

**From the 2007 – 2008 Volunteer Manual
for Club and Group Officers**

F. Club Membership

CLUB DUES

Club membership dues provide Clubs with much needed funds. When planning your membership goals, it is important to remember that one of the primary goals of the Association is to provide ways for alumni to connect with each other. Recognizing that only a minority of alumni (usually less than 25%) will actually become dues-paying members, access to the Club information about Club activities should not be limited to them.

When developing a policy for annual membership dues, factors to consider include the costs of:

- Printing and posting communication pieces
- Complimentary dinners and tokens of appreciation for guest speakers
- Occasional underwriting of partial or entire event costs
- Audio/visual equipment rental
- Local Club programs for student scholarships or financial aid

Membership Dues should be:

- Solicited of all local alumni annually at the beginning of the fiscal year
- Offered on a sliding scale (e.g., lower dues for new alumni)
- Ideally coincide with MIT's fiscal year of July 1 through June 30 of succeeding year

In addition, higher membership categories, such as "supporting" and/or "sustaining" may be added to allow people to make larger contributions.

Suggested Types of Membership

- Complimentary. Free membership usually offered to the most recent graduates (one year out, for both graduates and undergraduates).
- Young Alumni. Discounted membership offered to the five most recently graduated classes. Many Clubs charge just \$15 and some deduct 50% from the regular membership.
- Regular. Most popular type of membership offered. Most Clubs average \$25 to \$35.
- Supporting. Membership that contributes to overhead cost of Clubs above and beyond dues. Usually \$75.
- Sustaining. Same as above, Usually \$100 to \$250.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

As most Clubs are operating on the Association's fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), spring is a good time to think about membership recruitment. The Association recommends a dues-paying membership base that equals ten percent of the local alumni population. Below we have outlined some suggestions for an effective membership drive. Should you need assistance in developing a membership recruitment plan for your Club, please contact your AAO.

- Post your Dues on SmarTrans™.
- Send a stand alone "acquisition" membership mailing to all alumni in your geographic area who are not current members. Ask your AAO for samples from other Clubs.
- Include in all your communications a link to your membership form or a pre-printed form to allow alumni to sign up for membership.
- On event announcements, be sure to show non-member and member price difference to encourage alumni to become Clubs members.

- New graduates in your area should receive their first invitation to join the Club sometime in September, if not earlier. It is strongly suggested that new grads receive a heavily reduced or free membership.
- Consider a summer telethon to encourage both lapsed members and non-members to sign up.
- Consider sending your September newsletter to lapsed members with a membership form insert.
- As often as possible, reserve certain Club benefits for your dues-paying members. If you offer too many benefits to non-members on a regular basis (items such as your Club newsletter, email listserv, or having similar pricing for events for members and non-members), you may inadvertently remove the value of being a Club member. Look for ways to add value to your membership, such as providing a local alumni directory to members only, having some events for members exclusively, or offer an event that is free to members, but has a cost to non-members.
- Personally contact the alumni new to your area provided in the monthly New Neighbors reports from the Association.
- SmarTrans™ offers Clubs the ability to send an email to members whose dues are expiring at the end of the fiscal year and to those who were once members but have let their membership lapse (lapsed members) so long as they are still living within the Club area and have an email address. This message includes a link for online membership renewal or instructions for those who prefer to mail in a check or credit card number.

New Neighbors Reports

Every month, three electronic reports are emailed to Club Presidents listing alumni who have recently moved into and within your Club area. This is a group that you should welcome and solicit for membership. The three reports are detailed below.

- **Clubname_New_Neighbors**
- **Clubname_New_Neighbors_Committee.**
- **Clubname_New_Neighbors_address_updates**

REASONS TO JOIN AN MIT CLUB

People join MIT Clubs for many individual reasons. Highlight the perks of Club membership in your mailings and at events. Club members, through their involvement, will:

- receive discounts to appealing events
- have a chance to support MIT financially and through their efforts as volunteers
- meet new friends and renew old friendships
- hear first-hand new topics about the Institute from MIT faculty and staff
- provide scholarship money for future MIT students
- keep in touch with MIT
- provide social, educational, cultural, civic and community service events or activities
- enjoy behind-the-scenes tours at local sites
- receive exclusive invitations to special MIT events

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR MEMBERS

- If you use SmarTrans™ for your Events registration and Membership Dues payment, the Association will capture your members' and non-members' attendance at events. Please remember to send your AAO the names of participants who registered on site (walk-ins) and a list of dues-paying members who pay directly to the officers by check.
- Check Lists and Labels on the Volunteer Toolkit to get a list of your members and advise your AAO of any discrepancies.
- Ask for a list of non-renewing members to target with a special letter or phone call.
- Ask for a list of members who did not attend any event, thank them for their support, and ask why they didn't participate.

LOOK FOR TRENDS

Are most of your members about the same age or in the same profession? Do your events attract the same people? For example, if you have low representation among young alumni, try to recruit a young alumnus/a to join the board and to plan an event geared toward young alumni. If you have a decrease in the number of membership renewals, have a few board members telephone these alumni to find out the reasons behind their decisions.

TARGET GROUPS

An effective way to keep your members interested and active is to provide special interest programming. Some ideas include: MIT10 events, business luncheons, career forums, parents' events, family events, get-togethers for older alumni, etc. If these groups are big enough among your membership, you may want to have a chair on your board assigned to each group.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Many Clubs have reported terrific results from phone campaigns – both to increase attendance at events and for membership recruitment. Another benefit of phone calling is that you can use it as an opportunity to gather some feedback at the same time!

INCENTIVES TO BE RESERVED FOR MEMBERS ONLY

- Printed Club Directories
- Newsletters
- Special Discounts for Club Events (25% discount is recommended)
- Pre event reception for faculty visits

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE MIT10 INVOLVEMENT WITH CLUBS

The Association defines MIT10 as those who received their undergraduate degree in the last ten years or a graduate degree in the last five years.

- Appoint a MIT10 Chair
- Plan an annual event to welcome new graduates to your Club at minimal or no cost.
- Provide samples of easy, low-cost MIT10 events that Clubs can sponsor. Topics such as financial planning, help on buying a house, resume writing, and networking are the most interesting to this population. Simple social gatherings such as happy hours or bowling could be considered.
- Offer a small gift to MIT10 who come to a Club event for the first time.
- Create a standard survey that Clubs can use to poll their MIT10 constituency and plan events that are best suited to their purposes.

The most successful activities for MIT10 are:

- Happy hour (or other purely social event)
- Events combined with MIT10 from other universities
- Networking or other career development events
- Sport events and outings (hiking, biking, etc.)
- Events related to current hot topics in science, technology, or business

The most effective ways to get MIT10 to attend Club events:

- LOW COST!
- Eye-catching invites with lighthearted graphics
- Event coordinator is also a young alumnus/a
- Email communications for events
- Personal contact with MIT10 before events (e.g. phone calls)
- Less formal agenda
- Follow-up after events
- Newsletter that includes MIT10 information