

Wittenberg University



Alumni Chapter Handbook

Your guide for getting the most out of being a
Wittenberg Alum

Welcome Tigers!

Dear Alumni Volunteer,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wittenberg Alumni Association, thank you for your service to your alma mater and to your alumni chapter. We know that free time for volunteer service is oftentimes limited and we value your loyalty and support.

Alumni chapter development is an essential element in helping the Office of Alumni Relations build and maintain relationships with alumni and friends of Wittenberg University. These chapters provide alumni with the opportunity for professional and social interaction, and volunteer opportunities that benefit both the University and the individual.

Official alumni chapter affiliation with the Alumni Association comes with many advantages and privileges. This small handbook will help you to better understand our expectations and guide you through the process of starting and maintaining a successful alumni chapter. Again, we thank you for your commitment and look forward to working with you.

With Tiger Pride,

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Why start an alumni chapter?

Stay Connected. Get involved. Get together. Give Back.

Chapters are formed primarily because alumni have a fondness for Wittenberg University and want to enhance their relationship with the university and all that it represents. They want to maintain a direct link with the university and remain a vital part of its future.

Alumni Chapter involvement is the most effective way to enhance the mutual benefits of the alumni, the community, and the university. Along with a series of programs/events a chapter that is formed with that basic purpose of mutual benefits will be successful and bring a sense of pride to Chapter members and the university.

Starting a local chapter provides alumni the opportunity to get to know other Wittenberg alumni and friends within their community. Alumni and friends can share their experiences in the spirit of the great Wittenberg tradition. This is a fantastic networking opportunity!

Like the members who compose it, each alumni chapter will take on its own unique personality which will be reflected in the chapter interests. Regardless of the personality there will be the common themes in each Alumni Chapter:

- Creating ways for alumni to network and meet each other in their communities.
- Renewing friendships developed at Wittenberg and creating new friendships in community
- Supporting the efforts of the university to keep alumni informed of campus developments.

Where are we now?

Wittenberg alumni live, work, and play all over the world! Alumni chapters are a fun way to keep the Wittenberg spirit alive and pass the light to communities all across the world.

We have strong chapters in:

Chicago, IL

Columbus, OH

Washington D.C
Dayton, OH

Cincinnati, OH
Cleveland, OH

How do you start or revitalize an Alumni Chapter?

It's as easy as 1,2,3...

1. **Form an initial core planning team.** Each chapter should have at least 3-5 members who are willing to initially serve as the core planning group. As the Chapter matures, the Chapter may decide to formalize leadership and identify Chapter officers.
2. **Plan.** The core planning committee or the Chapter leadership meets and prepares a draft calendar of potential events. One event per quarter is recommended.
3. **Host the kick-off event.** This can be a happy hour or an interest event – anything that will attract fellow Tigers. The Alumni Relations Team will send event notifications and host an electronic registration page on your behalf.

We've got your back! The Alumni Relations Team will be there every step of the way. As a chapter leader, you are not alone. You should feel confident relying on our team's areas of specialization (communications, mailings, etc.) to help you and your chapters operate successfully!

What does it mean to be a chapter leader?

It is important to take a moment and mention the university's expectations of our chapter leaders. We require that each chapter leader communicate consistently with the Alumni Relations Team. Chapter leadership is to represent Wittenberg University and through their actions promote a positive image of the university and its alumni. Think of yourself as our brand ambassador in your respective area; you are a constant representative of the larger organization: Wittenberg University.

Each chapter should have three members on its leadership team. Leaders can have different responsibilities, as determined by the respective chapter. Additionally, depending on the size of the chapter, consider committee chairs and committees.

Leadership positions and committee areas could include:

1. Event Planning
2. Young Alumni
3. Fundraising
4. Communications and/or Social Media
5. Recruiting

What can you expect from us?

1. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in planning and implementation of approved and scheduled events.
2. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in producing and mailing chapter materials, including event advertising.
3. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in collecting chapter event reservation information
4. Access to pre-approved office resources such as our online social media outlets, conference call technology, etc.
5. Approved distribution lists of alumni relevant to your chapter, when necessary. **All records are confidential and are not to be used for any commercial purpose or personal gain.**

Always feel call on us with any questions or concerns.
(937) 327-7424

What are the Office of Alumni Relations goals?

Goal 1: Increase the number of Alumni engagement through affinity, reunions and chapters

Goal 2: Through Goal 1 increase alumni participation and giving

How will our office accomplish these goals?

Plan engaging events

- We will give alumni a greater incentive to participate and return to future events
- The more the merrier; give us the names of your friends, your kids, your significant other and we will invite them ; the people are what makes an event great

Utilize social media

- We can create a chapter Facebook, add members in the area and then use it as a great marketing tool to show off the achievements and fun experiences of your chapter

Acquire alumni data

- We will have a sign-in sheet at events so that we can reach back to attendees and track our chapter efforts, both positive or negative

Raise Retention rates

- We will reach out to chapter members at least once a month via email, mailers, and social posts
- We will help guide the creation of chapter traditions
- We will email thank you notes post event

Event Planning 101

The best events are those where good preparation is supported by clear communication. There are chapter and campus events taking place daily, so it is important to provide our office with ample lead time on any type of event you wish to host. Proper planning allows for successful events, and our most successful chapters create calendars of events for each year.

Things to keep in mind-

- Purpose: What are our goals for this event? Socializing, networking, academic interests, community engagement/service project, etc.?
- Audience: Who will attend this event? What is the best method to engage this particular group? What strategies should the chapter employ for this particular target group which will maximize the success of the event?
- Timelines: When is the best time to host this event? How much time before the event do we need to have details confirmed? How much time does the Wittenberg Communication Team need to effectively promote the event?
- Communication: What is the best way to get word out about this event? Should we host a registration page? Will there be a cost associated with attending?

Event Planning Advice-

- Be realistic. You shouldn't plan an event just to plan one. Fewer well-planned events are better than many haphazard ones.
- Be consistent. Traveling from one place to another for game watches can confuse people. Do the proper work in the beginning, and keep plan details as consistent as possible.
- Be resilient Not every event is going to have 100 people attend. That's okay! We consider any alumni engagement a success, and we value the hard work you put into your chapter events. Find what works best for your area and chapter, and don't ever become discouraged.

Remember to-

- Wear Wittenberg colors
- Take a lot of pictures (and email them to alumni@wittenberg.edu after the event!)
- Thank everyone as many times as possible
- Have vegetarian meals available
- Wear a nametag
- Check on parking availability and communicate plan to attendees

Chapter Event Examples

Be creative! Take part in the local flair of your communities!
Have fun, and take lots of pictures!

Not sure where to begin? Here are some ideas to help you brainstorm:

Social Networking Events

- Happy Hours
- Holiday Socials
- Block seats to a local event

Sports Affiliated Events

- Game watch parties
- Chapter activities at local professional and minor league sports events
- Block tickets at athletic games when teams come to your area

Family Friendly Events

- Cookouts
- Trips to a local zoo or aquarium
- Day at the park or museum

Academic Focused Events

- Book Clubs
- Trivia Nights
- Inviting a guest speaker for a luncheon

Multicultural Events Community

Service Events

Young Alumni Events

Ideal Event Planning Schedule

Twelve Weeks Prior to Event:

- All details of the event should be in place 10-12 weeks before the event. Have your event locations booked, format planned, cost established, etc.
- Start promoting the event. It takes eight weeks to print, label, mail and deliver notices (fliers, postcards or formal invitations). Add extra four weeks for responses so that there will be adequate participation.
- Submit information to be printed in alumni publication. Information must be received prior to the deadline for materials.
- Request labels and label counts. When requesting labels and label counts, make sure you specify geographic areas (zip codes or county) and whether you want all alumni

Seven to Eight Weeks Prior to Event:

- Send bulk mail. It can take as long as three weeks for bulk mail to be disseminated. Any mailing over 200 pieces can be sent at bulk rate.
- Market the event, post on Facebook, call your friends- GET THE WORD OUT!

Two Weeks Prior to Event:

- RSVP deadline. Plan to have mailings reach alumni at least two weeks before the event. This gives them time to make plans and RSVP before the deadline.
- Confirm reservations, menu, etc.
- Print name tags
- Request any supplies from the Alumni Relations team

Day After:

- Send list of attendees and pictures to (alumni@wittenberg.edu)
- Do a thank you post on Facebook

Social Media Advice

Our alumni chapters play a crucial role in helping us reach alumni, fans, and friends throughout the country. Your ability to communicate with alumni in your area is paramount to Wittenberg University's success. Some of the ways our chapters communicate are listed below. We ask our chapters to follow these guidelines and work with our office if you have any questions. We are happy to help, and we can provide you with branding assistance, demographic data, and more.

Facebook

- Create a Chapter Facebook Profile: First Name: CITY – Last Name: Alumni-Chapter, needed to access the Facebook Group you will create next
- Create an official Facebook Group/Page
- Naming should follow the style of “Wittenberg (CITY) Alumni Chapter”
- Make us an administrator in the event additional assistance is needed, like changing leadership
- You are responsible for posting content and creating events
- Spotlight alumni accomplishments in your area
- Highlight sporting events as they relate to alumni initiatives
- Tag people on your chapter/council from your personal account!

Twitter

- Using shortest account name possible to save character space (i.e. @Witt(CITY)Alumni)
- Always research appropriate hashtags, and utilize those selected for our alumni events.
- Create conversations vs. one-sided posts
- Respond to mentions and tags

Instagram

- Naming should follow the style of “Wittenberg (CITY) Alumni Chapter”
- Utilize strong image of alumni, constituent, or athletic events.
- Instagram is typically a more stylized social media platform, so get creative. Keep in mind the vast majority of Instagram users are under 40 years of age.