

Club Officers:

The success of a club can be directly attributed to the strength and dedication of its leaders. It is therefore crucial to attract, inspire, and retain effective, reliable officers. The board should be vested with the powers of general guidance and be composed of officers, directors (if desired), committee chairs (if committees are desired), the area Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network (CAAN) chair, and representatives of any special constituency groups that may be active in the area (i.e. a Johnson School club, the Cornell Black Alumni Association, a Hotel School club, etc.) At the very minimum, each club should have a core leadership group comprising a president, outreach vice president, programming vice president, treasurer (for dues collecting clubs), secretary, and webmaster.

Brief example officer position descriptions can be found in the sample constitution and bylaws in Appendix 1. Identifying, recruiting, and developing volunteer leaders should remain a consistent and top priority. The tips that follow will help guide you as you cultivate and grow a strong set of club leaders.

Identification and Development of New Leaders:

- Identify potential leaders from among the regular attendees at club events
- Have sign-in sheets at every function; allow attendees to sign up for committee membership at each function
- Welcome and involve newcomers as soon as they arrive
- Establish a board that includes Cornellians of all ages, colleges, and ethnic backgrounds
- Reach out to people whose interests or profession match your club's needs
- Take a chance; the top reason that people don't volunteer is that nobody asked
- Make committee participation fun

Succession and Continuity

- Staggered two-year terms of office are ideal for most successful clubs; these terms provide for movement and growth within the leadership structure, while ensuring continuity and stability
- Develop a hierarchical system of leadership within the board to benefit from the experience of the group, and to cultivate future Presidents
- Ask a seasoned board member to mentor a new board member
- The nominating committee should present a slate of identified leaders to the entire club membership for open elections each year

Involving and Retaining Past Leaders

- Consider appointing an advisory board to capitalize on the expertise and experience of past leaders
- At the direction of the president, an advisory board can: provide advice about special club projects; make contact with alumni and prominent local Cornellians on behalf of the club for assistance with special functions or particular needs; provide valuable stand-by service in case of an unexpected vacancy; offer historical perspective on the club's past efforts

Recognition of Volunteers

- Rewarding and/or recognizing volunteers is essential. Each person likes to be recognized or rewarded differently, but some ideas include: nominating outstanding volunteers for other Cornell alumni leadership roles or university recognition listing of board members names in the club's annual mailing, event programs and website; verbally acknowledge fellow leaders

at each event; privately and frequently, thank individuals for their specific contributions; immediately follow volunteer activity with thank you notes, small Cornell-themed tokens, or certificates of appreciation; host an end-of-the-year party for volunteers

Committees:

Depending on the size of your board and pool of leaders, committees may help organize and facilitate the club's activity as well as groom future leaders. With the exception of the nominating committee, they are not necessary, and should only be appointed if there is ample and meaningful work for committee members to do. Ideas for committees include outreach, programming, young alumni, and publicity. If you choose to include committees in your club structure, keep in mind that steps for the creation, responsibilities, and governance of committees should be clearly outlined in your club's constitution and bylaws.