



How to Start a Gator Club®

Thank you for your interest in starting a University of Florida Alumni Association alumni club (aka Gator Club). The mission of the University of Florida Alumni Association is to foster and enhance the relationship between the University of Florida, its alumni and friends, and to support the University's mission of teaching, research and service. Our gator clubs exist to support the mission of both the Alumni Association and the University of Florida, by strengthening the connection between alumni and friends, their communities and the relationship to the University.

There are several criteria that must be met in order to become a chartered club. Upon meeting all of these requirements, a UFAA staff representative will work closely with those interested in starting the club and oversee the chartering process.

Objective:

To continue to support the UFAA mission and add clubs in areas with an established alumni base and leadership commitment while maintaining adequate staff/service support.

The criteria include:

- For in-state clubs, a minimum of 200 alumni in a particular area, with 25 percent of that number already being active dues paying members
- For out-of-state clubs, a minimum of 50 alumni and friends that are dues paying members
- A minimum of 5 key leaders (President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, Web/Communications) to form a board of directors
- 100% Alumni Association membership among officers
- A distance of 50 miles between out-of-state chapters

Steps to Starting a Club

Reminder: All members of the association are automatically members in their local gator club, should there be one. No local dues are collected. Membership is open to anyone, including non-alumni.

First, check the list of alumni clubs (www.ufalumni.ufl.edu) to be sure there is no chapter in your area. If a club does not exist, contact the Alumni Association to determine if there are the minimum number of alumni and dues paying members in your area. This report may take up to 10 days to obtain.

Second, join the Alumni Association. You (and all future officers) must be a member to organize a club. You should also create a group/account on Gator Nation Network. This free online community enables you to search and seek out other gators in your area to gauge interest. <https://gnn.ufalumni.ufl.edu/>. UFAA can also send an email to alumni, parents and friends in the area to gauge interest.

Third, be prepared to share your development plan with UFAA. Schedule a conference call with a club staff representative and explain: how you will build the Gator Nation in your area, what you currently know of the alumni in your area, how you will support the mission of UFAA and UF, the activities you will plan for the club and how you will attract volunteers. Send this outline in writing via email to the club staff representative.

Fourth, prepare a solicitation letter/email for alumni and friends in your area. UFAA does not provide mailing list for confidentiality reasons. After approval of your basic plan, the association will assist you in mailing an initial letter/membership solicitation to alumni and friends in the area explaining that a club is in the start up phase, and include directions on how to join. Make sure your letter contains a purpose of meeting, contact information, and how the club will support the mission of both UF and UFAA.

Additional Guidelines for Forming Special Interest Groups

If you are interested in forming a special interest group, the affiliate organization must first:

- Be deemed of value in advancing the mission and goals of the alumni association and the University of Florida. You must provide a written proposal explaining the group's primary purpose in accomplishing this.
- Be able to bring a unique contribution to the advancement of the association and university that is not already included in an existing club or group.
- Be able and qualified to reach the population they seek to engage in university advancement.
- Be able to bring together alumni and friends in such substantial numbers that its organization and networks reconnects significant numbers of alumni contacts to the association and university.

** The requirements and criteria are in place to reach maximum potential and sustainability while receiving the adequate support of the alumni association.*

For more information, please contact Star Sawyer at ssawyer@uff.ufl.edu or 352-392-1616

Join UFAA and stay connected! www.ufalumni.ufl.edu