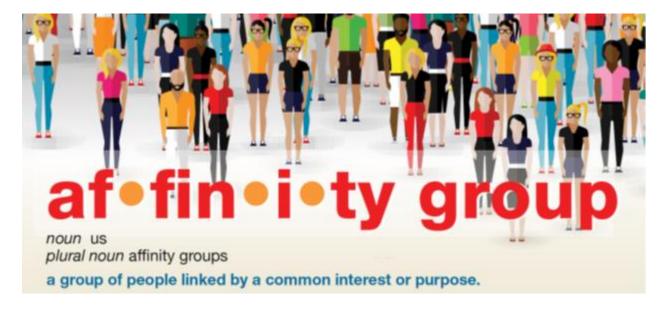# What is an Affinity Group?

An Affinity Group is a group of faculty and staff linked by a common purpose, ideology, or interest. Affinity Groups play a vital role in ensuring an inclusive environment where all are valued, included, and empowered to succeed. They can provide a collective voice for faculty and staff with common interests, and are affiliated with and can receive funding support from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI).

As a member, you can play a vital role in ensuring an inclusive environment where all are valued, included, and empowered to succeed.

Why should I join?

Benefits of joining an Affinity Group include the opportunity for:

- Professional development and networking;

- A collective voice and relationship with ODI;

- A role in fostering a community of support, respect and advancement;

- Engagement in recruitment and retention efforts; and

- Broadening cultural awareness on campus.

Getting Started

If you have an idea for a new Affinity Group, here's how to get started:

Group Charter

Each Affinity Group should include a Group Charter which should include the following:

- A mission statement – a brief statement of what you want the Affinity Group to represent and accomplish; its purpose and reason for existing.

- Value proposition – clearly defined benefits that faculty and staff will receive by joining and participating within the Affinity Group.

- Goals/Objectives – the goals and objectives should align and support the University's Strategic Plan—*The Plan for Pitt: Making a Difference Together, Academic Years 2016-2020.* They should communicate both the Pitt and the affinity group's core values and common interests.

Leadership

Each Affinity Group should have a defined Leadership Team to include:

- Chair – this individual leads and oversees the function of the group. The Chair helps ensure that the Group Charter is supported and outcomes are successful and work directly with the ODI advisor. The Chair is also responsible for meeting with leadership to provide reporting on the group's metrics and other duties assigned.

- Vice Chair – individual(s) that assist and/or act in the absence of the Chair to oversee the function of the group. The Vice Chair helps ensure that the Group Charter is supported and outcomes are successful and other duties assigned.

- Business Manager – individual supports the administrative functions of the group and submits monthly activity and budget reports to the ODI Advisor on behalf of the leadership.

- ODI Advisor – individual(s) in the ODI that provides guidance and advise the group on day to day items/initiatives and act as the liaison to the Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion.

Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor's role is critical and multi-dimensional. it is our vision that the Executive Sponsors:

- Act as a campion for and visible representable of the Affinity Group.
- Share information about the Affinity Group's activities with other leadership and management and vice versa.

- Encourage attendance at key events by engaging the Executive's professional networks.
- Encourage and inspire the Affinity Group leadership team, by challenging them to think outside of the box to create and implement new and innovative ideas for programs and workshops.
- Offer visioning advice and/or a broader perspective of the campus university to the leadership, so that Affinity Group's activities align to the University's strategic plan.
- Allow the Affinity Group leadership team act in full autonomy with the guidance of the ODI office, but be available for counsel when needed.

Committees

Each Affinity Group should develop committees and assign committee chairs or co-chairs to each based on the goals and objectives of the group, including the following:

- Communication/Marketing – assist with website upkeep, developing marketing/branding collateral, social media exposure and other duties assigned.

- Community Relations – assist in forming relationships with internal communities and other Affinity Groups, but also developing partnerships with the local external diverse communities of Pitt.

- Programming – assist with development of programming and/or workshops that assist in the development of faculty and staff, mentorship, assist in the onboarding of new participants within the group and Pitt at large and other duties assigned.

Initiatives

Each Affinity Group should develop the following items consistent with the goals and objectives. Each can be stand alone or joint partnership with internal and external organizations:

- Events – this can be social or professional and can also be an inclusive event exclusively for the faculty and staff participants of the group or include all faculty, staff, and students across the university. In addition, each group will have a signature event that will be a partnership with the ODI.

- Membership and General Body Meetings – a meeting with all faculty and staff participants and other key partners to discuss assigned agenda items and present new business initiatives and/or close out old ones. This meeting is also an opportunity for leadership to provide an overall status of the Affinity Group.

- Programming – this can be a series of workshops or events focused on a specific area aligned with the focus of the group.

- Workshops - a meeting or training at which the group engages in discussion and activity on a particular subject or project aligned with the goals and objectives of the group.

<u>Reporting</u>

Each Affinity Group will be responsible for submitting a report monthly that consist of the following:

- Snapshot of Monthly Activity – Report that captures a rolling calendar of past and future initiatives, budget overview, and status summary.

- Participant report - Excel spreadsheet of active/non-active faculty and staff members.

- Scorecard – Scorecard that tracks level of participation of faculty and staff at initiatives and general body meetings and measure level of engagement of ongoing participation within the group.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Here's how the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) can play a part in the commitment and success of Pitt's Affinity Groups:

- Provides guidance and financial support to all Affinity Groups;
- Assists in the development of new Affinity Groups;
- Assists in any relaunch or rebranding of existing Affinity Groups;
- Provides ongoing mentorship to all.

The ODI Advisor will provide day to day advice and act as the liaison to the Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion. Funding requests will be submitted to ODI for review and approval.

We want our Affinity Groups to grow!

If you have an idea for a new Affinity Group please contact Lisa Garland at 412-648-7873 or email at lig52@pitt.edu.

You can also go to our website at www.diversity.pitt.edu/diversity-resources/affinity-groups to learn more.