within a geographic location. For example, the Bay Area Alumni Chapter consists of alumni who live in the area surrounding San Jose, San Francisco, and Santa Rosa, California.

Affinity Groups are created around an affinity for a program, student organization, or common interest among alumni. Affinity group members may not all be located in the same geographical area. For instance, the Army ROTC Affinity Group consists of alumni who are graduates of the NMSU ROTC program.

A list of the active alumni chapters and affinity groups can be found on the NMSU Alumni website.
Chapters and Affinity Groups Objectives:

- Represent and advance the name and reputation of New Mexico State University and the NMSU Alumni Association
- Foster lifelong relationships between alumni, future alumni, and friends of the university
- Organize diverse events in chapter areas to connect Aggies
- Support scholarship or endowment goals of the chapter and Alumni Association
- Engage alumni to support events on behalf of NMSU including athletic events, community service events, social events, recruitment events, and more
- Communicate effectively and consistently with the Alumni Association and alumni in your chapter area
- Retain and grow alumni engagement

Chapter Organization and Leadership

The NMSU Alumni Association is thankful for the network of over 70 alumni volunteers. We value your time and commitment to your university. We also respect your jobs, families, and other commitments, and encourage alumni chapter members to remain as involved as their life and schedule allows. Member involvement in the NMSU Alumni Chapter can range from attendance at events to a leadership position that works toward gathering alumni in creative ways. If you choose to be an alumni chapter leader, your level of involvement will increase. It is important for each chapter member to consider availability before accepting a leadership position in the chapter.

The NMSU Alumni Association supports chapters with many different types of organizational structures. We recognize that all chapters are different and do not fit into one mold. Thus, the Alumni Association does not require a specific organizational structure for chapters and affinity groups. Each individual chapter has the autonomy to choose its own structure and leadership roles. Keep in mind that it is very important to create and maintain a leadership framework that supports longevity and succession planning. With changing work environments, relocations, and family commitments, an organizational structure that allows leadership transition is ideal.

Leading an NMSU alumni chapter is an outstanding opportunity for loyal Aggies to positively impact their communities. Although there are no position or term length requirements, it is recommended to have a leadership team of at least two people that serve a minimum of one year. Having multiple leaders allows the chapter to operate efficiently and prevent volunteer attrition. The President or Co-Presidents should submit their contact information to the Alumni Relations Office to be displayed on the website. The chapter members should review the chapter leaders annually and make any necessary changes to ensure the long term sustainability of the chapter. Don’t forget to tell the Alumni Relations Office of any leadership changes.
Suggested Leadership Positions:

- **President/Co-Presidents** - Provide oversight and direction of chapter
  
  ◦ Conduct regular chapter meetings, propose and execute events, encourage volunteer participation, engage alumni and potential students in the community, work in conjunction with Alumni Relations staff, share alumni concerns, compliments, and recommendations to with Alumni Relations staff

- **President Elect/Vice President** - Shadow and aid the President in preparation to fill the President position in the future
  
  ◦ Perform duties of President in their absence, assist the President in all duties

- **Secretary** – Communications specialist
  
  ◦ Take meeting minutes, record attendance at events, maintain updated roster of chapter members with current contact information, photograph events and send to Alumni Relations Office, submit chapter reports and press releases

- **Young Alumni Leader** – Engage recent graduates/new alumni
  
  ◦ Engage recent graduates to get them involved with the alumni chapter, plan special events focused on this group

Other Leadership Roles to Consider:

- Treasurer
- Past President
- Scholarship Chair
- Social Media/Communications Chair
- Committees (planning, recruitment)
- Event Leader
Chapter Meetings

Consistent and timely chapter meetings will help any alumni chapter/affinity group garner support from alumni and friends in your area. These meetings should be scheduled regularly at a convenient location. There is no requirement for how often a chapter must hold a meeting. Some chapters meet monthly, others meet quarterly while some meet each spring and fall to plan their events for the year. The goal of an alumni chapter meeting is to inform and engage. Meetings should include updates, information about upcoming chapter events, generate volunteer support, and opportunities for committees to plan chapter calendars. It is important for the Alumni Relations Office to track alumni participation, thus a list of meeting attendees should be submitted within a week following the meeting. Chapter meetings should always be an encouraging and positive experience for attendees and should focus on the ultimate goal of an NMSU alumni chapter – to have fun with fellow Aggies!

Meeting minutes should be taken at each meeting to serve as historical record of the chapter’s work. It is recommended that minutes be distributed to chapter members that could not attend the meeting so everyone stays informed. Well recorded meeting minutes lend to continuity as they will serve as a platform for future members and leaders of your chapter to build on what has been done in the past.

Chapter Finance and Scholarships

All chapters and affinity groups have access to their own account managed by the NMSU Alumni Relations Office. Chapters are expected to allocate funds for the advancement of the chapter and Alumni Association. The chapter leader and treasurer (if applicable) can receive a monthly statement with their account balance from the Alumni Relations Office if requested. Opening a chapter checking or savings account at a personal bank is strictly prohibited.

Chapters can have up to three different accounts:

1. General  
2. Event  
3. Scholarship

It is important to focus on responsible spending and to plan “break-even” events. It is useful to create a budget for each event outlining projected costs. This will help in determining if a fee to attend the event is necessary. As a chapter leader, you are not expected to “host” events by providing the financial resources to cover expenses. Often the costs of events are recovered through ticket sales, sponsorships, potluck, or “dutch” treat. Please consult with a staff member before a purchase is made with chapter funds. Events are kept in a separate account in order to track revenue and expenses incurred. At the end of the fiscal year (June 30), any funds left in the event account will roll over.
Alumni Relations staff are available to assist you with establishing chapter accounts, managing tickets through an on-line system, and sending out invitations. Working together, we can use cost-saving strategies to support your efforts to engage alumni at chapter events. If you receive money (cash or check) at an event, you should mail it along with a description to the Alumni Relations Office at the following address as soon as possible. The staff will apply the funds to the appropriate account.

NMSU University Advancement Office of Alumni Relations
ATTN: Ashlee Matlock and Dolores Cardoza
1305 N. Horseshoe Drive, Dove Hall 2nd floor
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Chapters are encouraged to raise scholarship funds to support a student in their area attending NMSU. A separate chapter account is required for scholarship gifts. There are two kinds of student scholarship funds:

- **Endowment**
- **Current Use**

For chapters who wish to establish an endowment for a scholarship, the funds are deposited into the chapter scholarship account and continue to grow until the minimum of $25,000 is reached. Then the funds are invested and the interest earned is used to award the scholarship.

A current use fund may be established in which case the funds are used to provide scholarships until the funds are depleted. These funds do not generate interest to provide scholarships in the future. The Alumni Relations staff can provide assistance in establishing scholarship requirements and accounts for chapter scholarships.

Donors are not involved in the process of selecting the scholarship recipient. In compliance with IRS regulations, the charitable classification of a gift is at risk if the donor is involved in the selection process.

**Events and Programs**

Engaging alumni through chapter events will help you grow and sustain enthusiasm and support for your chapter. Chapters are encouraged to offer a variety of events that appeal to various demographics in your area. Focus on coordinating a few great programs and events each year. Too many events can burn-out your volunteers. Manage the number of events to avoid over extending the time and goodwill of alumni volunteers. As a chapter leader or event leader, you should plan to attend the event as host/hostesses (does not mean you cover expenses). All chapter leaders should actively participate in events in order to engage alumni and lead by example. Remember, keep it fun!
Planning
Planning sets the foundation for how the event will operate. Ideally the planning process should begin 6 to 8 weeks prior to the event date. Keep in mind some functions require more time and planning than others. Chapter leaders are in charge of developing event details including event type, date, time, location, catering etc. Experienced chapter leaders are a great resource for advice and planning tips.

Once event details have been determined the chapter leader will complete the chapter event request form located on the Alumni Relations website. The form will require information including the event type, event details, and ticket price (if applicable). This form is very important for the success of your event. It provides leaders the opportunity to tell the Alumni Relations staff how we can help you. Included on this form is a communications request so that our staff can email save the dates, invitations, and event reminders to alumni in your area at your request.

Day of Event
On the day of the event, the chapter leader (or event leader) should have a list of the contact information for any parties involved in the event, such as the caterer and location manager, in case of an unplanned occurrence. You should arrive at the location one hour in advance to confirm all event details are in place. In some cases it may be beneficial to establish a group of volunteers to help with set-up and clean-up. Make sure someone is designated to manage the sign-in table. This person should also greet each guest and write name tags if necessary. You can find an event sign-in form located on the Alumni Relations website. Don’t forget to take pictures and share with the Alumni Relations Office as well as post on your chapter’s social media pages.

Smile, things will go wrong! What if the caterer spills a drink tray or a sign falls down? These (and more) are situations that may arise during your event, but don’t get flustered. Aggie alumni are gathering to meet other alumni and friends. They will not remember a sign falling down or drink spilling, instead they will remember the camaraderie shared among fellow Aggies!

Following the Event
After the event, it is important to report event numbers and updated demographic information on attendees to the Alumni Relations Office in order to track engagement. The information you provide allows the database to remain current in order to reach more alumni and increase participation at events. It is encouraged to write ‘thank you’ notes to volunteers and vendors to show an attitude of gratitude and maintain relationships. Thank you stationary is available through the Alumni Relations Office.

Any feedback is always welcome and appreciated. Please send any event materials such as the sign-in sheet and photos to alumni@nmsu.edu. If something did not work please let the Alumni Relations staff know so that other chapters can learn and continuously improve. If you tried something new that worked really well, let us know the good things too!
Successful Events

*Annual Chile Roast:* Every fall, typically in August and September, active chapters host a Chile Roast featuring Mesilla Valley green chile. The Alumni Association partners with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) to provide local chile to alumni across the country. After purchasing their chile, Aggies and friends come together to enjoy the taste of New Mexico. You can find steps to a successful Chile Roast on the Alumni Relations website.

*Aggie Hour:* A happy hour event is generally the easiest to plan and host. Simply find a local bar or restaurant, reserve seating, and invite Aggies for a social hour. This is a great engagement opportunity with little to no cost (attendees pay for own beverages).

*Watch Party:* Watch parties are very popular events where Aggies gather to cheer on Aggie athletics. It is held at a local bar/restaurant or someone’s home. Watch parties require slightly more planning and coordination with the venue and date. Make sure the sporting event you wish to view is televised and available at the venue.
Other Event Ideas:

**Socials**
- Aggies in the Park – family picnic and outdoor games
- Dinner at a restaurant – “dutch” treat
- Wine tasting/Beer tasting – include New Mexico wines and craft beers in your menu
- Homecoming In-a-Box – have a homecoming celebration in your town if you cannot make it to campus. The Alumni Relations Office will provide a special event box coordinated with the year’s homecoming theme.
- Backyard BBQ – potluck or grill and make this a relaxing event at a home
- Enchilada Fiesta – Invite alumni to potluck their favorite chile recipes and enjoy the tastes of “red or green”

**Professional networking**
- Alumni Professional Networking – invite alumni to meet and share business cards, establish career contacts, and promote alumni businesses

**Student engagement and recruitment**
- Freshman Send-Off – gather incoming freshmen and their parents to celebrate them leaving home and beginning their journey at NMSU
- Alumni at college fairs – represent NMSU at a college fair in your community and encourage students to study at NMSU; this involves coordination with the Alumni Relations Office and University Admissions

**Fundraising**
- Scholarship – use chapter events to raise funds by adding a small fee to each ticket price. The money will stay in the general chapter account until event expenses have been cleared, then transferred to the Chapter Scholarship account.
- Silent Auction – Encourage local businesses to donate items to be sold at a silent auction to raise chapter funds or in support of a scholarship
- Golf tournament – Host a golf tournament as a fundraiser by charging a four-person team an entry fee
- Raffle – Sell raffle tickets for the chance to win prizes
**Athletic events**

- Tailgate – bring out the grill and show your Aggie pride at a game or sporting event in your area
- Pre-game social – Meet at a local restaurant before an athletic event
- Attend a game together – arrange for game tickets together and cheer for your local team

**Community service**

- Organize a volunteer group to perform community service such as picking up trash in your community through Adopt-A-Highway

Please note that you are not restricted to the events listed here. Your chapter is encouraged to be creative when brainstorming event ideas. Many successful events occur when you capitalize on aspects that are unique to your area. For example, the Phoenix chapter hosts a successful social at an Arizona Diamondbacks baseball game.

**Event Support from Alumni Relations Office**

The Office of Alumni Relations is here to assist chapter leaders and members as you plan annual events or work to create new, innovative events to engage alumni. We can assist with event promotion, take payment for ticket purchases, accept RSVPs, and continue to keep chapter leaders informed about the growing event attendance list. We are here to help you!

What can we do for you?

- **Database Access** – The NMSU Alumni Relations Office has access to a database of NMSU alumni, which can provide leaders with the number of alums in your area. Upon signing a Confidentiality Agreement provided by the Alumni Relations Office, an alumni chapter/affinity leader may request the following:
  - List of alumni living in a geographic area determined by radius. Example: Alumni living in a 50 mile radius of Dallas, Texas.
  - Information available to be shared includes: Name, Address, Phone Number, Email, Graduation Year, and Degree Awarded. Personal information may not be shared with anyone who has not signed a confidentiality agreement.
  - Chapter leaders are not permitted to use the contact information for personal or professional gain or any use other than for chapter business.
• **NMSU Alumni Association website** – The NMSU Alumni Association will advertise chapter events and chapter contact information on the official website. A list of each active alumni chapter will be displayed. The Alumni Relations Office will be responsible for updating the website’s calendar of events. This will be where alumni can click to RSVP for events and make their ticket purchase if necessary.

• **Digital Communications** – Once event information is finalized and submitted to the NMSU Alumni Relations Office using the ‘event request form,’ the Alumni Relations staff will prepare a save the date, invitation, and event reminder to be emailed to the alumni population in the database selected to attend this event. The frequency and timing of emails will be determined by the NMSU Alumni Relations Office in congruence with departmental policies. The Association will be the primary advertiser for events through email. The NMSU Alumni Association will design graphics for the invitation with the direction of the chapter leader. In special cases, printed invitations can be mailed. Alumni Relations will also promote your event through NMSU Alumni social media outlets.
• **RSVPs and Fees** – The Alumni Relations Office will serve as the contact to receive RSVPs through our online community and phone calls. An attendee list will be emailed to the chapter leader the day after the RSVP deadline or as estimates are needed for catering/planning purposes. Typically, the RSVP deadline is set 2 weeks before the event or what is required by the venue. Events such as a ‘happy hour’ may not require two weeks’ notice and allow RSVPs until the day of the event. If the event requires a ticket or entrance fee, the NMSU Alumni Association is equipped to accept payment through online registration. Guest simply enter their payment information after clicking on the RSVP link.

• **Aggie Gear** – Each year the Alumni Relations Office will send chapter leaders a box of Aggie gear that includes items such as pom-poms, giveaways, ‘thank you’ stationary, name tags etc. For special events such as Watch Parties, Homecoming, and Chile Roast, the office may send another Aggie box with items tailored to the event.

• **Consultation** – The Alumni Relations Office is here to help you in any way. Do not hesitate to contact the office if you need assistance planning an event or would like to share questions or concerns.
Communications and Social Media

Communication is key when developing engagement opportunities for Aggie alumni. There should be open lines of communication between the chapter leaders and Alumni Relations Office. To ensure operational efficiency please respond to phone calls and emails within 48 hours. If you do not already have an alumni profile through the NMSU Alumni website, please register through the following link: https://advancing.nmsu.edu/login. It is important to keep your contact information updated on your profile to ensure you are receiving information.

With over 1.5 billion users, social media has quickly become the best way for individuals to receive real-time information. Alumni chapters/affinity groups can utilize social media outlets to connect with Aggies and share NMSU related news instantly. It is best to utilize the sites that have the most user traffic: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Chapters are not required to have an account for all three outlets. For instance, your chapter may only want to utilize Facebook. The goal is to standardize the alumni chapter social media sites in order for chapter accounts to be easily searchable and create more brand consistency. Thus, chapters should use the following account names:

Facebook – “NMSU Alumni CITY”
Example - NMSU Alumni Houston

Twitter and Instagram – “@NMSUAlumniCITY”
Example - @NMSUAlumniBayArea

Hashtags are a popular tool on social media that allow for focused searches. You or your social media chair should strategically choose hashtags that will reach your target audience. All twitter and Instagram posts should use the hashtag #CITYAggies. For example a post might read, “Join the NMSU Denver Alumni Chapter for a happy hour tonight at 5:00 at Joe’s Bar #DenverAggies.”

Keep in mind that your social media presence is a reflection of the Alumni Association and NMSU as a whole. All postings must be related to NMSU and positive in nature. Postings about political affiliation, religion, negative commentary on university officials or programs, and personal interest posts are prohibited. An Alumni Relations staff member should be added as an admin to any chapter social media accounts to monitor the page and ensure brand consistency. Social media sites are for the following uses:

• Promote chapter events
• Post pictures of events to engage more alumni and encourage participation
• Highlight alumni in your area
• Share NMSU news
The NMSU Alumni Relations Office utilizes Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts: “NMSU Alumni and Friends” and “@nmsualumfriends.” We will gladly share your chapter events on the NMSU Alumni Association social media outlets. This is also a great way to receive news and updates from the Alumni Office. We encourage all chapter leaders and other alumni to follow our official social media pages.

NMSU Branding

New Mexico State University works to function as a singular branded institution. In order to increase consistency among staff, faculty, students, and alumni, University Communications has published a brand identity page. Please visit this page for a thorough review of brand identity requirements. As a chapter leader, you are required to follow branding guidelines. A summary of requirements is listed below:

- The official MNSU colors for print and presentation purposes are PMS (Pantone Matching System) #208 and white. Black and gray can be added to create shadow as needed if printing without color.

- Rotis is the university recognized official font. If your computer does not have Rotis font, you can request it at mktgserv@nmsu.edu. Other font options include Palatino Italic, Adobe Garamond, Lucida Bright, Times New Roman, Arial, and Verdana.

- The New Mexico State University Alumni Association has an official logo. This logo should be visible on all publications, invitations, handouts, or presentations your chapter may produce. You may request a format of this logo by emailing alumni@nmsu.edu. The NMSU Alumni Relations Office can provide the logo in PDF or JPEG format in varying sizes to fit your needs. Any invitation, email, agenda, or other publication that shows the NMSU Alumni Association logo, should be approved by the NMSU Alumni Relations Office. Old logos that are no longer approved include: Lasso Larry and Interlocking NM State.
Appendix

*Alumni Association Constitution and Bylaws (Updated 2015)*

**Article VII.   Alumni Chapters**

7.1 **Organizations.** Any group of alumni residing in a definable geographical area, may organize a chapter and apply to the Association for recognition. A recognized chapter shall pursue the objectives of the Association. Such chapter shall elect officers as they deem necessary.

7.2 **Chapter Requirements.** Each chapter shall report annually to the Executive Council a list of officers and summary of its activities. In the event that a chapter does not meet this reporting requirement by July 31 of each year for the prior fiscal year, the chapter recognition will be suspended until further notice.

**Article VIII.   Alumni Groups/Interest Groups/Affinity Groups**

8.1 **Organization.** Any group of alumni with similar academic, professional, geographic or cultural interest may organize an Alumni Group and may apply to the Association for official recognition by the Association. All recognized interest groups shall pursue the objectives of the Association.

8.2 **Group Requirements.** Each group shall report annually to the Executive Council a list of officers and a summary of its activities. In the event that a group does not meet this reporting requirement by July 31 of each year for the prior fiscal year, the group recognition will be suspended until further notice.