

Penn Alumni Regional Clubs Diversity & Inclusion Best Practices

Diversity is not only a public good – it is also very good for Penn. Our quest for eminence depends on great minds that represent a wide array of perspectives and backgrounds.

- President Amy Gutmann

The University of Pennsylvania's commitment to diversity and inclusion is embedded in everything we do. Across 12 Schools, more than 25,000 students, and more than 4,000 faculty members, we become one university: a wide-ranging, ever-changing community that draws its strength from a multitude of races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, historical traditions, ages, religions, disabilities, veteran status, interests, perspectives, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Penn Alumni Regional Clubs extend the University's footprint to reach over 300,000 alumni around the world. By reflecting and expanding the University's values, clubs become stronger and fulfill their mission of connecting every Quaker. Check out our ideas below on how your club can prioritize diversity, inclusivity, and community.

- Understand the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion by reviewing <https://diversity.upenn.edu>. Share these resources with your board and your constituents.
- Use Penn's resources to continue to educate yourself, and others.
 - Watch recordings of past conversations about antiracism and social justice hosted by Penn Alumni and view other resources at www.alumni.upenn.edu/socialjustice.
 - Find further readings handpicked by University students, staff, and librarians through the Penn Libraries' [Diversity in the Stacks](#) program.
 - Watch our December 2020 Quarterly Call on [Canvas](#), featuring Chaz Howard, C'00, University Chaplain and Vice President for Social Equity and Community.
- Open a dialogue with your board members and evaluate your club's current commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community. Review and identify blind spots in your board make-up, the variety of events you've hosted and promoted, your website, your bylaws and your mission statement to ensure they reflect and extend the University's principles.
 - After the Penn Club of DC's July 2020 board elections, several board members came together to form a Diversity & Inclusion Working Group. The Working Group is building a roadmap for how the club can become a more inclusive organization. Some of their initiatives include updating the club's bylaws, working with the Events Committee to coordinate topical events, and identifying ways to connect alumni to the local community.
- Work towards building a board that reflects the diversity of your local alumni community and plan to recruit alumni from underrepresented groups. Consider race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, school, interests, perspectives, and socioeconomic backgrounds when you think about diversity. Seeing, believing, and cultivating leadership skills in alumni from traditionally marginalized groups can go a long way towards building engagement with people who may be more hesitant to get involved.
- Elevate diverse voices in club events and communications.
 - When planning speaker events and panel discussions, make sure you are representing a variety of viewpoints.

- If you host a book club or other discussion groups, try to feature diverse content and works by a wide range of authors.
- Highlight diverse alumni in your community.
 - The Penn Club of Chicago launched an initiative in 2020 to feature a profile of local Black alumni in their newsletters.
- When you invite alumni to share their experiences and perspectives with a larger group, be respectful and accommodating.
 - Be mindful of the emotional labor on the part of the speaker. You can acknowledge that in your ask, and also provide an easy way to say no – language like “We want to invite you, but we don’t want to overburden you” can go a long way. For more discussion on this point, watch the December 2020 Quarterly Call with Chaz Howard on [Canvas](#).
 - Be aware that our suppositions about any individual’s pronouns are not always correct, and making assumptions can send a damaging message. For more information about sharing your pronouns/asking people’s pronouns, visit the [Penn LGBT Center’s website](#).
- When planning in person events, be thoughtful about creating a space that welcomes all. Think about your venue, and if it is an accessible and comfortable place for everyone, and be aware of how music choices, dress code, and food options can make some people feel excluded.
- Promote Social Justice programming hosted by the University and Penn Alumni groups in your newsletters and on social media. Follow www.alumni.upenn.edu/socialjustice to stay up-to-date on upcoming events related to antiracism.
- Learn more about the Penn Spectrum alumni groups and if there is a local chapter in your region, connect with their leadership and find opportunities to partner and support their work.
 - [Association of Latino Alumni \(ALA\)](#)
 - [Association of Native Alumni \(ANA\)](#)
 - [The Black Alumni Society \(BAS\)](#)
 - [The James Brister Society \(JBS\)](#)
 - [Penn Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Alumni Association \(PennGALA\)](#)
 - [University of Pennsylvania Asian Alumni Association \(UPAAN\)](#)
- Connect with alumni groups from other schools and centers to help expand your reach and be inclusive of all alumni.
 - [Association of Alumnae](#)
 - [Engineering Alumni Society](#)
 - [Wharton Global Clubs Network](#)
- Partner with a local community organization to host a volunteer opportunity for your alumni.
 - You may be able to find alumni who work for nonprofits by searching through MyPenn. You can also ask alumni via your newsletter or social media what nonprofits they already volunteer with, which can help you make a connection to put together a great event.
 - Many community organizations are also willing to work with groups to create individual giving pages or donation drives that your club can organize. This allows alumni to participate on their own schedule instead of attending a time-constrained event.
- When you survey your constituents, consider asking if they feel included and like they belong in your community. This may help you identify gaps in your outreach. If you would like to see an example, your liaison can share a survey from the Penn Club of Seattle.

- Consider that many alumni, particularly recent graduates, may have conflicted feelings toward the University, and try to create space for constructive criticism as well as celebration. Watch our December Quarterly Call with Chaz Howard on [Canvas](#) for more discussion on this topic.
- Host events for your alumni community focused on antiracism and social justice. Here are some examples:
 - Penn Club of Los Angeles: Q&A with *Rolling Stone* Senior Writer Jamil Smith, C'97 focused on his *Rolling Stone* cover story, "The Power of Black Lives Matter"
 - Penn Club of San Antonio: San Antonio Black History Tour led by Walk on the River, a documentary movie series illustrating the story, contributions, and achievements of African American people in the city of San Antonio, Texas
 - Penn Club of Silicon Valley: Books with a Purpose Discussion Series, which focuses on books related to antiracism
 - Penn Clubs of India: Pursuing Passions – Sustainability & Social Impact, featuring Pia Singh, W'94, Vice Chairman of DLF Foundation and Non-Executive Director, Board of DLF Limited and Anant Ahuja, C'12, Head, Organizational Development, Shahi Exports and CEO/Co-Founder of Good Business Lab