

### How to Start a Network

#### What is a network?

Alumni from around the world form volunteer-led networks with other Tartans, including current students, parents and friends, to build and maintain connections with each other and with CMU. Networks collaborate with the Carnegie Mellon University Alumni and Constituent Engagement office to support the vision and mission of the university and the CMU Alumni Association by engaging the Tartan community worldwide and across various affinities.

When volunteer-led networks are officially recognized, they benefit by having access to staff expertise and support in communications, marketing, event management, resources and fundraising efforts. Our volunteers and networks are integral to creating connections between each other, our communities and to the university. To help guide network success, we have outlined specific [network leadership roles](#) and a [Statement of Partnership](#) providing expectations for both network leaders and their CMU staff partners.

We acknowledge and appreciate the time and effort contributed by all of our network volunteers and thank you for your interest in staying involved, giving back and engaging with others on behalf of Carnegie Mellon University!

#### How do I start a new network?

Check to see if your network is listed on the [CMU Networks page](#). If not:

1. Review guiding documents, such as the [Statement of Partnership](#), and communicate with other network leaders to better understand the role of a network and the support provided by CMU.
2. Send an introductory email to [alumni-networks@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:alumni-networks@andrew.cmu.edu) expressing your interest in starting a new network. You will be connected with a staff partner who will reach out to set up a preliminary discussion via video chat. After you have spoken with your staff partner, please complete the following:
  - New Volunteer Checklist (to be emailed after meeting with your staff partner)
  - [Application for Starting a New Network](#)
3. Once you have completed the application and have received approval from your staff partner to continue, the next step is to audit your potential constituents and then survey those in your potential network. Your staff partner will help communicate the survey to the group. Sample questions for your survey should include the following, but are not limited to:
  - Are you interested in participating in this network?
  - What kinds of programming or events would you like to attend?
  - How often would you participate in events?
  - What do you feel is the most important reason for being part of this network?
  - Are you interested in volunteering?
4. Using the feedback from the survey, host a planning meeting with those interested in volunteering to outline your year one network plan. The plan should include a kickoff event and 1-2 additional events planned throughout the year, a communication strategy, ideas to build interest in the network and a membership structure outline if applicable.

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5. Deliver a formal presentation to CMU staff and Alumni Association Board members that summarizes your ambitions, the survey data and the year one plan. Upon completion, CMU staff will deliberate and provide you with an answer and feedback for how to proceed into a pilot year.

#### **So your network has been approved – now what?**

##### Annual Plan

Begin to implement your “year one” plan. After the first year, your staff partner will evaluate the effectiveness and viability of this network using the outcomes of events and communications in your plan. Moving forward, you will complete the network annual plan and end of year review.

##### Network Leadership

All networks should consist of formal leadership positions, ideally in two-year terms. These positions should be established early to help lead and guide the network through the first year. Role descriptions for these positions can be found on the [Volunteer Resources](#) page under General Network Resources.

All new volunteers, regardless of title, must complete the Volunteer Checklist that is provided during the onboarding process.

##### Data Audit

Starting and maintaining an active network is dependent on having engaged members. In many circumstances, CMU’s records may not be 100% up-to-date for who may be eligible to participate – particularly for identity and student organization-based interest networks. Newly formed networks will be required to audit the alumni data on file and will strive to enhance CMU’s records by researching and tapping into your personal connections to acquire more accurate data sets.

##### Communication

Network emails require advanced planning and should be discussed with your staff partner to suit your type of network. Email deadlines and send dates can be found on the [Volunteer Resources](#) page. Under the Communications heading at the bottom of the page, you will find a link to the Monthly Email Deadlines. [Email requests](#) should be submitted for each and every email send date.

##### Hosting Events

Consult the Event Planning Guide as found on the [Volunteer Resources](#) page. Once the logistics have been planned, the event lead should complete the [Event Submission Form](#) in order for staff to build the online registration page and to begin marketing.

##### Network Budget

After the pilot year, each organization has their own financial account housed within the university monitored by the network leadership and staff partner. All registration fees and gifts to the network are deposited to this fund; all event payments and reimbursements are withdrawn from this fund. Your staff partner will update you with changes. The university does not provide funding for your events, and each event must recoup its costs. More information around using your network funds can be found on the [Volunteer Resources Page](#). Under the Finance heading at the bottom of the page, you will find a link to the Policy for Using Network Funds.

# Carnegie Mellon University

## Office of Alumni and Constituent Engagement

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#### Network Inactivation

In order for an alumni organization to have the designation of an official university network, approval by the university is required. To be considered an active network, the group must meet the following minimum standards:

1. Coordinate efforts with the staff or other university representative(s) per the submission of an annual plan
2. Maintain active volunteer leadership
3. Adhere to the information outlined in the [Statement of Partnership](#)
4. Adhere to standards and operating principles set forth by the CMUAA and the university, including Carnegie Mellon University's [Statement of Assurance](#)

If a network does not adhere to these minimum standards and/or is inactive for 12 months, the network will be deemed "inactive" and will no longer be able to organize as an officially recognized CMU Network. Individuals or groups that are not officially recognized by the CMUAA or university will not be permitted to use the university name, logos, service marks, or brand.

#### **Commitment to Excellence**

Networks, volunteers and network members represent Carnegie Mellon University and the CMU Alumni Association. As representatives of the university, you are agreeing to support and further the mission of the CMUAA and the university and to maintain and uphold the university's commitment to [diversity and inclusion](#). You acknowledge the responsibility to conduct yourself and your membership in this network in such a manner as to display a positive impression of Carnegie Mellon University to the public, students, parents, alumni and friends. Network policies and procedures shall be consistent with those of the Statement of Partnership, and you may self-govern in conjunction with your staff partner and the CMUAA.

#### **Statement of Assurance**

Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Furthermore, Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate and is required not to discriminate in violation of federal, state or local laws or executive orders.

Inquiries concerning the application of and compliance with this statement should be directed to the university ombudsman, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (412-268-1018).

Obtain general information about Carnegie Mellon University by calling 412-268-2000.