



DUKE LAW

Alumni Club Handbook

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I. Duke Law Clubs Mission Statement

The purpose of the Duke Law Clubs is to help Duke Law School:

1. Engage alumni through networking, volunteer and fellowship opportunities
2. Foster alumni pride in and life-long commitment to the School

II. Club Organization

Club Responsibilities

The club leadership is fully responsible for selecting, planning and executing events and programs. Specific responsibilities include:

- Upon the founding of the club, compose a club charter (see “Club Charter” below for more information)
- Plan and conduct a minimum of three events/programs per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) within the predetermined budget (set by the Alumni Relations staff)
- Meet each year during the summer months (before September 1) to set a tentative calendar of events and assign responsibilities for those events
- Compose a letter from the board to club membership, describing events from the past year, previewing planned activities for the year to come and introducing new board members (to be mailed by Alumni Relations in September – see “Communication” below)
- Complete pre- and post-event reports (see “Individual Event Planning” below)
- Collect fees and make personal phone calls to increase RSVPs, as necessary
- Provide content for the club website to the Alumni Relations staff (see “Communication” below)
- Maintain close contact with the Alumni Relations staff

To help ensure a continually engaged leadership, any club that consistently fails to complete these responsibilities in a timely and professional manner (i.e., fall into a state of inactivity) may lose its “active” status. Loss of such status would require both one year of inactivity and the composition of a new club charter before the club could regain “active” status.

Alumni Relations Staff Responsibilities

The Alumni Relations staff will assist with communication (mail, e-mail and web), data management and finances. Specific responsibilities include:

- Provide the board with a complete membership list each summer to aid in event planning
- Mail/e-mail all event invitations and letters from the board
- Manage RSVPs
- Set the club’s budget
- Provide payment to vendors (within the club’s budget) and sign contracts for vendors, if necessary
- Maintain the club website
- Advise on event planning

- Maintain close contact with the club boards through monthly e-mails to all club board members
- Arrange for an Alumni and Development staff member to attend at least one event per year
- Make the final judgment on pertinent matters. The goal is to empower clubs to be as autonomous as possible; however, the Alumni Relations staff reserves the right to make the final approval on matters including, but not limited to, club financial issues, officer succession, board membership, and the founding and dissolution of the club.

Club Charter

Upon inception, each club shall compose a club charter, which will contain the following information (for a sample charter, see Appendix B):

- *Board Structure.* How will the board be structured? What offices will exist? What are the minimum and maximum numbers of board members? Will there be a requirement for age-balanced representation (i.e., at least one “recent grad” member and at least one “experienced” member)?
- *Description of Volunteer Roles.* For sample job descriptions, see “Volunteer Roles” below.
- *Term Lengths.* How long will board members’ terms be? Will there be a maximum number of terms allowed?
- *Election of New Board Members.* Will the board decide new members or will some other method be employed? Will elections for all positions happen at the same time or will the elections be “stair step” to ensure the presence of at least one experienced leader at a time?
- *Procedure for Removing a Volunteer from the Board.* Will the club have specific criteria under which a board member would be asked to resign? Is such a request at the discretion of the president and Alumni Relations staff or must it be put to a vote involving all board members?
- *Procedure for Amending the Charter.* To be in place should future boards wish to change board structure, term lengths, etc.

Board Structure

With the understanding that different clubs may operate best under varying organizational structures, the establishment of any named officer position(s) is left to the volunteers themselves. For example, the club may operate under the standard president/vice-president/treasurer structure or perhaps the club prefers to operate under a more loosely configured “committee” structure. In any case, the club board must have a central point person (e.g., a “president” or “board chair”) who assumes overall responsibility for the club. For sample job descriptions, see “Volunteer Roles” below. The chosen organizational structure must be clearly described in the club charter.

Volunteer Roles

The following descriptions are guidelines to use in establishing and defining leadership roles within the club board. To provide flexibility to the clubs, the president/board chair is the only required post. If, however, the club chooses a less-structured committee system, it will be the responsibility of the board chair to delegate necessary tasks not specifically assigned to another officer (e.g., accounting duties, paperwork completion).

President/Board Chair (REQUIRED): The president/board chair holds overall responsibility for the club and is the primary contact with the Alumni Relations staff as well as local alumni. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Serves as the primary contact for interested alumni in the area.
- Maintains close contact with the Alumni Relations staff.
- Schedules and conducts the annual summer planning meeting to develop the calendar of club events for the coming year. Schedules and conducts additional meetings or conference calls throughout the year, as needed.
- Delegates responsibilities to include assigning event coordinators and ensuring all reports are completed in a timely fashion.
- Attends a majority of club events throughout the year.
- Plans, in conjunction with the Alumni Relations staff and the rest of the board, for a well-suited successor to assure the continuation of a successful club. Oversees the selection of successors for all board positions.

Vice-President/President-Elect/Chair-Elect: This position aims to provide leadership and continuity to the club in the absence of the president/chair or when the president/chair's term expires. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Serves as a contact for interested alumni in the area.
- Conducts the annual planning meeting if the president/chair is unable to attend.
- Succeeds the president/chair at the end of his/her term.
- Attends a majority of club events throughout the year.
- Assists the president/chair in the selection and training of a successor.

Secretary/Communications Chair: This position assists the president/chair with all communication, both with the Alumni Relations staff and with the club membership. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Ensures all paperwork (including the Event Calendar form, pre- and post-event reports) is turned in to the Alumni Relations staff in a timely matter.
- Drafts and/or coordinates the writing of the annual letter to the membership.
- Proofreads all print and e-mail invitations produced by the Alumni Relations staff.
- Relays information for the club website to the Alumni Relations staff. Regularly checks club website for accuracy/timeliness and prompts Alumni Relations staff when changes are needed.
- Assists in all club leadership communication.
- Attends at least one club event during the year.

- Assists in the selection and training of a successor.

Treasurer: This position oversees and ensures adherence to the club's budget.

Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Tracks club spending and coordinates spending with the Alumni Relations staff.
- Provides regular budget updates to the board.
- Maintains regular contact with the Alumni Relations staff to ensure the club's financial records are in agreement with the staff's records.
- Collects event fees as necessary and forwards monies to the Alumni Relations staff.
- Makes recommendations on the allocation of funds among events and the estimated expenses for a single event.
- Attends at least one club event during the year.
- Assists in the selection and training of a successor.

Depending on the size and needs of the board and the club membership, various other positions could be established, including a Young Alumni Officer (encouraging participation among graduates of the last 10 years), a Newcomer Coordinator (welcoming new community members and encouraging participation) or a Publicity Chair (organizing phone calls to alumni to increase attendance at events).

For each event the club conducts, one board member (or a pair/team of board members, depending on the board's size), should be assigned as the Event Coordinator for that event. This spreads out the responsibility so that each board member has one event per year in whose planning the board member is heavily involved. The Event Coordinator for each event should be assigned during the summer annual planning meeting.

Event Coordinator(s): This position manages all aspects – including planning, execution and follow up – of the assigned event. Responsibilities include:

- Maintains close contact with the Alumni Relations staff throughout the planning process. Does not hesitate to ask the Alumni Relations staff for advice.
- Coordinates site, budget, pricing, vendors, invitations, logistics, etc. for the assigned event. Considers and makes decisions on all event-related issues covered in the "Event Planning Checklist" (see Appendix D).
- Delegates responsibilities both before the event and during the event to other board members, as needed.
- Attends the event. Arrives at the site at least one half hour before the event begins.
- Takes accurate attendance.
- Completes all pre- and post-event paperwork in a timely manner.

Elections

Timing: Board members' terms are based on the fiscal year followed by Duke University (July 1 through June 30). As such, elections to fill any opening positions should be completed during the summer. A recommended timeline for the selection of new officers follows:

- June-July: Solicit nominations. This may be completed in a variety of ways. The Alumni Relations staff and/or members of the club board may have been approached by willing volunteers or know of potential leaders, club members may recommend other clubs members, or a blast e-mail may be sent out to the club membership requesting self-nominations. In any case, the nominated individuals will need to be contacted to assess their willingness to serve. This will be the joint responsibility of the president/chair and the outgoing board member.
- July: Elections held. It is recommended that elections be completed by a vote of the board members plus the Alumni Relations staff. If, however, a more inclusive method is desired, the Alumni Relations staff can help set up an online voting system for polling all club members.
- August-September: Annual planning meeting held with new slate of officers.

Term lengths: A two-year term length is recommended. A term of more than one year will allow for the board member to become experienced in his or her position and implement new ideas based on that experience. A term of more than two years, however, may lead to leader burnout or discourage potential leaders who may be unwilling to make such a long-term commitment.

A term limit of two consecutive terms at a particular position is recommended. Clubs may also want to consider a maximum cumulative term limit. This will help cultivate new leadership.

Ensuring an experienced board: In order to prevent the entire board from “rolling out” at the same time, “stair step” elections are recommended (i.e., one or two positions would be elected one year and a different position/set of positions would be elected the next). In order to achieve this arrangement, when the club is founded, certain officers may need to agree to a one-time one-year or three-year term.

The positions themselves may also be created to help ensure experienced leadership through the establishment of the president-elect or past president position. The president-elect would work closely with the president and then assume the presidency once the current president's term ends. The use of the past president office would require the president to remain on the board in an advisory position for one year after his or her term is complete.

III. Club Programming

Annual Summer Planning Meeting

Each club board will meet at least once a year during the summer months to plan a tentative schedule of events for the year. This meeting should be completed by September 1; the Event Calendar form (Appendix C) should be completed and submitted to the Alumni Relations staff within one week of the meeting. Prior to the meeting, the Alumni Relations staff will provide the board with a list of club members, the tentative dates of any known Law School events in the area and the club's budget for the year.

Key Considerations When Setting an Event Calendar:

- **Variety.** Try to select a mixture of social, educational and family-oriented programming that will appeal to different interests.
- **Age of Membership.** Consider the full age range of the club membership. A happy hour might appeal to young alumni, but not to slightly older alumni who may have small children.
- **Budget.** Every club event can not be an upscale cocktail hour with full open bar! A nice event of this scale has to be balanced by something along the lines of a pay-as-you-go happy hour or a potluck picnic at a local park.
- **Location and Time.** Consider where the club membership lives. A downtown event might be successful at lunchtime, but suburbanites may not come back in the evening. Vary the location of your events; don't hold all events in the same neighborhood. Be mindful of traffic and remember that the time of day will affect the age of the crowd you attract.
- **Other Event/Holiday Calendars.** Be aware of religious holidays, major festivals/events in your city, Final Four dates (this is Duke, after all!), etc.
- **Availability of Alumni Relations staff.** Please do not plan ANY events within a week of Leadership Weekend (Nov. 7-8, 2008), Reunion Weekend (April 17-19, 2009) or Graduation (May 6-10, 2009). The Alumni Relations staff will be UNAVAILABLE to assist you during those times. Also, please bear in mind that invitations for your event go in the mail approximately one month before the event. Therefore, the invitation for an event scheduled in early May will compete with last-minute Reunion preparations for Alumni Relations staff support.
- **Keep it easy!** Board members are all very busy people. Simple events are more likely to be both successful events and enjoyable experiences for the organizers.

Types of Events: Here is a non-comprehensive list to help begin the process.

- **Speaker Events.** Educational events with speakers are very popular with Law alumni. The Alumni Relations staff will help the club obtain faculty speakers if desired. We can sometimes take advantage of a faculty member's pre-existing trip to your area; however, faculty, in general, tend to have full calendars, so have a first, second and third choice in mind. Alumni themselves may make engaging speakers or perhaps an interesting member of the community with whom an alum has a connection would be willing to speak. With speakers from out of town, you incur the additional cost of transportation, lodging and meals; stay local whenever possible.

- **Happy hours/game-watching events.** Probably more appealing to younger alums, these events have the advantage of ease in planning.
- **Family Events.** Picnics, BBQs, trips to the zoo, etc.
- **Community Service.** Volunteer for a group like Habitat for Humanity and revisit the Dedicated to Durham days.
- **Joint Events with Other Clubs.** Does another peer law school have a club in the area? Does another Duke professional/graduate school have a club? Challenge them to a softball game or co-host a networking event.
- **Cultural Events.** Obtain a block of group tickets for a show, a museum or a wine-tasting tour. Perhaps a Duke alum works for the organization and would be willing to give a behind-the-scenes tour.
- **Athletic Events.** Men's basketball tickets can be nearly impossible to get, but don't forget about Duke teams in women's basketball, soccer, football, etc.
- **Check with Your Local Convention and Visitors Bureau.** These organizations have a wealth of information about special events in town and even regular events/places that you may not have known existed.

Individual Event Planning

The Event Planning Checklist (see Appendix D) should serve as an adequate guide for the event coordinator. Event planning can be tricky, however. The task can be made much simpler by following a few basic pieces of advice:

- **Over-communicate.** With vendors, speakers, caterers, club boards members, the Alumni Relations staff, etc.
- **Consider and act on the little details.** As the event coordinator, you are responsible for all those little details that nobody notices when they go right, but everyone notices when they go wrong. You'll have to move tables, remember to bring the Sharpie for writing names on nametags, put a bottle of water at the podium for the speaker, etc.
- **Ask for advice.** The Alumni Relations staff put on over 135 events last year; they know what they're doing. Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you need. The most valuable service the staff can provide to the club is their event planning expertise.

Look for common pitfalls:

- **Locations.** Does the location have adequate facilities for your event (e.g., sufficient seating, podium and microphone available)? Does it charge for the space or require a minimum food and beverage purchase (account for this in your event budget!)? Does it require a binding contract?
- **Caterers.** Does your location require an in-house caterer? Can you provide your own food? Can your caterer provide vegetarian options (for full meals) and provide for a last-minute overrun of 10 percent? When does the caterer require a final number of attendees? Will the caterer be able to provide all plates, cups, plastic ware, etc.?
- **Hidden Costs.** What service charges (e.g., bartender charges, clean-up charges, A/V rental charges), taxes or gratuities will be added to the final bill?

Finances

Budget. Limited and pre-approved funding support of regional events may be available through the Alumni and Development Office. In order to determine the estimated costs of an event, a pre-event form must be completed and submitted to Alumni Relations where the costs where the costs associated with the event will be reviewed by the Associate Dean and Director of Alumni Relations. Upon approval, the event coordinator will be notified. In some cases, an event host or sponsor may agree to cover some or all expenses relating to the event. Depending upon the type of event, the potential sponsor may receive credit as a BluePrint Benefactor.

Event fees. Any expenses not covered by the approved funding support of the Alumni and Development Office will need to be recouped through charging an event fee to each attendee. It is best to keep these fees in the \$5-25 range. Event fees can be collected online upon registration via a link provided by Duke's Conference Services department. Event fees may also be collected by check. All checks should be made payable to Duke Law School. If cash is collected, a board member should deposit the money into his/her personal account and write a check to the Law School to avoid sending cash through the mail. Checks should be mailed to the Alumni and Development Office immediately following the event. The event attendee will need to fill out a payment form (see Appendix G) which will need to be sent to the Law School along with any checks immediately following the event. The alum will have a charge on his/her card from "Duke Law Alumni Association."

Please do NOT solicit donations from alumni to cover event expenses. It may not be possible to get the alum credit for his/her donation either for tax purposes or toward Duke lifetime giving totals.

Payment of Vendors. To maintain simplicity, Alumni Relations will pay vendors for all expenses. This will eliminate the need for each club to establish and maintain a checking account. Communicate with the Alumni Relations staff when you have a vendor requiring payment. Alumni Relations will contact the vendor and pay using procurement card. If the vendor requires a check, please keep in mind it will take at least two weeks to get through the Duke bureaucracy. Alumni Relations will need the following information for the check request: an invoice for the total amount, the name of the vendor and address where the check should be sent, and the vendors' tax ID number (usually on the invoice).

Although not preferred, it may sometimes be necessary for a board member to pay an expense using his/her personal credit card and then be reimbursed. In order to process the reimbursement, Alumni Relations will need the board member's social security number and original receipts.

Non-Profit Exemption. The Office of Alumni and Development has a non-profit status which is registered in the State of North Carolina. In planning an event that will require catering services, please be sure to inform the vendor of Duke Law's tax-exemption status. Then, contact a member of the Alumni and Development staff to obtain the official certification form.

Communication

Annual letter: The board will compose a letter to the membership each fall, introducing new board members, reviewing the previous year's events and giving a preview of anticipated events for the coming year. The purpose of the letter is to raise awareness of the club among the membership (especially those who may be new to the area) and to serve as a general "save-the-date" reminder for the coming year's events. Alumni Relations will handle the production and mailing of the letter.

Event invitations: For each club event, Alumni Relations will send printed and e-mail invitations to the event. The printed invitations will be in the form of a 4x5 full-color postcard designed by the Alumni Relations staff. The design will remain the same from event to event and will be unique for the Duke Law Clubs.

The Alumni Relations staff will "pull" the invitation list from its database for each invitation to ensure the most up-to-date addresses are used. All club members will be invited to every event. If there are space limitations, the invitation will clearly state that space is limited, the event is only open to the first 35 people to respond, etc.

Invitations must be mailed/e-mailed no later than one month prior to the event and the completed event pre-planning form must be submitted to Alumni Relations before the invitations will be drafted (see Appendix D: Event Planning Checklist). The board will have the opportunity to proof all invitations before they are sent out. A reminder e-mail may be sent out a week prior to the event if the board so chooses.

Website: Each club will have its own webpage on the Alumni and Development site. The page will contain information such as board roster and contact information, event schedule, the annual letter to the membership and pictures from past events. The Alumni Relations staff will maintain the site; however, the club board is responsible for sending information to be posted to Alumni Relations and for checking the website regularly to check its accuracy.

Appendix A: Alumni & Development Staff Contacts

Toll Free Phone: 1-888-LAW-ALUM

Fax: 919-613-7170

Web: www.law.duke.edu/alumni

E-Mail: alumni_office@law.duke.edu

Mailing Address:

Duke Law School
Alumni & Development Office
Box 90389
Durham, NC 27708

Physical Address:

Alumni & Development Office, Room 1001
Duke Law School
Science Drive & Towerview Road
Durham, NC 27708

Susan McLean, Director of Alumni Relations

919-613-7214, mclean@law.duke.edu

Dawn Downing, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations

919-613-8534, downing@law.duke.edu

**Law Clubs liaison*

David F. Levi, Dean

Janse Haywood, Assistant to the Dean

Jeff Coates, Assoc. Dean for Alumni & Development

Kate Buchanan, Asst. Dean for Alumni & Development

Dawn Blalock, Assistant to Associate & Assistant Dean

**Board of Visitors liaison*

**Law Alumni Association liaison*

Kristina Amidon, Regional Director

David Thompson, Regional Director

Kris Jensen, Director of Development

Jean Brooks, Associate Director of the Annual Fund

Sarah Wentz, Associate Director of Annual Giving (Reunions)

Anna Corliss, Annual Fund Coordinator

**Future Forum liaison*

**Future Forum liaison*

Mary Pinaula, Director of Advancement Services

Janet Silber, Stewardship & Communications Coordinator

Sondra Haithcock, Development Services Coordinator

Lisa Weir, Development Assistant

Appendix B: Sample Club Charter

Duke Law Club of _____

I. Establishment of the Club and Club Objectives

- A. This charter hereby establishes the Duke Law Club of _____ (the Club), consisting of all alumni of Duke Law School living within the same geographic boundaries as those members of the Duke Club of _____. Current student and parents of current students of Duke Law School will be considering adjunct members and may be invited to certain Club events.
- B. The overall objective of the Club is to advance the Duke Law Clubs Mission Statement. In pursuit of that goal, the Club will adhere to all policies and procedures set forth in the Duke Law Club Handbook and meet all “Club Responsibilities” described in Section II of the Handbook.

II. Officers and Duties

- A. The Club will be led by a board consisting of no more than six but no fewer than four members elected from the Club membership.
- B. Four board members will hold officer positions: the president, president-elect, secretary and treasurer. The remaining two positions are “at-large” positions. The duties for each position are as follows:

President: The president/board chair holds overall responsibility for the club and is the primary contact with the Alumni Relations staff as well as local alumni.

Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Serves as the primary contact for interested alumni in the area.
- Maintains close contact with the Alumni Relations staff.
- Schedules and conducts the annual summer planning meeting to develop the calendar of club events for the coming year. Schedules and conducts additional meetings or conference calls throughout the year, as needed.
- Delegates responsibilities to include assigning event coordinators and ensuring all reports are completed in a timely fashion.
- Attends a majority of Club events throughout the year.
- Plans, in conjunction with the Alumni Relations staff and the rest of the board, for a well-suited successor to assure the continuation of a successful club. Oversees the selection of successors for all board positions.

President-Elect: This position aims to provide leadership and continuity to the Club in the absence of the president/chair or when the president/chair’s term expires.

Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Serves as a contact for interested alumni in the area.
- Conducts the annual planning meeting if the president is unable to attend.

- Succeeds the president at the end of his/her term.
- Attends a majority of Club events throughout the year.
- Assists the president in the selection and training of a successor.

Secretary: This position assists the president with all communication, both with the Alumni Relations staff and with the Club membership. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Ensures all paperwork (including the annual meeting report, pre- and post-event reports) is turned in to the Alumni Relations staff in a timely matter.
- Drafts and/or coordinates the writing of the annual letter to the membership.
- Proofreads all print and e-mail invitations produced by the Alumni Relations staff.
- Relays information for the Club website to the Alumni Relations staff. Regularly checks Club website for accuracy/timeliness and prompts Alumni Relations staff when changes are needed.
- Assists in all Club leadership communication.
- Attends at least one Club event during the year.
- Assists in the selection and training of a successor.

Treasurer: This position oversees and ensures adherence to the Club's budget. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Tracks Club spending and coordinates spending with the Alumni Relations staff.
- Provides regular budget updates to the board.
- Maintains regular contact with the Alumni Relations staff to ensure the club's financial records are in agreement with the staff's records.
- Collects event fees as necessary and forwards monies to the Alumni Relations staff.
- Makes recommendations on the allocation of funds among events and the estimated expenses for a single event.
- Attends at least one Club event during the year.
- Assists in the selection and training of a successor.

At-Large Members (2): These positions are active board members who work to achieve the goals of the board. Responsibilities include:

- Represents Duke Law School and his/her alumni club.
- Completes any task assigned by the president, including serving as the event coordinator for at least one event.
- Attends at least one Club event during the year.
- Assists in the selection and training of a successor.

III. Elections and Term Lengths

- A. Each board member will be elected to a two-year term.
- B. A board member may serve in his/her position for no more than two consecutive terms with no more than five total terms on the board.
- C. Elections will be determined by a majority vote of the board with the Alumni Relations staff receiving a vote. All Club members are eligible for the board.
- D. Elections will be staggered with two board members elected each year. In Year 1 of the election cycle, the Secretary and one at-large member will be elected. In Year 2, the president-elect will be elected (the outgoing president-elect will assume the outgoing president's position). In Year 3, the treasurer and other at-large board member will be elected.
- E. To facilitate the staggered election, the founding secretary and at-large member agree to a one-year term and the founding treasurer and other at-large member agree to a three-year term. After the first election cycle following the Club's founding is complete, all terms will be for two years.
- F. In the event of a vacancy on the board, the president, in conjunction with the Alumni Relations staff, has the power to fill such vacancy for the remainder of the term. If the office of president becomes vacant, the president-elect will assume the role of president and then, in conjunction with the Alumni Relations staff, fill the vacancy in the president-elect position.
- G. The president, in conjunction with the Alumni Relations staff, has the power to request the resignation of any board member who has not met the responsibilities described above.

IV. Amendment

- A. This charter may be amended by a majority vote of the board, pending final approval by the Alumni Relations staff.