Once a Seventeen magazine advice guru to teenage girls everywhere, CORA’s own P.G. Sittenfeld ’07, Past President of the Ohio Valley Princeton Association, replies to regional leadership queries in our Dear CORA column.

Dear CORA: Our regional association is starting to host regular events again and we are ready to start a dues drive so we can create a financial cushion to pay venue deposits and offset the costs of events to make them more affordable. What is the right dues structure for a newly rejuvenated association? Respectfully submitted by Seymour Dewes

Dear Seymour: The essence of any thriving association is, first and foremost, the people, but your instincts to get some moolah in the club coffers is also smart. Consider setting a scale based on graduation years, along with a “benefactor” level. A benchmark example may look like this: Classes up to 5 years out - $0; 6-10 years out $25; More than 10 years out $40; Benefactors $100 or more. Separate snail mail solicitations during the year to collect dues is also a good goal, in addition to another couple reminders via email. Always solicit for membership when alumni check in at the registration desk. Finally, make sure to explain to your members what their contribution is going toward and why it’s important for them to pitch in. Pretty soon you’ll be seeing orange and black and green! Now good luck, start collecting, and don’t forget to price your events accordingly to break even.

Dear CORA: How often should regional associations send emails to maximize attendance at events without becoming annoying and having them unsubscribe from our communications? Sincerely, Fulton Inbox

Dear Fulton: Nobody likes being inundated with too many emails but it’s also important to keep your members informed and engaged. It may depend on the size of your region and how frequently you have events. For a region with a large number of events, sending an update to your association each month isn’t too much at all, and for any association with upcoming events, blasting out a reminder both the week before and the day before is a best practice. If people are receiving more than three or four emails in a week, then you might be getting over-eager with the mouse. In that case, aim to fit more information into fewer emails. At minimum, regardless of your association’s size, try to check in with folks via email at least once a quarter to keep them in the loop. And if the occasional grump unsubscribes from the list-serv, oh well, you can’t win them all!

Dear CORA: My regional association has a gathering every other month which is wonderful but I’m starting to see the same faces at the events. Do you have any ideas how we can attract new Princetonians? Submitted by Newt Igers

Dear Newt: Great question! The key is diversity: make sure you’re offering something for everybody. You can put together outings ranging from going to see a local sporting match to organizing a wine tasting to having a day of community service. Get less familiar faces involved by asking them to help. For example, if you’re not seeing a lot of younger alumni, then have a young professional put together a happy hour event for fellow young alumni. If you would like to see more graduate alumni involved, consider adding a graduate alumna/us to your leadership team to help plan events. There also needs to be diversity in the medium of your communications: reach out to your association through snail mail, email, and social media to maximize your reach. Hope this helps add some new Tigers to your pack.

CORA Teleconference Call dates
April 16, 1:00 p.m. ET - “Show Me the Money (Or At Least Break Even) - Financing Your Regional Association”
Hosted by Jackie Alexander ’84 & Tristan Propst ’91
Call-in Numbers: (609) 258-2607 or toll-free (800) 635-1257

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