

The Vanderbilt Alumni Association (VAA)

Chartered in 1910, the **Vanderbilt Alumni Association** fosters understanding, engagement, and support of Vanderbilt and its mission of education and service and creates lifelong connections among alumni as well as students, parents, faculty, and friends. Membership in the Alumni Association is automatic, for life, and does not require a fee. Vanderbilt defines alumni as all former students who have attended Vanderbilt for at least one semester and left Vanderbilt in good standing. Associate members include parents of past and current students, graduate fellows of the University, and interns and resident training staff of the hospital.

The Alumni Relations Office is part of the Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) department and works in conjunction with the Alumni Association and its Board of Directors. Visit www.vanderbilt.edu/alumni for information on DAR and a complete listing of Alumni Relations programs.

The Alumni Relations staff assists volunteer leadership in their efforts to connect alumni, and friends to Vanderbilt by serving as consultants, providing support, offering guidance and exploring new ideas.

Programs and Services of the Alumni Association

Chapters/Regional Events

Although thousands return to campus for events such as Reunion/Homecoming, it is not feasible to expect all alumni and friends to return to campus regularly. Therefore, Chapters provide an important way to reach and impact the broadest possible base of alumni and friends worldwide.

Homecoming/Reunion

Every fall, alumni and friends return to Vanderbilt for the largest alumni event on campus. The weekend is planned and organized by alumni volunteers and is packed with events, including special lectures by professors, open houses highlighting new buildings and unique departments, visits with the Chancellor, parties, receptions, football tailgates, luncheons, dinners, dances and memories.

VUconnect Online Community

Vanderbilt's online community, VUconnect, www.vuconnect.com, gets you connected across the country and around the world with alumni, students and friends.

With VUconnect you can...

- Connect with alumni all across the globe
- Update your contact information
- Receive and share career advice
- Build networking relationships
- Share your latest news with Vanderbilt friends
- Find former classmates
- Find alumni in your industry
- Find alumni in your area

Vanderbilt Travel Program

The Vanderbilt Travel Program engages alumni and friends of all ages. Each carefully designed trip offers unparalleled learning opportunities with Vanderbilt professors to interesting destinations for an exclusive “beyond the classroom” experience.

Student/Alumni Programs

These Alumni Association programs connect students with Vanderbilt alumni worldwide to network, establish relationships in new cities, and be part of the global Commodore family. Programs are designed to increase students’ awareness and access to the alumni network for career development and city connections, as well as to build unity and tradition among the classes. Our vision is to integrate students into the alumni community early on and seamlessly transition them into engaged alumni. The Alumni Association’s Student Alumni Board is a vital part of this effort; each class has a board charged with developing programs and generating awareness of the Vanderbilt Alumni Association.

Shared Interest Groups

Shared Interest Groups connect all alumni who share any one interest or common connection, including undergraduate student organizations, varsity/club sports and social or ethnic groups. Shared Interest Groups allow alumni with a common interest to gather for meetings, educational and social events, network with one another, connect with on-campus groups, share information and to function as an alumni organization under its own leadership. Each group has access to the resources of the Alumni Relations Office through the assistance of a shared interest groups liaison in the office. Many shared interest group gatherings/anniversaries take place during Reunion Weekend/Homecoming.

Commodore Recruitment Programs (CoRPs)

Commodore Recruitment Programs offer an opportunity for Vanderbilt Alumni to serve as ambassadors of the university to prospective students by representing Vanderbilt at college fairs and interviewing applicants. Both of these activities offer alumni and students a more personalized view of the admissions process, thereby promoting goodwill and a positive impression of Vanderbilt, regardless of whether or not the student is admitted.

Alumni Career Programs

Vanderbilt Alumni Association’s Alumni Career Services are designed to enhance the professional journey of alumni. There is an online toolbox for strengths assessments and how-to videos that help alumni fine-tune resumes, cover letters and interview skills at no cost. The opportunity to engage with a career coach for tailored career exploration is also available. The Vanderbilt alumni network includes over 5,500 Alumni Career Advisors, job postings on VUconnect and the Vanderbilt Alumni LinkedIn group which is over 15,000-strong where jobs are posted weekly and alumni can engage in online career discussions.

Vanderbilt Chapters

Vanderbilt Chapters are the foundation of the Alumni Association. They provide a great way to connect alumni, parents, students, and friends worldwide in the name of Vanderbilt. Hard-working volunteers – with assistance from the Alumni Relations Office – plan and implement a full calendar of events and programming for each chartered Chapter. Examples include:

- Educational events featuring Vanderbilt professors and administrators or local alumni speakers
- Cultural events, such as attending performances with seating for Vanderbilt alumni and friends, or visits to local art exhibits with a special Vanderbilt tour
- Events welcoming incoming students into the Vanderbilt community
- Networking events based around career fields and interests
- Gatherings to cheer Vanderbilt sports teams on to victory

Purpose of Chapters

- Promote the Alumni Association’s mission and Vanderbilt’s mission of education and service
- Strengthen, enhance, and sustain alumni connections with Vanderbilt and with each other
- Engage a large Vanderbilt base in local areas and increase participation in diverse programming

Large Chapters: (over 1,000 alumni)

Large Chapters are expected to meet the following minimum requirements annually:

- Two (2) Chapter Steering Committee meetings
- Two (2) Educational or cultural events
- A Summer Send-Off Party
- A *Vanderbilt and You* Program (if requested by the Admissions Office)
- One (1) other event selected from the following:
 - Community service event
 - Athletic event
 - Social event

Small Chapters: (under 1,000 alumni)

Small Chapters are expected to meet the following minimum requirements annually:

- Two (2) Chapter Steering Committee meetings
- A *Vanderbilt and You* Program (if requested by the Admissions Office)
- A minimum of 3 events annually:
 - Chapter events to include 1 of the following:
 - Educational event
 - Cultural event
 - A minimum of 2 other events selected from the following:
 - A Summer Send-Off Party
 - Community service event
 - Athletic event
 - Social event

Annual Leadership Conference

The Alumni Relations Office sponsors an annual Leadership Conference on campus for Chapter volunteers. While current Presidents or newly selected Presidents are strongly encouraged to attend, all current and new Steering Committee members are also invited to attend.

The goals of the conference are to provide Chapter leaders with training and tools to effectively operate a Chapter, as well as the opportunity to establish relationships and communicate with other Chapter leaders and Alumni Relations staff.

Through discussions and workshops, attendees discuss Chapter goals, exchange event ideas and common challenges, and share best practices. Alumni Relations staff report on the status of the Alumni Association, and Vanderbilt speakers provide insights on campus development.

The conference is generally held in spring. Following the conference, the attendees are charged with reporting back to their Steering Committees on new information, changes, plans, etc.

Chapter Leadership

The Alumni Relations Office and volunteers each have defined responsibilities and work together as partners.

General Responsibilities of the Alumni Relations Office

- Help identify and develop volunteers, as well as provide rosters and contact information of local alumni, students, parents, and friends
- Design, print and mail up to 2 chapter mailings per year, planned in partnership with the Chapter's Steering Committee
- Pay for events involving the Chancellor or Provost
- Arrange for special VU faculty or administrative speakers and pay for their travel costs
- Assist with upfront deposits associated with a Chapter event; supplement events on a case-by-case basis
- Provide leadership education, training and resources
- Coordinate an annual Chapter Leadership Conference
- Provide a Chapter liaison to meet with Steering Committees (liaison may travel to the chapter up to 2 times per fiscal year)
- Communicate with all alumni and friends through tools such as alumni Web site, chapter newsletter mailing, broadcast e-mail, social media, *Commodore* and *Alumni eXclusive* newsletters and *Vanderbilt Magazine*.

General Responsibilities of the Chapter

- Plan and execute Chapter events and programming
- Conduct a minimum of 2 Steering Committee/Planning meetings annually to create goals and calendar of events
- Plan and submit information for the chapter newsletter mailing
- Oversee Chapter expenses and operate on a breakeven basis
- Identify, recruit, and retain volunteers: future Chapter leaders, interesting local alumni/volunteers in local Chapter area, assist with updating contact information through VUconnect
- Send President (or alternate representative) to annual Leadership Conference
- Provide post-event registration forms, attendance lists, and other related information to chapter liaison
- Provide input and feedback to the Chapter Liaison about the Chapter

Steering Committee

An effective Steering Committee should:

- Reflect Chapter area population with diverse representation (gender, age, ethnicity, VU school)
- Be primarily responsible for the Chapter, ensuring it is operational and alumni and friends are engaged
- Strive to include all volunteers interested in serving in a leadership capacity
- Members should promote and attend as many Chapter events as possible
- Be willing to commit the necessary time to meet Chapter needs

Chapters may have as many Steering Committee members as necessary for operation, with **each committee member filling a two year term**. Each Steering Committee should have at least three members. Below are suggestions for potential Steering Committee Chair positions:

- President
- Events Chair
- Athletic Events Chair
- Education/Cultural Events Chair
- Community Service Chair
- Young Alumni Chair/GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade)
- Communications Chair
- CoRPs Chair (Commodore Recruitment Program)
- Parent of Current Student Chair
- Immediate Past President (1-year term)
- Volunteer Chair
- Member at Large

Steering Committee (cont.)

Having at least three members on your Steering Committee is important to the sustainability of the group. Your Committee can decide which roles best suit your members. Many chapters have Co-Chairs for some positions. Please take the interests of each volunteer into account when deciding on roles. For example, if one of your volunteers is an avid sports fan, it makes sense to make him/her responsible for arranging sports viewing parties and trips to local sporting events.

Selection of Steering Committee members:

- Members serve a 2-year term
- At the end of 1st year in office, the current President works with their Chapter Liaison to identify and recruit a President-elect from the existing Steering Committee
- The President will also serve a 1-year term as immediate past president at the end of his/her term

Descriptions of Steering Committee Roles

Chapters may choose to add more Steering Committee roles as needed. Below are brief descriptions of key roles. Please check with your Chapter Liaison for more detailed descriptions of each position, and keep in mind that the titles and roles are only suggestions. As long as the expectations for your Chapter are met, you can divide up the work in whatever way works best for your group.

PRESIDENT

The role of the President is to oversee all Chapter operations, preside over local Chapter activities/events, and ensure the Chapter is running smoothly and efficiently. He/she is also the “ambassador” to local alumni, friends, and the community and must be an alumnus/a of Vanderbilt.

Responsibilities:

- Executes the goals and mission of the overall VU Chapter program and evaluates Chapter progress annually
- Presides at Chapter functions and he/she oversees the Steering Committee
- Organizes and leads Steering Committee meetings
 - sets meeting time, place, and agenda and notifies Steering Committee of meetings
 - leads Steering Committee in setting annual events calendar and goals for Chapter

EVENTS CHAIR

The Events Chair is responsible for making sure the annual calendar of events planned by the Steering Committee is efficiently planned and implemented, ensuring local alumni and friends enjoy excellent, high-quality VU programming. A subcommittee of individual event coordinators (e.g. “Athletic Event Coordinator” or “Educational Event Coordinator”) is strongly recommended, as many volunteers are interested in assisting the Chapter by helping plan a single event or type of events.

Responsibilities:

- Works with Steering Committee to identify regional community events and programming for potential Chapter activities
- Plans and implements logistics of Chapter activities and events and/or delegates these tasks to subcommittee “event coordinators” who plan an individual event or type of events:

- identify and book event location
- coordinate food and beverage needs/costs
- coordinate programming and audio visual if needed
- See Appendix A for General Event Planning Roles and Appendix B for the General Events Checklist

ATHLETICS EVENTS CHAIR

Athletics provide a wonderful opportunity for alumni to engage with one another. The Athletics Chair is responsible for planning events with an athletic focus. The chair should monitor Vanderbilt athletic schedules paying attention to events that are televised in the chapter area or taking place in or near the chapter city.

Responsibilities:

- Host a VU coach (request through your chapter liaison)
- Plan pre-game and post-game parties
- Plan game-watching parties at a local venue or home
- Arrange attendance at a professional sports event (VU seating at ballpark/venue)
- Arrange to have “Welcome VU Alumni” on the big media board at sporting events

EDUCATION/CULTURAL EVENTS CHAIR

Education/Cultural Events provide meaningful, lifelong opportunities for alumni to engage and connect to Vanderbilt. The role of the Education/Cultural Events chair is to work with the Chapter Liaison and the steering committee to plan a range of purposeful programs that appeal to alumni with diverse interests.

Responsibilities:

- Plan an event with VU professor or Vanderbilt update with an administrator (request through Chapter Liaison)
- Invite prominent local alumni or alumni who are professors at other institutions to speak
- Pick a hot topic in your city (Olympics, lottery, elections, or pro sports) and invite an expert (faculty, parent, or alumnus)
- Plan events in conjunction with performances of Vanderbilt alumni, parents, students, or faculty
- Downtown business luncheon or breakfast with VU administrator, professor, or local leader
- Theater, ballet, symphony, concert in the park or other live performance with special VU seating; or museum visit with “VU Night” – This could be a gathering around annual local event (“VU at Shakespeare in the Park”)
- Book club/discussion group – focus on VU alumni or professor authors
- Host specific professional gatherings – “Calling All Teachers,” etc.
- Plan seminars using local alumni as resources such as home buying, career networking, or investing
- Have a professor speak on an art exhibit using slides, even if exhibit is not currently touring the city
- Connect with VU groups and/or individuals traveling to cities for events, conferences, or other reasons (Public Affairs, Athletics, Admissions, deans)
- Travel to neighboring cities or Nashville for special events or a day on campus
- See Appendix C for Educational Event Planning Roles and Appendix D for the Educational Events Checklist.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CHAIR

Community service is an important part of the Vanderbilt culture. The Community Service Chair plans opportunities for Vanderbilt alumni to give back to their communities in the name of Vanderbilt.

Responsibilities:

- Participate in a service project (Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, highway/park clean up, soup kitchen) and wear VU or black and gold T-shirts
- Organize a toy drive, canned food drive or book drive
- Help with voter registration (non-party affiliated)
- Participate in local “Hands On” organization day as a VU group and wear VU shirts

YOUNG ALUMNI/GRADUATES OF THE LAST DECADE (GOLD) CHAIR

It is important chapters plan activities that engage younger alumni and provide opportunities for them to become active future volunteers for the chapter and the university.

Responsibilities:

- Plan events geared toward the Young Alumni/GOLD, i.e. Happy Hours, Networking
- Plan activities that welcome recent graduates to area

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

This chair has the very important tasks of marketing the Chapter's events and boosting participation. This position works closely with other Steering Committee positions, especially Events Chairs.

Responsibilities:

- Provide information to Chapter Liaisons for blast emails that promote the event
- Assist the Chapter Liaison with editing promotion materials, i.e. email, Facebook, Twitter
- Provides Chapter updates and photographs of events for Alumni Relations information outlets (e.g. e-newsletters, *Commodore*, *Vanderbilt Magazine*, Social Media, etc.)

CoRPs CHAIR (Commodore Recruitment Programs - Prospective Students)

Commodore Recruitment Programs (CoRPs) are managed by Alumni Relations in conjunction with the Undergraduate Admissions Office. This chair must be an alumnus/a, and work with his/her subcommittee to assist Vanderbilt in attracting the best possible incoming class each year by promoting Vanderbilt and recruiting bright, well-rounded students who represent diverse backgrounds and educational goals. A subcommittee is essential and will be comprised of enthusiastic volunteers who provide an invaluable perspective to prospective Vanderbilt students. Alumni know best what it was like to be a Vanderbilt student and will share their experiences to personalize the admissions process.

Responsibilities:

- Serves as a local Vanderbilt contact for high schools and as an ambassador and resource for high school-age students and their parents; Serves as a contact for the Admissions Office in securing alumni to assist with college fairs and other college-related events
- Works with Chapter Liaison to organize the local *Vanderbilt and You* information session (if requested by Admissions Office)
- Makes congratulatory phone calls or emails to all admitted students from the local area and/or delegates to subcommittee

PARENT OF CURRENT STUDENT CHAIR

This chair promotes family participation in all Chapter events, and encourages parents to get involved with the Chapter. A requirement of this chair is that he/she is a parent of a current undergraduate student.

Responsibilities:

- Works with Promotions/Communication Chair to encourage attendance among parents
- Assist the CoRPs Chair with *Vanderbilt and You* programs and Summer Send-Off Parties, helping identify potential hosts and encouraging attendance among parents of current Vanderbilt students
- Serves as a resource contact for families on behalf of the Chapter

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

The immediate past president is a valuable resource for the current chapter leaders. The role of the Immediate Past President is to insure consistency and serve as an advisor to the steering committee.

Responsibilities:

- Assists President as a resource for Chapter operations, understanding the current President will operate the Chapter in his/her personal manner
- Serves a 1-year term on Steering Committee immediately after the conclusion of term as President
- Provides assistance, guidance, insight and suggestions to President as necessary
- Attends Steering Committee meetings and provides a recent history of Chapter as necessary
- Works with Steering Committee to encourage event attendance as needed
- Helps Steering Committee identify and recruit potential volunteers from VU community
- Participates in Chapter and VU events

VOLUNTEER CHAIR

It takes a wide range of committed and dedicated volunteers to operate a Chapter. It is strongly recommended that the Volunteer chair appoint a subcommittee to help locate and recruit volunteers to help the Chapter operate. This process can range from calling alumni and friends in the area to increase participation, to helping plan and implement events.

Responsibilities:

- Develops and implements a plan to identify, recruit, and engage more alumni, students, parents, and friends in Chapter activities
- Reviews event RSVPs/attendance records and uses them to identify and recruit potential new volunteers
- Informs Steering Committee and Chapter Liaison of alumni and friends updates (new e-mail addresses, phone, etc.), encouraging alumni to update info via VUConnect
- Communicates information on alumni to the Chapter Liaison including births, deaths, promotions, outstanding civic activities, etc.