

## The Components of Success: Membership, Programming, and Communication

WELLESLEY  
ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION  
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In this session we are going to discuss membership.

Without members....there is no Club!

## Club models



**Model A:** Small, geographically diverse, and/or in temporary hibernation, or just forming

**Model B:** Medium, urban, suburban, or a growing club

**Model C:** Urban or suburban, mature club

**Model D:** Large, urban club

Several years ago, we adopted these club models. At the time it seemed— sort of common sense but we soon understood that having these models DID give our Club leaders **manageable expectations** for running their clubs.

Wellesley women can be over-achievers -- taking on more, doing more, raising the bar. As a new club leader in a small club, it is often daunting to come to ALC and listen to what a club like Chicago or Boston is doing and feel that you have to compete – we are telling you that you do not need to and are not expected to do this.

We hope you find the club models a useful guideline for your club structure. Your packet should include a handout with your club membership and your model.



## Definitions



**All alumnae are members of WCAA.**

**Club members** = All alumnae who live within the geographic boundaries of your club area.

**Dues-paying members** = The sub-set of club members who pay dues.

All alumnae are members of the Alumnae Association. **And by default, each alumna is a member of her class or club.** When you receive or download a club list, it will include all alumnae living within the **defined zip codes** for your club area regardless of whether or not they are dues-paying members.

It should be noted that alumnae can also opt to be a member of **more than one club** and receive mailings from their “second club interests.” Many of our “snowbirds” in Florida during the winter certainly want to make sure that they are connected in Florida and as well as with their primary area.

Marisa is listed as a second club interest for all of our clubs. Please make sure that you do not remove her from your mailing list or anyone else you see as living outside of your club area. These alums have indicated an INTEREST in hearing from your club.

The other definition of membership is whether or not someone is a dues-paying member. It is the Clubs responsibility to keep the dues-paying membership lists – we do not.

# Why do clubs need to collect dues?



- Printing and mailing costs
- Program costs (Admissions events, food, etc)
- Book Awards
- Money for current students outreach

So why should you collect dues? Of course, you know, running a club costs money.

Almost every club has printing and mailing Costs, program costs (especially Admissions events or others that include current student), book awards at \$22 a book, and any kind of current student outreach including care packages or dinners when they are home. Many clubs are attempting to outreach to these students by sending them cards at the beginning of the year and including a small gift card to the bookstore or perhaps to Starbucks.

# How much should we charge?



Amounts vary per club.

- One flat rate for all alumnae -\$10-20
- Tiered system
  - » Young alumnae (2001-2011) \$10-25
  - » Regular members \$25-40
  - » Most recent grads or more than 50 years out, free or complimentary membership

So how much should you charge for your dues? Unfortunately, we do not have a magical answer. It depends on what your costs will be (or you want to be). Some clubs charge one flat rate for all alumnae generally between \$10-20. These tend to be smaller clubs.

Others have a tiered system where:

Young alumnae – usually 10 years out - - \$10-25 – or some clubs limited this to 5 years out.

Regular Members \$25-40

Most Recent Grads or More than 50 years out are often listed as Free or complimentary

Your board should be dues paying members as most club by-laws do have a clause indicating that all board members must be dues paying members or by-laws that state only dues paying member can vote on club issues or a slate. Many boards find themselves in an awkward position with having board members who do not pay...something a board will have to decide how they want to deal with this.

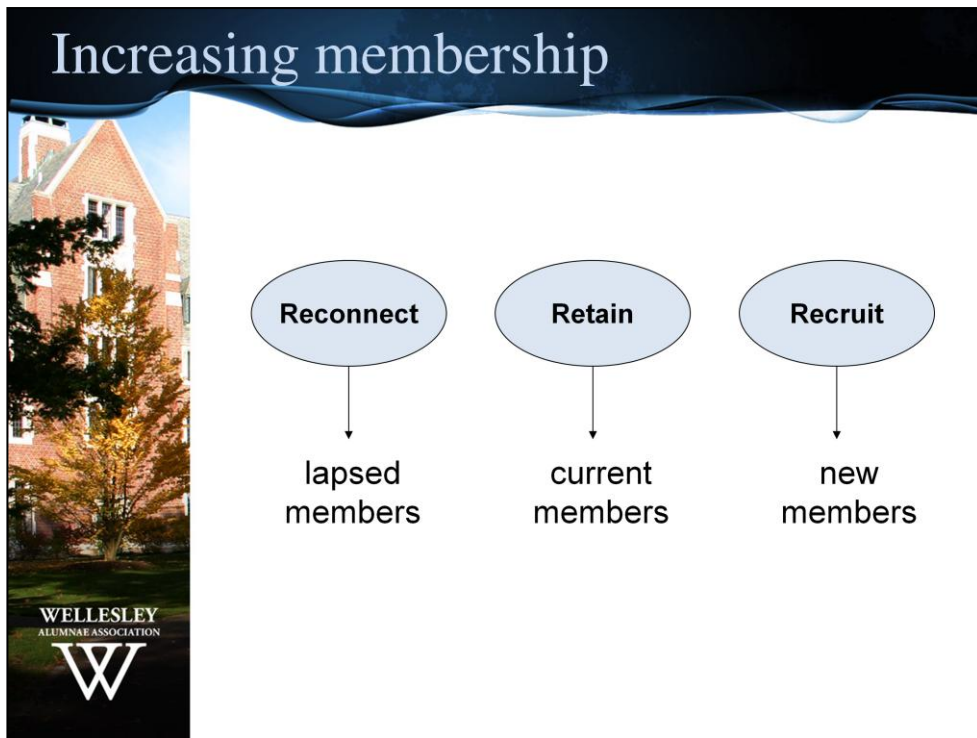
# Ask for dues



- Different aspects will motivate different people based on region and age
- Target your outreach and programming

In order to collect dues, you must ask your constituents.

Different aspects will motivate different people based on region and age. Target your outreach and programming to appeal to your club members.



When thinking about membership, we often think about how recruiting **NEW** members. However.....Do not forget to think about **retaining** your current dues paying members and **renewing** the ones you used to have – your lapsed members. Each of these categories should have a different approach....lapsed and/or current members might get a phone call....party phonaton....but...maybe without the wine! Also, remember, dues paying members are invested.....target them for programming ideas, volunteers, and for future leadership.



# Incentivize dues-paying membership



1) Financial incentives

2) Emotional incentives

Realistically – how are you going to motivate people to pay!  
First, you need to make it clear the possible financial incentives for becoming a dues-paying member-what tangible benefits do they get for their money?

Member-only events/discounted price for events, printed directory, they could list their business or occupation on your club webpages or in your printed directory, and always remind alums that **ALL dues and donations are tax deductible.**

Our emotional incentives are a little more difficult to define but just as important if not a **MORE** important factor. Make that emotional connection to alumnae-tell a story.

Other emotional components: connecting with current student, promoting club scholarships and book awards. Do an article on a student who received financial funds from your club's scholarship fund or ask the recipient to write this.

## Soliciting dues



- Make it easy to pay dues!
  - » Newsletters and pre-printed envelopes
  - » Online Membership Registration Launch
- List members in newsletter or Chapter Pages
- *Always* ask for donations - and always give special recognition to these donors.



And of course, always make sure it is easy to collect dues. Checks are still the most common way to pay dues. If you are mailing a newsletter, enclose a pre-printed envelopes, and always list (and THANK!) your current dues paying members and list them on your website. When you make the plea for dues, do not forget to ask for donations...or list a special “patron level” of dues.

# Appealing to your members



- How do you motivate an alumna '08 to become a dues paying member?
- alumna '64?
- alumna '81?

Let's take what we've gone over and put it to practice.

How would you motivate a young alumna to become a dues paying member? How would you appeal to alumna '64? Or ....alumna '81?

How do you reach each of these women and others of the same age group or decade?

## Increasing membership



- Establish a membership **goal**
- Have a **Membership Chair** or committee on your board to work towards that goal
- Target **current students** – they will be alumnae soon!
- Get **young alumnae** involved

Increasing your membership is your objective.....not increasing your dues amount...participation is always more important.

### **Have a goal – promote it!**

- Challenge your club members to help you reach that goal (Wellesley women love a challenge!) – publish it in your newsletters and emails – TALK ABOUT IT.
- The percent of dues-paying members varies – some of our large clubs may struggle to reach 10%, and some of our Florida club have nearly 80% dues-paying members. The average is about 20-25%. But if last year, your club had 12% dues paying members - go for 15% - on 200 alumnae that is only an increase in 6 people – but it is an increase that you can say, “we did it”! Establish and publish a GOAL – work to achieve it!

### **Have a volunteer in charge of membership and nothing else – someone with a plan of how to increase your membership.**

**Target Current Students** - They will be alumnae soon! Demonstrate the power of the network now while they are still on campus; show them what clubs do and the value of being part of a club. Send exam or cards or packages – value the students you have....support them!

**Target Young Alumnae** – Get young alums involved in outreach. Push the “free” first year out but you must sign up....participate.

## Discussion...



- **Our clubs, part of our network, are a RESOURCE for alumnae – make sure your constituents value this!**
- **Wellesley needs our clubs and our clubs need volunteer support.**