

*Alumni Club*  
**HANDBOOK**



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# LETTER FROM THE INTERIM **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Elizabeth Muth, '05 BA**  
Interim Executive Director  
My Carolina Alumni Association

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We are grateful for your willingness to join My Carolina Alumni Association as an alumni volunteer, in service to our alma mater. The work of volunteer leaders on behalf of the University of South Carolina is vital to our ability to successfully add value to students, engage alumni and build the University's brand.

With over 300,000 living alumni, we rely on passionate volunteers to plan and provide programming, as well as serve as university ambassadors in their communities. Your active participation in building and strengthening the Gamecock Network allows our

impact to be meaningful and as diverse as the students, alumni and friends we serve.

We need your help and support in bringing a variety of programming and events to your area, so that while you may no longer be near the Horseshoe, the Garnet and Black are always close.

Thank you for your service and commitment. Our staff is here to support your efforts and help you build a plan for successful engagement!

# ABOUT MY CAROLINA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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## Mission

Add Value to Students.  
Engage Our Alumni.  
Build the Brand.

## Vision

Student for a short time.  
Gamecock for a lifetime.  
Forever to thee!

## Brief History

### My Carolina Alumni Association

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### Elizabeth Muth, '05 BA, Life Member

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The University of South Carolina's alumni association can trace its roots back to 1846. The graduates that year met to establish a series of reunion dinners. After several iterations of the organization in the following years, the group changed the name to the University of South Carolina Alumni Association, and its purpose was to "promote the general education interest of the state of South Carolina, to make it more and more a potent influence and agency in the education policy of the state."

Today My Carolina Alumni Association is a 501(C)3 organization that connects our network of over 300,00 living alumni to our beloved Carolina. With help from our volunteers throughout the world, My Carolina strives to support student learning outside of the classroom, connect alumni to each other and advocate on behalf of the University of South Carolina.

# MY CAROLINA CLUBS

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While we all have unique memories of our time at Carolina, we are united by our love for our alma mater. Clubs bring alumni living in a common geographic area together for the common purpose of networking with fellow alumni, supporting current students and serving the University of South Carolina. Clubs are comprised of diverse groups of graduates who are passionate about being Gamecocks, loyal to our traditions and dedicated to strengthening the Carolina brand.

## Why Clubs?

My Carolina clubs are essential to achieving the goals of My Carolina Alumni Association and the University of South Carolina. Clubs offer meaningful opportunities for Gamecocks to stay connected to one another and to Carolina no matter where they reside. Clubs also create professional and social interactions while fostering a sense of unity among alumni, students and friends of the university. Clubs establish an avenue for Gamecocks everywhere to stay connected to Carolina and extend the brand worldwide.

## Club Goals

- Coordinate activities, seminars and events for alumni to network in their local communities and strengthen ties to the University of South Carolina
- Involve alumni in career/professional development, mentoring and job/internship placement of students and graduates
- Support the efforts of My Carolina Alumni Association to keep Gamecocks informed of campus developments
- Promote and advocate for the University of South Carolina and its initiatives

## Partnership

As a My Carolina club member, you are a partner and advocate of My Carolina Alumni Association and the University of South Carolina. Every club officer must be a member of My Carolina Alumni Association and agree to promote membership within your community.

## Why Participate?

Volunteers are essential to successful My Carolina Club activities. Club Coordinating Committee members are needed to advocate for club engagement, organize events, and be an ambassador for the University of South Carolina. Club volunteers do the following:

- Help promote the University of South Carolina pride and traditions in your area.
- Create ways to attract new members and volunteers.
- Network with alumni throughout your region, and with other club volunteers nationally.
- Participate in community service projects, social events, viewing parties, Welcome to Your City gatherings, and much, much more.

# STARTING A CLUB

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My Carolina clubs establish a means for Gamecocks everywhere to stay connected to Carolina and extend the brand worldwide. Managing a club takes substantial effort and will require several leaders from your local community to work together in order to be successful. Starting a club also is an extremely rewarding way to give back to the university and live out your Gamecock values in your local community.



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## Steps to becoming a club:

- 1) Visit [MyCarolina.org/Clubs](https://mycarolina.org/clubs) to see if there is already a club in your area.
  - If there is a club in your area, we encourage you to contact the club chair to get involved!
  - If there is not a club in your area, email [clubs@mycarolina.org](mailto:clubs@mycarolina.org)
- 2) A member of the My Carolina team will call the primary contact listed on the application to have an initial conversation about starting a club. Based on the alumni population in the city and other corresponding requirements, the club will fit into one of three club levels (see page 7).
- 3) The primary contact on the application will complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- 4) Once the application and MOU are completed and received, My Carolina staff will review the documents and pending approval, the group will become an official My Carolina club.

Once a club is officially approved, the primary contact will work with a My Carolina staff member to communicate with alumni in their area, create social media accounts and help get club activities started.

Have questions?  
Email [clubs@mycarolina.org](mailto:clubs@mycarolina.org) or 800-476-8752

# CLUB LEVELS

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There are three levels of My Carolina clubs (see below for club types and descriptions). After a new club application has been submitted, My Carolina staff will research the current number of alumni living in the area to determine which club level is appropriate. Each club level has corresponding expectations as outlined in the club requirements section of this handbook (see page 8).

▶ **Horseshoe Clubs:** Horseshoe Clubs have at least 6,000 alumni living within a city. Clubs in this category will have an assigned staff liaison and can expect at least one official visit each year. Horseshoe Clubs are required to hold at least four meetings and host at least four types of events a year (See page 13).

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▶ **Capstone Clubs:** Capstone Clubs have 250 to 5,999 alumni living within a city. Clubs in this category will have staff support and are required to hold at least two meetings and host at least two types of events a year (See page 13).

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▶ **Carolina Clubs:** Carolina Clubs have 249 or fewer alumni living within a city and its surrounding suburbs. While these clubs are encouraged to host events and engage as many alumni as possible, the main function of these clubs is to act as a local contact for any inquiries.

# CLUB REQUIREMENTS

Horseshoe, Capstone and Carolina Clubs each have a specific set of requirements. The chart below highlights the expectations for each level. Additional details on each level will be explained throughout the handbook.

		Horseshoe Club	Capstone Club	Carolina Club
Coordinating committee make-up	Club Chair	✓	✓	✓
	Chair-Elect	✓	✓	
	Communications Chair	✓		
	Events Chair	✓		
	Membership Chair	✓		
	Affinity Group Representatives	✓		
	6+ events/year* (One community service event is required)	✓		
	4+ events/year* (One community service event is required)		✓	
	1+ event(s)/year*			✓
Event requirements				
	Attend Club Retreat	✓	✓	Optional
	Participate in club chair calls	✓	✓	✓
	Ability to request a yearly grant	✓	✓	
	Submit Memorandum of Understanding	✓	✓	✓
	Submit Annual Report	✓	✓	✓
Resources and required paperwork	Maintain a social media presence	✓	✓	✓

\*For questions about event suggestions see page 13.

# CLUB REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED

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## Coordinating Committee:

Leadership of each club includes the chair, chair-elect and other committee chairs. Each club level has corresponding requirements to match the size of the club.

- **Horseshoe Clubs:** The Horseshoe Club has a coordinating committee comprised of a club chair, club chair-elect, communications chair, events chair and membership chair. In addition, a representative from each of My Carolina's affinity groups will serve on the coordinating committee. The affinity group members will represent both their city's club and their affinity group. If assistance is needed in expanding or developing a committee, please contact your club's staff liaison.
- **Capstone Club:** The Capstone Club has a committee made up of a club chair, a club chair-elect and two additional chairs (at a minimum).
- **Carolina Club:** The Carolina Club is led by a club chair who will act as an alumni contact for the area.

*\*See Leadership section for additional details on committee positions on page 11*

## Affinity Groups:

Alumni groups that are linked by a common interest or purpose. My Carolina Association currently has three affinity groups including the Black Alumni Council (BAC), Veterans Alumni Council (VAC) and Young Alumni Council (YAC). Each group provides a platform for alumni of similar interests and backgrounds to openly share, support, network and meet the needs of their respective population.

## Club Chair Retreat:

All club members are invited to the annual retreat held each spring in Columbia, S.C. at the UofSC Alumni Center. During the retreat, members will discuss and learn more about successfully leading a club, My Carolina's strategic direction, alumni engagement, alumni trends and club best practices.

*\*All Horseshoe Clubs are encouraged to bring as many members of their coordinating committee as possible.*

## Club Chair Calls:

Throughout the year, My Carolina will host conference calls for club chairs to discuss upcoming events, pressing issues and current topics. The calls are great opportunities for club chairs to connect, build a network of support and exchange ideas.

## Grants:

See Finance section (page 14)

## Memorandum of Understanding:

Club chairs are required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) each fiscal year and/or when a new club is approved. The MOU will outline My Carolina's mission, strategic plan and any changes to the Club Handbook. The document also will outline expectations of the club chair and club. When a new club chair transitions, chairs must sign the MOU and send to their My Carolina staff liaison.

## Annual Report:

By the end of the fiscal year (June 30), all clubs must complete the annual report (available in the Club Toolbox online at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs)).

The annual report will ask for the following:

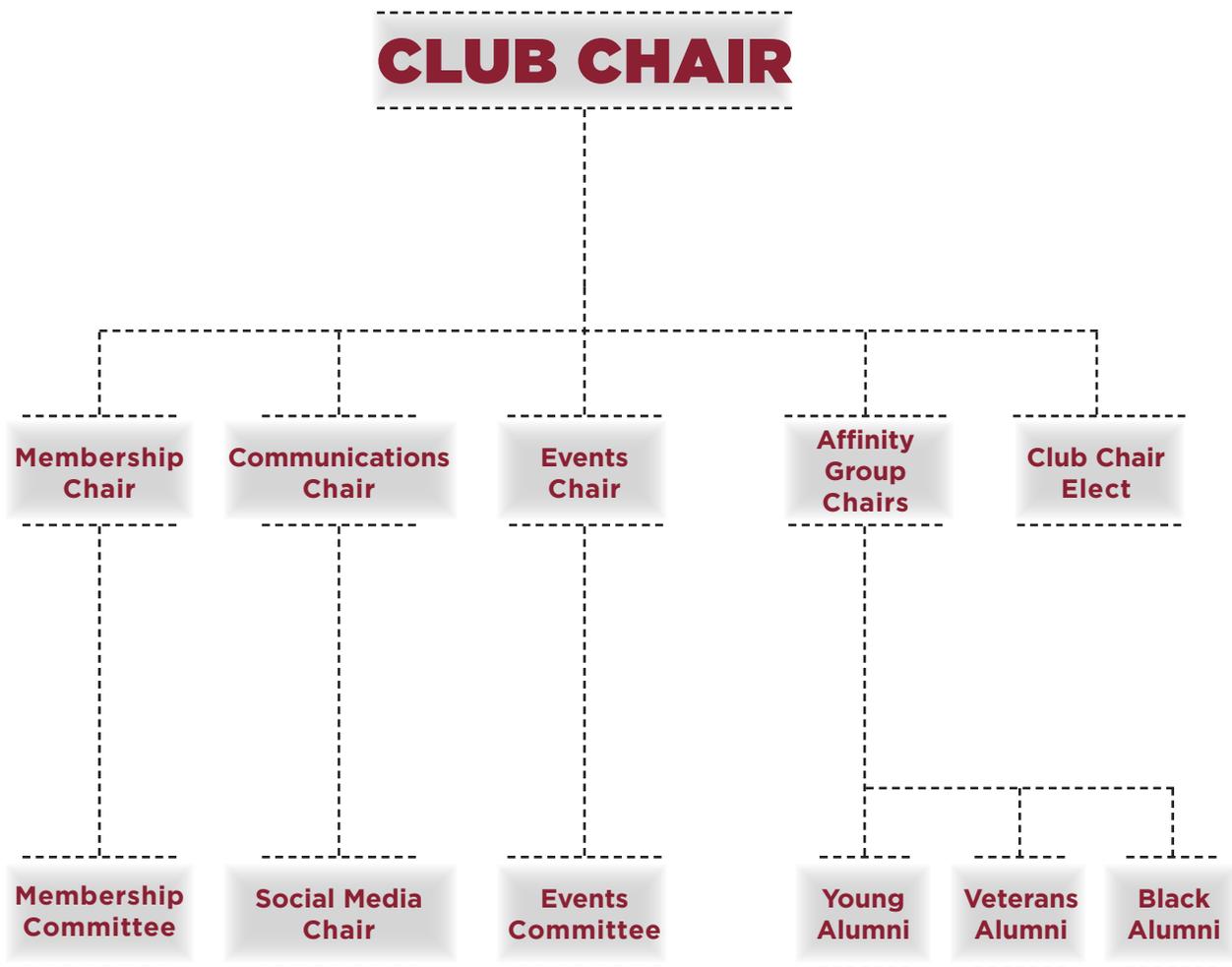
- Names of club leaders
- List of club events and meetings held during the previous year
- Event/meeting attendance numbers
- Club analytics for social accounts
- List of alumni contact info collected after each event
- Plans for future events
- Goals for the coming year

## Social Media:

See Communications and Marketing section (page 15)

# CLUB CHAIR BREAKDOWN

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# LEADERSHIP ROLES

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Alumni like you who willingly serve in club leadership roles are key to the success of each club because your efforts drive the activities of the club, create excitement among alumni and represent the University of South Carolina and My Carolina Alumni Association in local areas.

## **Term Limits:**

All Club chairs are asked to serve a two-year term, starting July 1 of each year. The chair-elect is expected to serve two years in that position and then transition to the club chair position for two years. All other committee chairs are asked to serve at least a one year term.

*\*All who hold a leadership position within a club are required to keep their alumni association membership current.*

## **Club Chair**

- Provides overall leadership and direction for the club
- Attends all club events
- Schedules and leads club meetings
- Signs the memorandum of understanding annually
- Submits annual report by the end of the fiscal year (June 30)
- Maintains regular contact with My Carolina Alumni Association staff liaison
- Acts as a contact for people who are interested in getting involved with the club
- Secures successor if they step down before the end of their two-year term
- Welcomes newly graduated alumni to the area after spring and winter graduation
- Attends Club Chair Retreat (optional for Carolina Clubs)

## **Club Chair-Elect**

- Fills in for club chair when they cannot attend an event
- Assists the club chair in fulfilling responsibilities and duties
- Aids the club chair in guiding the club and its coordinating committee
- Becomes club chair if the current club chair steps down

## **Events Chair**

- Coordinates venue, date, time and purpose of club events
- Ensures the club is meeting expectations and hosting a variety of events as outlined in the Club Handbook
- Consistently communicates with the club chair and communications chair so information can be shared with the public

## **Communications Chair**

- Takes notes at every meeting and sends them to My Carolina Alumni Association staff liaison
- Maintains social media accounts, posting regularly on all club platforms
- Coordinates event communications
- Collects attendance and alumni data (name, graduating year, email address) at all events to send back to staff liaison

## **Membership Chair**

- Oversees all My Carolina membership acquisition and retention throughout the year during club activities
- Ensures membership is a part of all club activities by bringing membership packets to club events
- Plays an active role in welcoming new and recent alumni members to the city

## **Young Alumni, Black Alumni and Veterans Alumni Chairs**

- Affinity groups exist to serve in advisory roles and represent the interests of their specific populations to the My Carolina Board of Governors and My Carolina staff
- These representatives serve a dual role in representing their city to their respective affinity group board and serving on the coordinating committee of their city's club
- These representatives may request the coordination of a specific event to encourage engagement of their population

# HOW TO TRANSITION & SELECT LEADERSHIP

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When it is time to transition leadership, following these steps will ensure consistent club engagement and leadership.

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## Club Chair:

- 1) If the club chair has served their two-year term\* and will be succeeded by the chair-elect, they should alert the club coordinating committee and staff liaison.
- 2) If the club chair is stepping down because of a move or is unable to continue to serve before their term is completed\*, the club chair-elect will assume the position.
- 3) If the chair-elect is not able to assume the role of chair, alert the club coordinating committee and staff liaison and begin seeking a replacement. If a new leader must be found, the staff liaison will assist with the process of recruiting a new chair.
- 4) Once a replacement has been identified, the former and incoming chairs should meet (in-person or virtually) to discuss club business and transition duties.

## Committee Chairs:

Alumni interested in serving on the coordinating committee should express their interest to the Club Chair. Committee chairs will serve at least one year. The club coordinating committee will select the committee chairs before July 1 of each year. Committee Chairs may serve more than one term.

## Selecting A Club Chair And Club Chair-Elect:

The club chair and the club chair-elect shall be elected by members (alumni of the University) of the club biennially in June to begin their terms. The club chair shall be elevated from the office of club chair-elect. Vacancies among elected members may be filled by the club chair-elect for the unexpired term.

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*\*Before departing the position, the club chair shall leave an annual report encompassing the year's activities*

Note: My Carolina staff will assist your club with any transitions that may arise. If a chair unexpectedly leaves the position due to a move or unforeseen emergency before a replacement is identified, all materials should be sent to the appropriate My Carolina staff liaison.

# EVENTS

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Events are the best way to engage at-a-distance alumni in communities throughout the world. My Carolina encourages clubs to host a diverse range of events that appeal to a variety of interests. Along with the help of My Carolina staff, clubs are encouraged to create a calendar of events at the beginning of each year to ensure the club is connecting with as many alumni as possible and meeting club level requirements (see page 9).

## **My Carolina Event Assistance:**

- My Carolina staff will assist the events chair with event planning, as needed.
- Submit an event request form for the Alumni Association to create a My Carolina online registration page, event web page or email blast (*form in Toolbox online at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs)*)
- Work with My Carolina staff to determine event costs and how club will cover expenses (ticket sales, sponsorships, donations, etc.).
- Membership materials must be provided at each event.

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## **Event Suggestions**

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### **Advocacy**

The university needs alumni support in South Carolina to advocate for Carolina to our state leaders. Attend Carolina Day at the State House as a group or support advocacy efforts with emails and phone calls to legislators. If your club is interested in learning more about legislative issues that affect the university, My Carolina will help arrange for a speaker to come to an event or meeting.

### **Affinity Groups**

Host an event based on special interests (Young Alumni, Black Alumni, Veterans Alumni) or to encourage a connection based on former student involvement (Greek, Student Government, band)

### **Athletics**

My Carolina loves to support our Gamecocks! Hosting a game watching party is a popular way to bring alumni together, and these events can be done at little or no cost to the club. Other athletics-oriented ideas include attending a sporting event in your city or joining an intramural league.

### **Community Service**

Bring alumni together to volunteer, host a clothing or food drive or support a campus service event.

### **Educational**

Your staff liaison can help you find a university speaker to speak at a club event or members can engage a local expert on a topic unique to your area.

### **Networking Social Events**

Alumni want to connect with other Gamecocks. Host a breakfast, afternoon coffee or after-work happy hour for alumni to meet and share contact information.

### **Virtual Networking Events**

Network with fellow alumni and/or current students through UofSC's virtual networking events. These events are coordinated by Alumni Association staff, so contact your staff liaison for more information on upcoming events.

### **Welcome to the City events**

Our newest graduates are coming to your city! My Carolina encourage clubs to host a Welcome to the City event after May and/or December graduation to welcome new alumni to your city. Happy hours at a local bar or a coffee shop are popular and easy options.

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*\*These are suggestions. Be creative and work with your staff liaison to brainstorm and create new events specifically for Gamecocks in your area. \*\*When hosting any club event, NCAA compliance rules must be followed. See Club Toolbox online at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs) for those guidelines.*

# FUNDING FOR ALUMNI CLUBS

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## Alumni Club Funding:

All clubs receive annual funding at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1). The amount of funding a club receives annually is determined by the club's category (which is based on the number of alumni in the city). To receive funding, the club must have met all requirements before July 1.

Clubs are not permitted to have individual bank accounts. My Carolina staff must handle all financial transactions. This is a security feature that protects clubs and their members by taking liability away from individuals. Clubs will not need a treasurer.

### Annual funding amounts:

<i>Horseshoe Clubs</i>	\$450
<i>Capstone Clubs</i>	\$350
<i>Carolina Clubs</i>	\$200

For events where the club needs to collect a registration fee or a donation, My Carolina staff will work with club leaders to create an online landing page for e-commerce. My Carolina will make payments to the vendor or reimbursement to the individual provided proper documentation is submitted in advance for payment. See Club Toolbox at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs) for forms.

## Supplemental Funding Request

Clubs can apply for more annual funding through the supplemental funding request form online.

Supplemental funding will be granted to clubs that have exhausted their annual funds and provide justification for why additional funds are needed. Supplement funding request forms are accepted throughout the year and will be approved, modified or denied by My Carolina staff within two weeks. Additional money for a single, large event can be requested though the grant funding application.

## Grant Funding

Grant funding is available to clubs when the cost of an event will exceed the club's remaining annual funding. Requests for grant funding must be submitted by the quarterly deadline. Horseshoe Clubs may submit up to four requests per year and Capstone Clubs may submit two requests per year. Requests will be reviewed quarterly by My Carolina staff.

These grants are to support clubs with larger events that strengthen and expand alumni outreach, interaction and awareness.

Horseshoe and Capstone Clubs may submit multiple grant requests per year, but only one request may be approved per club each year. There is no guarantee that all clubs will receive a grant every year.

Once a grant is obtained, My Carolina staff will submit the payments to the vendors on behalf of the club. No money is to be issued directly to an individual unless it is being used as a form of reimbursement. Grant applications must be submitted by July 1, October 1, January 1 and April 1 and at least 30 days prior to the event date.

## Reimbursement Procedures:

My Carolina will reimburse all approved expenses with proper documentation. Requests for reimbursement, once received, may take three weeks to process. To be reimbursed by My Carolina, an individual must fill out a reimbursement form and provide the original, itemized receipt that indicates payment.

See Club Toolbox online at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs) for reimbursement full policy and reimbursement form.

## Scholarships/Club Philanthropy:

If a club is interested in starting a scholarship, their My Carolina staff liaison will set up a meeting about the process and requirements.

# COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

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## Social Media:

Clubs are encouraged to maintain a Facebook page and post regularly (at least once a week). Other channels to consider using for club publicity efforts are Twitter and Instagram.

Once a club's social media channels are created, clubs should submit the name and password to their My Carolina staff liaison for approval and make the staff member an administrator for the Facebook page. When creating the club name on all social media channels, use "the city name" Gamecocks.

*Examples: Napa Gamecocks, Charlotte Gamecocks.*

Please remember that club social media accounts represent the University of South Carolina and My Carolina. Keep posts positive and focus on UofSC, not our rivals.

*\*If you need assistance starting the club's social media accounts, let your staff liaison know.*

## Promoting Outside Entities:

Below is My Carolina's policy on posting for individuals, non-profits and corporations who are raising money for charities, wish to sell a product or service or want to promote an event they are hosting:

*"We are proud to support all of our alumni, students, and Gamecock family for their accomplishments and commitment to serving our great university at home and in their communities. At this time, we do not accept requests to post or disseminate information for individuals, non-profits and corporations who are raising money for charities, wish to sell a product or service or want to promote an event they are hosting. You are welcome to post your event on our wall personally, but we ask that you include your personal contact information so that our followers can interact with you one-on-one."*

## Email Communication:

According to University policy and the 'Can-Spam Act' laws, My Carolina is not allowed to provide you with alumni email addresses or contact information. However, My Carolina is happy to send appropriate club information on your behalf. If you would like an email sent to the alumni in your area or an event page created, please send all information through the Event Request Form\*. This request must be submitted at least two (2) weeks in advance of the event. For larger events please allow more time.

*\*See Club Toolbox online at [www.mycarolina.org/clubs](http://www.mycarolina.org/clubs) for more information on the Event Request Form.*

By assuming the responsibility for email distribution, My Carolina is ensuring consistency with the Alumni Association and the University of South Carolina's brand and messaging.

## Club Web Page:

My Carolina will host a web page for each club. This page will include the club chair's contact information, the number of alumni in the area and links to all club social media outlets.

## Club Logos:

All clubs will receive a logo and electronic banner from My Carolina that should be used on social media, in club emails, etc.

*\*In keeping with university licensing policies, any item that uses the Gamecock or any trademark of USC must be approved by University Licensing.*

