



HANDBOOK FOR REGIONAL OFFICERS

2008 Edition

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I – Role and Mission of the Regional Association, Alumni Council, and Office of the Alumni Association

A. What is a Regional Association?

Regional associations are the formally-constituted, alumni-led organizations that connect all Princetonians within a certain geographic boundary to each other and the University. Regional associations are typically known as a “Princeton Club,” “Princeton Association,” or “Princeton Alumni Association” of a city, county, state or country.

The oldest Princeton regional associations were formed in the 1860s, just after the American Civil War. Using the newly-founded Princeton Club of New York City as a model, College President James McCosh encouraged the creation of regional clubs and associations across the country. By the end of his presidential term in 1888, there were seventeen regional clubs in places such as Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, the Pacific Coast and the “New Northwest” (Minnesota).

As of this handbook’s printing one hundred forty years later, there are 163 Princeton regional associations around the world. These range in size and population from the five boroughs of New York City (with nearly 10,000 Princeton constituents) to Kathmandu (with its four local alumni). For a complete list of recognized regional alumni associations, see **Appendix B**.

B. What is the Mission of a Regional Association?

The mission of Princeton’s alumni organizations is to engage as many alumni as possible in the ongoing life of the University in mutually beneficial ways and to support alumni initiatives that promote the goals of the University. For the complete mission statement of the Alumni Council of Princeton University, please visit http://alumni.princeton.edu/main/volunteers/alumni_council_committees/.

Regional associations are designed to allow Princetonians to pursue this mission locally—to create communities of Princeton around the world. The diversity in our local alumni communities allows each regional association to go about this process in unique ways, but commonalities emerge. Most associations seek to fulfill their purpose by holding activities that allow constituents to gather for educational, networking, service-oriented, and/or social purposes. In addition, they try to motivate and inspire the alumni community to serve the University. They also create positive awareness of the University among local non-alumni so as to enrich local knowledge about Princeton University, to attract applicants and promote higher education. For more specific ideas about how to accomplish this mission, see Section II – Successful Regional Associations: An Overview.

C. How do Regional Associations Fit into the Network of Princeton Alumni Organizations?

All Princeton alumni—numbering more than 80,000—are members of the Alumni Association of Princeton University. Regions, classes (year of graduation), and affiliated groups, including the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni (APGA), are the three typical ways in which Princetonians organize themselves into smaller associations.

Regional, class, and affiliated associations select officers to govern and represent their constituencies to the University. All regional, class and affiliated group presidents (along with certain other elected and

appointed alumni) serve on a central **Alumni Council**, which is the governing body of the Alumni Association of Princeton University. The 72-member Alumni Council Executive Committee functions as the working arm of this group. The Executive Committee meets on campus three times a year and conducts much of its business through standing committees dealing with the many significant aspects of alumni affairs.

One such group is the **Committee on Regional Associations (CORA)**, whose membership consists of a chair, vice-chair, and eight regional association officers elected to the Executive Committee. CORA works with staff members from the Office of the Alumni Association to provide support, guidance and information to regional officers around the globe. CORA also works in collaboration with the Regional Affairs staff in designating achievement awards for associations.

For an organizational chart of the Alumni Association and Alumni Council, see **Appendix R**.

D. What is the Office of the Alumni Association and How Can its Staff Help Regional Officers?

The Office of the Alumni Association, consisting of twenty-three University staff members, serves the Alumni Association of Princeton University and the Alumni Council by assisting, informing and engaging alumni and providing opportunities for alumni to be of service to each other, to students and to Princeton. Located in historic John Maclean House next to Nassau Hall, the Office provides staff support to the volunteers and is responsible for strengthening the University's multiple relationships with its alumni through programs of communications, participation, and service. For a complete list of current Alumni Association office staff and organizational chart, please see Appendix S.

The staff members within the Regional Affairs team of the Office of the Alumni Association specifically support regional association volunteers and their activities. They can be an important source of assistance in managing your associations, programs and activities. For instance, they can:

- Arrange for University faculty members or administrators to visit your region
- Help advertise upcoming events in your region
- Supply a limited quantity of Princeton insignia materials (such as napkins, nametags, cups and paper tablecloths) for use at regional functions
- Enable specialized online services (including the ability to send mass e-mails) for regional officers, and explain how to maximize this resource
- Assist in running reports of alumni, parents, and students residing in your region
- Act as a sounding board for your ideas
- Strategize with you on new initiatives and programs
- Provide advice and guidance to help you through a difficult situation
- Suggest well-qualified alumni in other regions who also may be able to help you
- Answer questions about any element of this handbook or other matters related to the running of a regional association

Please feel free to contact the **Regional Affairs staff members** if you have any questions while serving as a regional officer.



II – Successful Regional Associations: An Overview

Regional associations vary widely in their size (both geographically and demographically) and activity level, and no two associations are run precisely the same way. However, the most active and successful groups tend to have the following qualities:

- **Strong, Enthusiastic Leadership**
- **Active and Engaged Membership**
- **Excellent Communication Practices**
- **Successful Programming and Events**

The next sections of this handbook will examine each of these elements in depth.

A. Scaling These Features to Different Sizes and Kinds of Regional Associations

It is very possible for all associations—large, medium and small, as well as domestic and international—to achieve excellence in all of these areas. The important thing to remember is to set attainable goals that are appropriate for the unique cultural, demographic and geographic circumstances in your region. The following chart details a few of the annual goals regional officers may wish to set for their associations:

	Large Association (Local Population over 600)	Medium Association (Local Population between 200 and 600)	Small Association (Local Population less than 200)
Leadership	Stable leadership and board, active committees, regular leadership meetings	Stable leadership and board, regular leadership meetings	Stable leadership with multiple officers
Communications	10+	8+	5+
Events	6+	4+	3+

This chart merely provides benchmarks, but what is appropriate for any given association will vary widely based on local factors. Large associations tend to have an event at least every other month, though in many cases, they hold multiple events each month. In areas with smaller alumni populations, regional leaders may find it makes sense to hold three or four alumni events each year; however, some small associations also hold multiple events each month. Of course, turnout at events will likely be smaller in regions with fewer alumni spread out over large territory than in those located in metropolitan areas. Similarly, monthly newsletters may be a perfect communications tool for a large association, but impractical for small associations that sponsor a few events per year. Throughout this handbook, we will suggest ways to apply ideas to associations of all sizes.

The quality of the experience is as, if not more, important than the quantity of projects undertaken. When ingenuity and spirit are behind the projects, alumni react positively and feel engaged by the association and the University; this means they are successfully fulfilling the regional association’s mission.

B. Recognition Awards for Regional Associations

In 1978, the Alumni Council's Committee on Regional Clubs and Associations (now known as CORA) established several awards to recognize outstanding service to Princeton and Princetonians by successful regional clubs and associations. All of Princeton's regional clubs and associations are eligible for award consideration—nominations are solicited annually. The awards are presented at the annual meeting of the Alumni Council on the weekend of Reunions. For a complete list of Regional Association recognition awards, please see Appendix Q. For complete lists of past regional association award winners, please visit the Alumni Association Web site at http://alumni.princeton.edu/main/volunteers/awards/regional_association_awards/.

