

Boston College Employee Affinity Groups Guidelines

The guidelines below have been developed to ensure clear expectations and boundaries between professional responsibilities and academic activities.

To advance Boston College’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the workplace, Human Resources, through the Office for Institutional Diversity (OID), provides strategic direction and support to Employee Affinity Groups.

The following provides information on establishing and maintaining an affinity group at Boston College. Holding space for different identities without concerns of potential power dynamics or conflicts of interest, Employees may not sponsor events for student organizations; however, employee affinity group members may attend student group events as invitees.

Table of Contents

Establishing an Affinity Group.....	2
Role and Significance of Employee Affinity Group.....	2
Benefits to the University.....	2
Resources and Support for Recognized Affinity Groups.....	2
Employee Affinity Group Recognition and Budget Process.....	2
Process for Recognition and Funding of New Affinity Groups.....	3
Maintaining an Affinity Group.....	5
Appointing a Chairperson.....	5
Chairperson’s Responsibilities.....	5
Event planning: Space.....	5
Event Planning: Food.....	6
Communication.....	7
Annual Report.....	7

Establishing an Affinity Group

Role and Significance of Employee Affinity Group

An affinity group represents the interests and concerns of traditionally underrepresented employee populations and/or protected classes of people. They also help campus community members understand those interests and concerns by sponsoring employee programs and events shared with the broader community. An affinity group's mission and purpose must also be aligned with the University's and open to all BC faculty and staff.

Benefits to the University

Affinity groups benefit the University by supporting community building, providing visibility and practical support to its diversity and inclusion efforts (e.g., participating in diversity recruitment and retention efforts, identifying and raising concerns that might not otherwise be visible, building diversity competence and cultural sharing in the community).

Resources and Support for Recognized Affinity Groups

Recognized groups will have access to BC resources, including financial support via a budget determined annually (see below), use of meeting space, use of the Boston College name and other identification (logos, etc.) for approved activities, technology, including website support, logistical and other support from the OID and representation on the BC Diversity Advisory Committee.

Employee Affinity Group Recognition and Budget Process

To be eligible for new or continuing recognition, financial, and other support, groups must submit an annual report to the Associate Vice President of the Office for Institutional Diversity no later than **May 31st** of each year detailing the events, programs, and related itemized expenditures from the previous year (if applicable). The report will also describe proposed programs and events for the coming year and an itemized proposed budget required to support them. Proposed programs and events should align with the University's diversity and inclusion mission and OID's five strategic initiatives toward inclusive excellence:

1. Develop and support faculty and staff effective recruitment, hiring, and thriving initiatives, driving the incorporation of an inclusive performance management process.
2. Work to strengthen the ties between the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, its Jesuit and Catholic identities, Mission and Ministry, and other appropriate stakeholders.
3. Develop strong, mutually beneficial working relationships and initiatives with Boston College affinity groups, advancing a diverse and inclusive campus.

4. Diversify our leadership and enhance their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competency to actively lead in a diverse work environment.
5. Focus on fair treatment and a sense of belonging for all individuals in the Boston College community.

Funding made available to groups may vary from year to year depending on factors including but not limited to availability, activities proposed (activities proposed jointly by more than one group may receive priority consideration), previous activities, etc. The OID will determine how available funds will be distributed in response to annual requests with the approval of the Vice President of Human Resources.

Process for Recognition and Funding of New Affinity Groups

Proposals to become recognized and thus eligible for the benefits outlined above must be submitted to the Office for Institutional Diversity for review. To be recognized, the proposal must demonstrate, at a minimum, that the group meets the affinity group definition above. In addition, it must include evidence that the group represents an, as yet, unrepresented interest that cannot, as a practical matter, be supported by an existing affinity group or other University entity (For other factors to consider, see *What are some best practice considerations/to-do's when drafting a new affinity group proposal?* in the frequently asked questions section below). Considering these and other factors it deems relevant, the OID will recommend the question of recognition to the Vice President of Human Resources. The Vice President of Human Resources will finalize the question based on the factors outlined here and/or others that he/she deems appropriate.

Newly recognized groups will not be eligible to receive an annual budget until at least one year of activity is completed. Newly recognized groups may request funding and other support in their first year of recognition on an activity-by-activity basis. To be eligible for consideration for an annual budget, newly recognized groups must submit an annual report and, at a minimum, demonstrate an ability to sustain themselves and effectively utilize University funds and resources provided during their first year of operation.

Decisions regarding approving a new group's first annual budget will be based on considerations raised in the Affinity Group Recognition and Budget Process. If a group is denied an annual budget, it may continue to request funding on an activity-by-activity basis, as described above, and submit new budget requests in subsequent years.

Considerations for Initiating an Affinity Group

1. What are the group's goals? Are they aligned with the University's? With OID's strategic initiatives?
2. Can an existing group or university entity accomplish these goals?
3. How is the group different from other groups on campus?
4. Is there sufficient interest among current faculty and staff to support the new group? Is this a viable short-term and/or long-term organization?
5. How would this group offer value to faculty and staff? To the University? To OID?

Best Practice Considerations for Drafting a New Affinity Group Proposal

1. Meet with OID to discuss the process;
2. Identify the common interest(s) or characteristic(s) that will connect members of the Affinity Group;
3. Provide a mission statement for the group. The mission statement and the group's purpose and vision should align with the University's mission.
4. Ensure the group's name reflects its core values, common interests, and the University's mission.
5. Describe how one becomes a group member, remembering that such groups should be employee-initiated, voluntary, and open to all employees. Determine how you will promote and invite members to join.
6. Describe the leadership structure, including how succession will be sustained over time and how its two representatives to the Diversity Advisory Committee will be selected.
7. Describe how often and when the group will meet. Please specify the day, time, length, and frequency of meetings and/or how members and prospective members will be notified.
8. Outline the group's method of communication and online presence.
9. The proposal should also include proposed goals, programs, and activities:
 - Formulate and prioritize goals for the short and long term that are consistent with the Group's mission;
 - Develop and maintain an annual plan of programs, activities, and events that are in alignment with the Group's goals and
 - Create measurable indicators for each area of focus within the program/activity plan.

Maintaining an Affinity Group

These guidelines have been developed to ensure clear expectations and boundaries between professional responsibilities and academic activities.

Appointing a Chairperson

The selection of an affinity group chairperson is a volunteer role, typically filled through nominations from within the group and confirmed by the affinity group leadership team. Once the chair is selected, the OID is notified to formalize the appointment. Each affinity group chair is invited to participate in the monthly Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting. The chairs are responsible for attending these meetings and representing their affinity group, facilitating collaboration, alignment of goals, and shared learning across different groups.

Chairperson's Responsibilities

The chairperson of an affinity group plays a pivotal role in steering the group's direction and ensuring its effective contribution to the organization's diversity and inclusion goals. The key responsibilities of the chairperson include:

- **Leadership and Representation:** Acting as the primary representative of the affinity group, the chairperson ensures the group's voice is heard in broader organizational contexts, particularly in the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) meetings, Diversity Steering Committee meetings (DSC), New Employee Welcome Luncheon.
- **Meeting Facilitation:** Organizing and leading regular meetings of their affinity group, setting agendas, guiding discussions, and ensuring productive and inclusive participation from all members.
- **Liaison with OID:** Communicate regularly with OID to align the affinity group's activities with the organization's objectives and report on the group's progress and challenges.
- **Member Engagement:** Encouraging active participation, engagement, and recruitment of new members within the affinity group, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.
- **Event Planning** involves overseeing the planning and execution of events or initiatives that support the group's goals, enhance its visibility, and contribute to the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** Collecting feedback from group members and stakeholders to continually assess and improve the group's impact and effectiveness.

Event planning: Space

- Boston College offers a diverse array of locations, spaces, and resources to support the event needs of affinity groups. For detailed information about these

facilities and how to access them, visit the Event Management website at Boston College Event

Management: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/auxiliary-services/sites/event-management/plan-your-event/conferences.html>.

- After reviewing the available spaces, if your group decides to reserve a space managed by Event Management, please log into the Agora Portal. Under 'Common Services,' select the 'Event Space Reservation System' to proceed with making your reservation.

Agora Portal SEARCH MY FAVORITES

My Services

Please call the BC Help Center at (617) 552-4357 (2-HELP) if you need assistance.

Academics and Courses	Account and Personal Info	Common Services
Canvas Learning Management System	Academic Advisor	BC Email Account
Career Services	Address/Phone/Emergency Contact	Address/Alias Settings
Classmate Roster / My Courses	Campus Loans	Enter Gmail
Course Evaluations	Change BC Password	Campus Groups
Courses and Grades	Change Challenge Questions	Directory Search
EagleApps Course Information and Schedule	Change Secondary Password (for BC Email)	Event Space Reservation System
EagleApps Planning & Registration for Students	Demographic	Faculty & Staff Resources
Enrollment Certification Request	Eagle One Card - Add Funds	MyBC
Exam Schedule	Eagle One Card Activity Summary	Voicemail Services
Navigate Academic Support	Eagle One Card Deactivate (Lost/Stolen)	

- In addition to the event spaces managed by Event Management, affinity groups at Boston College have access to other designated locations for their activities. Groups interested in spaces such as 245 Beacon Street, the Thomas More Apartment Conference Room, and the Theology and Ministry Library can directly contact these spaces to check availability for specific dates and times. To facilitate this process, please connect with the OID's liaison for affinity groups, who can provide the necessary contact information for these additional spaces and assist you in coordinating your inquiries and reservations seamlessly.

Event Planning: Food

- For affinity group events, ordering food through Heights Express is strongly recommended. Affinity groups should contact the HR liaison dedicated to affinity groups to facilitate the purchase. This ensures a streamlined process and adherence to Boston College's policies and procedures for event catering.
- If you require special menus for your affinity group event, contact the event coordinator from BC Dining Services to discuss the possibilities. The OID's liaison is available to provide further support and direction if you need assistance or guidance in exploring catering options not listed on the standard menu.

- If Boston College cannot accommodate your specific catering request, you can order from external vendors. However, it's crucial to verify whether these vendors accept P-cards and if they are registered in the BC PeopleSoft system. Prior to using a P-card for any external catering orders, please consult with OID's liaison for affinity groups for approval and guidance.

Communication

- **Event Announcement:** Once the time and location of an event are confirmed, the affinity group chair should utilize listservs or any available mailing lists to send out invitations to their members. It's an efficient way to ensure that all members are informed and have the opportunity to participate.
- **Engaging New Employees:** Each affinity group chair will receive a monthly list of new employees from the OID's liaison to affinity groups. It is encouraged to actively reach out to new employees, inviting them to attend events and engage with the group. This inclusion not only welcomes newcomers but also broadens the network and impact of the affinity group.
- **Website Updates:** If the affinity group wishes to post event details or any other updates about the group on their official website, the affinity group chair should communicate this request to the OID liaison with clear instructions.
- **External Communication:** Should the affinity group plan to cross-promote external events and student group activities, share resources, or address concerns regarding occurrences on or off campus, the affinity group chair must consult with the Associate Vice President of OID prior to disseminating such communications.

Annual Report

Each group is responsible for submitting an annual report to OID **no later than May 31** each year to ensure continued recognition. The OID conducts an annual review of all affinity groups to verify their goals and objectives align with the university's mission, core values, and desired organizational outcomes. The continued recognition and status of an affinity group at Boston College are contingent upon the timely submission of this annual report.

An appropriate annual budget can only be determined with the information in an annual report. Failure to submit an annual report (including budget request) promptly will make it impossible to arrive at an appropriate allocation for a group. In that event, an affinity group will be required to request funding and other resources for events on a case-by-case basis.

A successful annual report should include the following sections:

1. Annual Planning

- a. Review, update, and prioritize goals for the short and long-term
- b. The goals, programs, and activities of the Group should align with its mission
- c. Maintain an annual plan of programs, activities, and events
- d. Create measurable indicators for each area of focus within the program/activity plan.

2. Group successes, challenges, and overall outcomes:

- a. Track and report on programs, activities, and progress toward achieving goals.
- b. Communicate the value of the programs, activities, and/or events to the BC community, the organization’s leadership, and members.

3. Budget

- a. The previous year's expenditure report includes a detailed listing of all activities for the year and the associated costs. Please be as specific and detailed as possible.
- b. The proposed budget for the succeeding year includes resources needed to achieve planned activities for the fiscal year ahead. Cost items include meetings, refreshments, speakers, etc... Please be as specific as possible. Note: Requests for items not included in the proposed budget and approved in advance must be submitted to HR separately and approved before any related expenditure.
- c. Below is a sample spreadsheet to track previous years, and proposed costs are provided.

Type of Expenditure	Budgeted Amount (\$)	Actual Cost (\$)	Variance (\$)	Notes
1. Expenses related to regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., refreshments)				
2. Amounts contributed to activities co-sponsored with other groups (one row per activity)				
3. Special events or activities (e.g., retreats/events with paid speakers, etc.)(one row per activity)				

4. Other activities - please specify (one line per activity)				
Total:				