

AAVC Club and Regional Network Information Guide

(Revised 2009)

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Dear Club Volunteers,

Thank you for all that you do as regional volunteers! You are critical partners in keeping the spirit of Vassar alive in her alumnae/i through your programs and activities. Your efforts and enthusiasm on behalf of your alma mater are greatly appreciated.

This Information Guide is intended to help clarify AAVC's expectations of clubs and outline some of our policies and services. The information provided is fluid and will continue to evolve.

In addition to helping boost local awareness of the college, clubs and regional networks may also choose to focus their efforts on the following objectives:

- Sustaining a sense of community among local Vassar Alumnae/i.
- Promoting continued life-long learning opportunities.
- Assisting the office of admission by cultivating local high school student interest in Vassar.

No more is asked or expected of any Vassar Club, though we understand that many clubs have traditionally engaged in other activities. We want to be clear that there is no expectation on the part of the college or AAVC that clubs engage in fundraising activities, particularly gala events. We thank those of you who were involved in these galas for your past efforts.

In the end, AAVC and regional networks and clubs share the same mission to connect alumnae/i with each other and the college. As such, our goals and action plans should be complementary. We look forward to working in partnership with all of you.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Lunn
Director of Alumnae/i Relations for Programs

EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN AAVC AND CLUBS

What AAVC expects of clubs

- Keep the local alumnae/i connected to the college and each other in a manner that is reflective of the college's mission and ethos.
- Raise local awareness of Vassar College.
- Inform AAVC of your events and activities as well as attendees.
- Provide timely responses to queries for information such as event attendance lists and treasury reports.
- Inform AAVC of transitions in leadership.

We do not require clubs to elect traditional officers, have boards or hold monthly meetings.

We do not expect clubs to plan large scholarship fundraisers. When clubs do engage in fundraising activities, we expect them to follow the standards set forth in the attached Fiscal Management Standards for Nonprofits. (See appendix)

We do not require clubs to maintain their own 501c3 tax exemption certificate.

We do not require clubs to maintain their own external bank accounts. Where external accounts exist, we expect timely responses to requests for information.

What Clubs can expect of AAVC

In return for meeting our expectations stated above, Clubs can expect the following from AAVC:

- Basic administrative services at no cost to your organization.
 - Access to reliable, updated mailing lists
 - Central treasury services (invested account, dues collection)
 - Central database (managed by the College to ensure privacy)
 - Director and Officers' Liability insurance coverage at no expense (including certificates of insurance required by some venues.)
- Access to information on ideas, best practices, leadership training, other volunteers.
- Some funding for faculty travel and cooperative programs.
- Biennial reports of your activities generated by AAVC.
- Permanent, centralized archival records for your club.
- Broadcast email service

SERVICES

AAVC can provide the following services to clubs at no expense.

Broadcast Emails

Our free broadcast email services allow clubs to promote their events, and share news through emails, also providing them the opportunity to operate in an environmentally friendly manner and at a cost savings.

In order to use the broadcast email services for events, we ask that clubs make use of the online registration services. This will provide volunteers and AAVC instant access to attendance lists.

To request a broadcast email and view the guidelines, please visit http://aavc.vassar.edu/aavc/email_event_request.html

Event Calendar and Online Registration

AAVC maintains an online calendar of events that provides information about all events. This calendar is archived as well, so we can look back at past events. We also offer online registration services to clubs and regional networks, at no cost to them. This service allows clubs to accept credit card payments for event registrations which are collected and then forwarded to the club via a check.

To add an event to the calendar and/or request an online registration, please use the online form found at http://aavc.vassar.edu/aavc/email_event_request.html

Website

AAVC houses a website for all Vassar clubs and regional networks. These sites are updated annually with basic demographic information (population breakdown by decade and top cities) from the college database. Clubs and regional networks are encouraged to maintain an online presence through their AAVC website. You may also want to create a Facebook page to increase access to younger alums. Though we are no longer able to house external websites on our server, we can link to outside websites.

For questions or training on creating and updating your website, please contact Susan Brkich '86 at subrkich@vassar.edu or 845-437-5449.

Labels, Lists, Club Directory

AAVC, through the college database, can provide lists and labels to club leaders for their mailings. These lists, labels and directories can be sorted in a variety of ways, from alphabetical by current name, to zip code order. Additional information can also be provided on employment and other affinities within the Vassar experience such as dorm affiliation and undergraduate organizations if known.

SERVICES (continued)

Labels, Lists, Club Directory (continued)

NOTE Each alumna/us is entitled to place restrictions on the kinds of communications they wish to receive and from whom. When a club list is drawn from the database, it will exclude those alumnae/i who have said they are not interested in contact from their local club. Those alumnae/i who maintain seasonal addresses will receive club correspondence if they have informed us of their seasonal dates and have not asked to be excluded from club contact.

To request labels, lists or a directory, please contact Chris Viola chviola@vassar.edu or 845-437-5398. To ensure that labels are as accurate as possible, please make your request no sooner than 2 weeks before the mailing date.

Treasury Services

AAVC can provide treasury services to clubs; holding their funds in our local account which spins off interest that is then returned to the participating organizations. By eliminating the need for clubs to hold local accounts of their own, we can solve or reduce many troublesome issues such as multiple signatories needed for local accounts, treasurers using their own personal accounts, and succession issues.

For more information on AAVC treasury services please contact Willa McCarthy '92 Director of Operations by email wimccarthy@vassar.edu or phone at 845-437-5441.

Survey Assistance

AAVC is a subscriber to Survey Monkey, an online survey tool frequently used for program evaluations. Clubs and regional networks are able to create surveys of their own, which we can process through Survey Monkey and email to their members.

Please contact Cathy Lunn by email calunn@vassar.edu or phone 845-437-5443, to request survey assistance.

Directors and Officers Insurance Coverage to officers

AAVC provides indemnity coverage at no cost to club officers in their official capacities, provided they operate in accordance with our guidelines and policies. We can also provide certificates of insurance at no cost to clubs that certain venues may require before contracting with clubs. Please allow at least a week for the certificate to be delivered to the appropriate party.

To request a certificate of insurance, please contact Chris Viola chviola@vassar.edu or 845-437-5398.

SERVICES (continued)

Faculty Speakers

AAVC can arrange faculty speakers for your club or network, and though we have some funds available to offset expenses, clubs and networks may be asked to pay for the faculty travel and housing. It is most efficient to have an idea of a topic or discipline you'd like to hear about as well as a target date or range in mind when making your request.

Please DO NOT make direct contact with faculty members.

To request a faculty speaker, please contact Kathy Knauss at kaknauss@vassar.edu or 845-437-5453.

Mailing Services

AAVC can provide mailing assistance to clubs, but this service does have a cost associated with it. Small mailings (under 300 pieces) can be processed in-house for a substantial cost savings (approximately .23 each for supplies + postage) and for larger mailings, an outside vendor is used and the costs passed to the clubs. Electronic transmittal of documents is preferred. Please allow a week for processing.

For mailing assistance, please contact Christina Viola chviola@vassar.edu or 845-437-5398.

DATA

The College maintains a database of biographical information on every alumna/us. Changes of addresses, emails, and telephone numbers occur daily, and are updated by the Office of Central Records. The data within is only as accurate as the information provided by the alumnae/i to the college.

In an effort to keep the information as current as possible and in the spirit of the Vassar tenet of going to the source, all address updates should come directly from alumnae/i to AAVC.

To maintain the integrity and, most importantly, the security of the data, clubs and regional networks should not maintain their own independent databases. AAVC can provide lists and labels to volunteers on request with reasonable notice.

BEST PRACTICES

Club Administration

Club activity has definitely changed over the past decade, but in many cases, the model of club management has not evolved at the same pace. Fewer people are willing to accept or take on traditional officer titles, and top-heavy boards and club structures find it difficult to support their own weight. Our recommendation is to try and find a team of alums willing to take on smaller less daunting tasks than "president".

Clearly, without willing volunteers in the local area there is little AAVC can do to resuscitate clubs from Poughkeepsie, but in reality, there is no need for a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. The volunteer commitment does not have to be formal and long-term; it can be as simple as stepping up to host or plan an event for the local alumnae/i on a one-off basis.

Should you as an officer find yourself in a situation where you can't find volunteers and local alumnae/i are no longer attending your events, contact AAVC. We will send an announcement to the local alumnae/i asking for anyone interested in helping to plan or host a future program to step forward. We can also continue to promote activities and events planned cooperatively by some of our professional groups (IvyPlus, NEAR, Seven Siblings.) Most importantly, we will give you the opportunity to sunset your volunteer activities with gratitude for your efforts.

Programming

In the end, the chief role a club plays is to offer programs to local alumnae/i. Programs do not have to involve formal speakers; a simple dinner and conversation at a local restaurant may be more than enough for your fellow alumnae/i. Events can be pay as you go, eliminating the need for dues.

There may be opportunities in some locales to offer joint programming with other schools, whether it is an Ivy Plus Group, the Northeast Alumnae/i Relations (NEAR) Schools, or the Seven Siblings. Contact Cathy Lunn calunn@vassar.edu, 845-437-5443 to find out if other schools have representatives in your area.

We recommend 3 programs a year:

- Freshmen sendoff party for newly admitted freshmen and their parents (if applicable)
- Topical intellectual program with speaker (alum, guest, faculty)
- Social program such as a happy hour

BEST PRACTICES (continued)

Communications

A few clubs are still communicating solely by paper mailings. With postage rates rising along with conservation awareness, more and more clubs are turning to electronic mailings to handle the bulk of their communications. We can tell you how many of your alumnae/i currently have an email record on file, allowing you to decide whether to continue using paper mailings or to use traditional mail as a supplement to emails.

We recommend using email whenever possible, particularly for event announcements. We further recommend that electronic communications be sent to all local alumnae/i and, when appropriate, parents of current students- not just members. This will give you a broader audience for your events, and may encourage new participants.

Very active clubs who plan multiple events at a time are encouraged to work with AAVC to develop a newsletter template that can be used to efficiently announce programs and events on a monthly basis. Though we have no restrictions on the number of emails that can be sent on behalf of a club, we encourage clubs not to overuse the service.

We recommend the following timeline for announcing events whenever possible.

- 2-3 months out- Save the Date
- 4 weeks out-announcement and registration
- 1 week out- reminder

AAVC INFORMATION

AAVC Staff Contact Information

Executive Office

Patricia Duane Lichtenberg '90
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Program Department

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Communications Department

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Alumnae/i Information Services

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AAVC Mission Statement

Founded in 1871 and governed by an independent board of directors, the Alumnae and Alumni of Vassar College (AAVC) is a not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to lead the more than 36,000 Vassar alumnae/i in connecting with each other and with our college. We celebrate the shared Vassar experiences that bring us together, and we strive to make a difference for our college and for each other.

Vassar College Non-Discrimination Policy

Vassar College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious belief, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, veteran status, or age in the admission of students to the college; in any of the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the college; in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other programs administered by the college; or in the employment practices of the college. Additionally, should state or federal law be enacted during the period this policy is extant which prohibits discrimination based upon a group's protected status not listed in the above categories, this policy will be deemed amended to afford protection to such groups.

It is AAVC policy neither to sponsor nor promote alumnae/i events, including locations where policies for membership or use, violate Vassar College's nondiscrimination policy. It is essential that alumnae/i events be held in facilities that are consistent with the AAVC's policy of being open and welcoming membership to all alumnae/i and are consistent with Vassar's nondiscrimination policy.

Appendix: Financial Management Standards for Nonprofits

Overall Expectations: Nonprofits are expected to exercise prudent and dutiful board and management practice; maintain accurate financial records; comply with generally accepted accounting principles; be respectful of the intent of donors and prospective donors; and act in ways that ensures that the organization's financial resources are used solely in furtherance of its mission. In furtherance of these expectations, organizations relying upon the fiscal agency/bookkeeping services of Family Services of Westchester, Inc. are expected to strive toward achieving the following standards:

A. Financial Accountability

- Operate in accordance with an annual budget that has been approved by the board of directors prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.
- Financial statements, reflecting the financial activity of the organization, including the comparison of actual to budgeted revenue and expense, should be provided to the board of directors at every regular meeting (at least quarterly).
- Adopt written financial policies governing the following matters, where appropriate: (a) investment of the assets of the organization; (b) internal control procedures; (c) purchasing practices; (d) reserve funds; (e) compensation, including salary and benefits; (f) expense account reporting; (g) earned income (h) petty cash and (i) the receipt and treatment of charitable gifts and grants.
- Budget for a "manageable" deficit from time-to-time, if essential, but not incur persistent (multi-year) or increasing operating deficits.
- Periodically review regulatory, risk management, and liability concerns.

B. Fundraising Activities

- Fundraising costs should be reasonable in terms of percentage of charitable revenue spent for development.
- Fundraising methods should promote the public's trust in its stewardship of charitable dollars. Solicitation, promotional materials, and grant applications should be accurate, honest, and ethical. The materials should clearly identify the organization, its mission, and the intended use of the solicited funds.
- The known intentions of a donor or grant source should be followed to the greatest extent possible in respect to the use of funds. Participating nonprofits are expected to fully comply with all donor/grantor requirements and to do so with complete accuracy.
- All statements that a participating nonprofit makes in its fundraising appeals and grant applications about the use of a contribution or grant should be honored or renegotiated.

C. Employment of Fundraising Personnel

- Fundraising personnel, including both employees and independent consultants, should not be compensated based on a percentage of the amount raised or other commission formula.

- Only professional fundraisers who are properly registered should be retained.
- Control should be exercised over any staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, or businesses that are known to be soliciting contributions on behalf of the organization.

D. Donor Relationships and Privacy

- Organizations should respect the privacy of donors and safeguard the confidentiality of information that a donor reasonably would expect to be private.
- Organizations should provide individual donors with an opportunity to remain anonymous and to prevent their name, gift amount, or other information from being publicly released.
- Organizations should receive permission from individual donors before their names, addresses, and telephone numbers are included in any donor only mailing lists that are sold, rented, or exchanged.
- Organizations should honor donors' and prospective donors' requests to curtail mailings or telephone solicitations from in-house lists.
- Solicitations should be respectful of the needs and interest of the donor or potential donor and should be free from coercion, undue influence, or excessive pressure.