Yale GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Graduate School Alumni Association (GSAA) Board
Roles and Responsibilities
Last updated: November 2024

I. Board Officers
[Chair, Vice Chair, up to three Executive Officers]

The Board Officers serve as the Board's leadership. They are models of collegiality and facilitators of best practices for the Board, including through the activities identified below.

The Chair and Vice Chair work closely with the Graduate School's Associate Director for Engagement and Alumni Relations to:

- Meet as appropriate with the Graduate School Dean to provide counsel and clarify any questions about the Dean's priorities for alumni engagement.
- Organize the year's activities and meetings, and preside over those meetings.
- Serve as sounding boards for the Executive Officers, Committee Chairs, and Board Members.
- Periodically review the Board's structure, bylaws, and guidance documents, and engage the Board in any suggested adjustments.

- Oversee the annual appointment of Board Officers, in consultation with the Nominating Committee. This process entails:
  - Working with the Associate Director for Engagement and Alumni Relations to solicit nominations and self-nominations for board officer positions that will be coming open, typically early in the calendar year
  - Giving careful consideration to nominees' board engagement and demonstrated leadership
  - Seeking to ensure a balance between leadership continuity and opportunities for new voices
  - Defining the roles of the Executive Officers each year to ensure that they address the priorities of the Dean and Alumni Association and align well with the work of board committees
  - Bringing a slate of board officers for consideration to the Board at its Spring in-person meeting

- Oversee the annual appointment of committee chairs and advisory board members. This process entails:
  - Working with the Associate Director for Engagement and Alumni Relations to solicit nominations and self-nominations after the Spring in-person meeting

- Giving careful consideration to board engagement, demonstrated leadership, and in the case of advisory slots, the potential to sustain or initiate specific strategic projects
- Seeking to ensure a balance between leadership continuity and opportunities for new voices
- Recruiting chairs and advisory board members after the conclusion of the in-person Spring meeting

The Chair and Vice Chair:
- Proactively support and advance the Dean's annual goals through and on behalf of the Board.
- Participate actively in the Coordinating Committee, which is responsible for identifying annual goals for the Board and its committees and monitoring progress toward those goals.
- Communicate on a regular basis with Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs to provide needed support, while being mindful not to assume the role of the Chairs or to do the work of Committees or Yale staff.
- Serve as a resource for all Board members.
  - Facilitate communication, resolve conflicts and challenges, and elevate issues when necessary to the Coordinating Committee.

II. Coordinating Committee
[Board Officers, Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs, and Associate Director of Engagement & Alumni Relations]

The Coordinating Committee serves as a nodal point for communications and coordination among Board Committees, as well as between the Board and the Yale Graduate School administration. It does not shape policy or drive strategic oversight of the Board. Rather, its main goal is to maximize efficient communication and minimize duplication of effort.
Activities of the Coordinating Committee include:

- Periodically assess/evaluate/reflect on the work of the Board and Board Committees.
  - Meet three times a year: at the start of the academic year to coordinate Board efforts/activities, at mid-year for status check-in, and at year-end for an annual review and to plan for the coming year.
- Continually listen to Committee reports and observe Committee activities to guide the Board in providing a coordinated and holistic approach to achieving the Board's overall goals and objectives.
- Serve as an advisory group to the Board officers.

III. Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs
Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs coordinate the activities of each Committee and keep Committee members informed of all relevant information. They ensure that all Committee members are heard, and they encourage and facilitate participation by all members during Committee meetings and in Committee activities. The Chairs/Co-Chairs are the communication liaison between the Committee and the Board Officers and the Board. Responsibilities of Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs include those identified below.

- Schedule a meeting between the Committee Co-Chairs (if relevant) and the Committee Staff Liaison as early as possible in the academic year to begin annual planning.
  - A Liaison from the Graduate School staff will be appointed annually to each Committee, and will serve as a touchpoint for the alignment of Committee work with the priorities of the Dean of the Graduate School and the University. While not expected to attend all Committee meetings, the Staff Liaison should be consulted about new ideas and initiatives and collaborate closely with Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs.
- Taking into account the Committee's previous year's goals and report (available in this folder), plan a full Committee meeting by early September to compose preliminary goals, projected activities, a timeline, and metrics of success.
  - Be mindful of opportunities to further the Dean's priorities for the year and intentionally advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging ("DEIB") in Committee work.
- Work thoughtfully, effectively, and efficiently.
  - Schedule committee meeting times to maximize attendance and participation of all members.
  - Prepare Committee materials, including meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes, as well as Committee reports and presentations.
  - Form smaller work groups where appropriate/advisable that report back to the full Committee.
  - Keep confidential discussion and voting to assigned Committee members only.
- Ensure that all Committee materials (e.g., schedules, agendas, meeting minutes, reports) are uploaded in a timely fashion to the appropriate GSAA Resources Hub folder or provided to the Graduate School's Associate Director for Engagement and Alumni Relations for uploading/archiving.

IV. Board Members

GSAA Board Members serve the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), its alumni, and the University by being an active role model and Yale ambassador; supporting the GSAA mission & priorities; and leading execution of GSAA Board programs & initiatives in collaboration with staff partners. Responsibilities of Board Members include those identified below.
- Actively contribute to the work of the Board by prioritizing in-person attendance to the two annual gatherings in New Haven and to the goals of the Committees on which they serve.
  - Absence from three consecutive Board meetings shall be deemed a resignation that the Board may (or may not) accept.
- Model a set of behaviors that ensure collegiality and professionalism in all interactions.
  - Prepare for Board and Committee meetings, having reviewed the materials to be discussed.
    - Be open to receiving and providing constructive feedback.
  - Focus on agreed Committee objectives, while minimizing activities outside those agreed by the Committee.
    - Refrain from re-visiting and re-discussing issues already deliberated upon.
  - Refrain from any personal recordings through videos or autogenerated meeting notes

(such at Otter.ai).
- The Development and Alumni Office staff may use autogenerated notes from digital meetings and may also record some sessions for the benefit of board members who cannot attend, though only with the awareness of meeting participants.

V. Resources

Board Members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with relevant available resources regarding the Yale GSAS (https://gsas.yale.edu/) and the Yale Alumni Association (YAA) (e.g., https://alumni.yale.edu/). In addition, Board Members should review, understand, and adhere to the:

- GSAA Constitution and By-Laws;
- GSAA Board Confidentiality Policy;
- GSAAB Community Agreement
- GSAA Board Event and Program Guidelines.