



VILLANOVA LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CHAPTER LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

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Section One: Mission, Governance & Membership

I. Villanova Law Alumni Association Chapter Mission Statement

Consistent with the rich history of the Villanova University School of Law and the teachings of St. Augustine, the mission of the Villanova Law Alumni Association (VLAA or the Association) is to foster loyalty and fellowship among the School of Law and its alumni and students, to promote a commitment to public service, and to assist the School of Law and its alumni in the pursuit of excellence in legal education and the practice of law.

The chapters of the Association engage alumni in specific geographic regions or special interest communities, and are charged with carrying out the Association's mission in their respective regions or communities.

II. Governance and Membership

Chapters operate under the auspices of the VLAA and are guided by the programming policies established by the VLAA Board of Advisors (18 members) and its officers. The Association's operating year is June 1 through May 31.

Each chapter is led by a leadership council responsible for ensuring the fulfillment of the chapter's mission. The VLAA Board of Advisors Membership Committee serves as the Association's liaison to each chapter's leadership council.

All alumni residing or working in the specified geographic area or who are part of a special interest community are considered members of the respective chapter. Chapters may not charge dues or membership fees. The costs of chapter events and programs are typically covered by registration fees and, in some cases, support from the Law School.

III. Chapter Programming

Experience demonstrates that successful chapter programming will cover some or all of six general areas:

1. **Social** – Social and professional networking opportunities to build a strong sense of community.
2. **Service** – Service activities to support Villanova's Augustinian and Catholic mission in the local community.
3. **Law Students and Recent Graduates** – Opportunities for alumni to interact with current students having summer jobs in their area and recent graduates

who have settled in their community.

4. **Education** – Programs involving Law School or prominent alumni speakers in the chapter area that provide information about current topics.
5. **Communication** – Information provided to alumni on Villanova Law School and VLAA programming, news and events.
6. **Stewardship** – Active, organized and well informed leadership councils that plan a variety of events and activities for all alumni.

Section Two: A Guide to Getting Started & Staying Active

I. Starting a Chapter

This section of the Chapter Leadership Handbook will help you determine the steps necessary to start a chapter in your region or area of interest. As you proceed, keep in mind the following items.

- Starting an alumni chapter requires a substantial amount of time and effort, and you will have to find people who are interested in helping you make the chapter succeed.
- A core group of at least three to five alumni are needed to plan and coordinate chapter events and activities. This is true if there are 50 alumni in your area or 1,000.

The following information provides an outline of the steps that need to be taken to start an alumni chapter:

1. Contact the Director of Alumni Relations (610-519-7054) and express your interest in organizing an alumni chapter.
2. Read this Chapter Leadership Handbook and any other information sent to you by the Association.
3. Make contact with alumni in your designated geographic region or special interest community with assistance from the Office of Alumni Relations, to inform them of the initiative, encourage their involvement and solicit interest in leadership positions. This may include:
 - a. Sending a mass e-mail;

- b. Making personal phone calls or sending individual e-mails;
 - c. Placing a notice in an alumni e-newsletter;
 - d. Mailing a letter; and/or
 - e. Organizing an informal gathering.
4. Once a group of five to ten interested alumni are identified, including a core group of at least three volunteers, the core group should work with the Director of Alumni Relations to select a time, date and location for the chapter's organizational meeting, as well as to determine the agenda. The VLAA Executive Committee will appoint a president, vice president and secretary to guide the chapter through its first full year.
5. The Director of Alumni Relations will work with the newly appointed officers to invite all alumni in the chapter's special interest community or working or residing within the chapter's geographic region to the organizational meeting. The core group should share responsibility for following up with those alumni who have expressed interest in attending the meeting and being involved in the chapter's formation.
6. Hold the organizational meeting. At the meeting
 - a. introduce the chapter's officers for the first year;
 - b. review roles and responsibilities of leadership council positions, and encourage participation on the leadership council (see Section Two, Paragraph II);
 - c. discuss potential goals and programming ideas for the chapter; and
 - d. before adjourning, set the next meeting date and expectations for the meeting.
7. If no representatives from the Villanova Law Alumni Association or Office of Alumni Relations are present at the organizational meeting, follow up with the Director of Alumni Relations the following day.

II. Chapter Leadership Council Roles and Responsibilities

The chapter leadership council plans and organizes all chapter activities. The leadership council is appointed by the chapter president, after consultation with the Director of Alumni Affairs. It is recommended that the leadership council consist of at least five to ten members (including the officers), depending upon the size of the chapter and interest of its members. The council should be diverse in class year, gender, ethnicity, practice setting, etc. Volunteers may serve in their leadership council positions for as long as they are capable of fulfilling their duties, and have the support of the majority of the leadership council.

The leadership council's officer positions are president, vice president and secretary. Their roles and responsibilities are as follows:

President

The president serves as the chapter's chief executive officer. The chapter president should demonstrate exemplary leadership, communication and public speaking ability. Presidents must have email and Internet access and be able to devote the time necessary to fulfill the chapter's leadership needs. The chapter's president should also plan on having a significant amount of interaction with the Director of Alumni Relations and VLAA Membership Committee Chair.

The election for president takes place at the chapter's annual planning meeting. The chapter leadership council elects the president to a two-year term of office commencing the day after the annual planning meeting.

The president will:

- Provide overall leadership and direction for chapter.
- Schedule/chair leadership council meetings.
- Recruit Leadership Council members.
- Delegate duties to leadership council members and/or recruit event coordinators.
- Ensure chapter adherence to the VLAA mission and practices.
- Communicate frequently with the Director of Alumni Relations and/or VLAA Membership Committee Chair.
- Work with the Office of Alumni Relations to determine expected annual budget for the chapter.
- Attend chapter events.
- Offer welcoming remarks at chapter events.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the VLAA Board of Advisors, and participate in VLAA Board meetings and Membership Committee meetings by conference call or in person when able.
- Attend VLAA Leadership Retreat in May, if able.

Time Commitment:

Length of commitment: 2 year term (renewable)

Total Average Monthly Hours: 5 - 10 (including attendance at events)

Vice President

The vice president will assume the duties of the president in his/her absence. The vice president position can also be used to prepare a leadership council member to assume the role of chapter president.

The vice president will:

- Attend chapter events.

- Assist in planning and conducting leadership council meetings.
- Assist the president in recruiting alumni to attend events and activities.
- Support event coordinators in planning events and activities.
- Help the president recruit leadership council members.
- Assist the president in participating in VLAA Board meetings and Membership Committee meetings by conference call or in person when president is unable to do so.

Time Commitment:

Length of commitment: 2 year term (renewable)

Total Average Monthly Hours: 4-8 (including attendance at events)

Secretary

The Secretary will:

- Attend chapter events.
- Assist in planning and conducting leadership council meetings
- Assist the president in encouraging alumni to attend events and activities
- Help president recruit leadership council members.
- Take minutes of chapter meetings and, if unable, delegate another council member to do so.
- Ensure completion of summary reports after each event.
- Ensure delivery of meeting minutes and summary reports after each meeting or event to the Office of Alumni Relations and VLAA Membership Committee Chair.

Time Commitment:

Length of commitment: 2 year term (renewable)

Total Average Monthly Hours: 4-8 (including attendance at events)

Officer Nomination & Election Process

At the end of the chapter's first full year of operation, and at the end of each year thereafter, each chapter president will nominate a president, vice president and secretary for the following year. The president may wish to assemble an ad hoc nominating committee, consisting of current council members, We ask that the president or nominating committee consider only current members of the organization's leadership council for officer positions.

A general notice should be sent to the leadership council members, inquiring whether or not anyone is interested in any officer position for the upcoming year. In addition, the president or nominating committee should make their own recommendations for positions based upon each council member's involvement, commitment and leadership qualities.

The president is asked to submit the chapter's nomination slate for president, vice president and secretary to the Director of Alumni Relations by April 1 each year, for consideration by the VLAA Nominating Committee. Those listed on the slate must be willing and ready to accept the position for which they have been nominated, and be ready to begin their respective terms on June 1.

The VLAA Nominating Committee shall review the chapter officer slate, consult with the chapter president as appropriate, and submit the slate for the approval of the VLAA Executive Committee no later than May 15.

Event Coordinators

In addition to the officer positions, event coordinators are additional leadership positions, which can be held by any member of the chapter at any time. Event coordinators are appointed by the chapter president, after consultation with members of the leadership council, to be responsible for planning and coordinating a specific chapter event or activity.

An event coordinator will:

- Plan and take responsibility for a specific chapter event.
- Recruit volunteers for the specific event.
- Communicate with the chapter president about event details.
- Communicate and work with the Director of Alumni Relations regarding event details and promotion.
- Attend the chapter event.
- Encourage alumni to attend the event or activity.
- Meet and greet people attending the event.
- Complete an event summary form.

Time Commitment: Varies with event

III. Chapter Communication and Marketing

Reaching our alumni population is one of the main ingredients in making our chapters and their events and activities successful. The marketing of these events is done through the joint efforts of each chapter leadership council, the Villanova Law Alumni Association and the Office of Alumni Relations.

Event Marketing

Chapters should share the following information with the Director of Alumni Relations at least 10 weeks prior to the event:

- Event Name

- Date/Time
- Type of event/brief event description
- Speakers, if applicable
- Location
- Price, if applicable
- Registration process and RSVP date

Once this information is available, a marketing plan for the event can be created using e-mail, mailed invitations and the Villanova Law web site. Please note that electronic media is often the most efficient and effective means of communication. We ask that chapter presidents submit their chapter's activity information as recommended below to allow for effective marketing:

- Summer Activities: 1st week of April
- Fall Activities: 1st week of July
- Winter Activities: 1st week of September
- Spring Activities: 1st week of January

Section Three: Staying Connected

I. Communicating with the Office

The Office of Alumni Relations provides chapters with leadership training, event-planning support, graphic design and technology services. Leadership council members may directly contact the alumni office at any time.

Office of Alumni Relations

Villanova University School of Law
 299 North Spring Mill Road
 Villanova, PA 19085
 Phone: 610-519-7054
 Fax: 610-519-6472
 Email: alumni@law.villanova.edu

Colleen M. Belz

Director of Alumni Relations
Executive Director of the Villanova Law Alumni Association
Administrator of the Villanova Law Inn of Court
 Direct Line: 610-519-7036
 Email: cbelz@law.villanova.edu

Karen A. Johnson

Administrative Assistant for the Office of Alumni Relations

Direct Line: 610-519-7054
Email: kajohnso@law.villanova.edu

II. Resources Provided by the Office of Alumni Relations:

Chapters may request the following information and supplies from the Alumni Office:

- Chapter Handbooks
- Leadership information and training
- Marketing and communication assistance (invitations, emails, etc.)
- Alumni list and demographics (for chapter use only)
- E-mail distributions for chapter
- Assistance with event planning and coordination
- Responsibility for signing contracts
- Responsibility for receiving event RSVP's and payment
- Items to raffle at chapter events
- Giveaway items for chapter events
- Event supplies (name tags, giveaways, Villanova Law and upcoming event materials, etc.)
- Guidelines and checklist for event planning
- Law School information and contacts
- Development Office information and contacts

III. Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the most important aspect of ensuring a chapter's success?

The most significant component of a successful chapter is a committed and active chapter leadership council. It is essential that each leadership council member is dedicated to his/her position and understands the time commitment involved with the position.

Leadership council members who provide consistent, effective leadership will be able to recruit dedicated chapter members for support. This situation will, in turn, result in a chapter that has numerous quality events that are supported and well attended.

It is also important for effective leaders to ensure continuity of the chapter by identifying the leaders of tomorrow and affording them the opportunity to become

involved with the chapter and develop as chapter volunteers and leaders.

2. Why do chapters need to be in contact with the Villanova Law Alumni Association and Office of Alumni Relations?

As explained above in the Chapter Leadership Information Guide, the Villanova Law Alumni Association Board and Office of Alumni Relations provide essential support and assistance to the chapters. Chapters must remain in contact with the Association Board and alumni office to obtain the assistance necessary to fulfill their mission. Chapters are an extension of Villanova University School of Law and the Villanova Law Alumni Association; the mutually beneficial ties must be respected by all parties.

3. How does a chapter know what constitutes an appropriate activity or event location?

A chapter should offer a diverse variety of events and activities that appeal to the educational, cultural, volunteer or social interest of its local alumni. A chapter's events and activities represent the Law School and Alumni Association. Limiting events to happy hours, Law School speakers, extravagant dinners or athletic events will also limit the appeal of the chapter to area alumni.

It is important to remember that the Law School, the Alumni Association and alumni expect first class, high quality events. The events should be reasonably priced and in convenient locations. The staff of the alumni office can assist with event details and finding appropriate locations upon the request from the chapter leadership council.

4. What record-keeping is necessary for the chapter?

If the leadership council holds a meeting, minutes must be taken to get action steps down in writing to ensure momentum, success and chapter growth. Just as it is important to plan properly for an event, it is also necessary to evaluate an event's success and maintain records for future events. After every meeting and chapter event, the secretary and/or event coordinator should complete minutes and/or an event summary form (and attach an attendance sheet) and submit copies to the Office of Alumni Relations.

5. How does a chapter obtain operating capital? Can an individual chapter charge dues?

All graduates of Villanova University School of Law are considered members of the Villanova Law Alumni Association. Members of the VLAA in a special interest group or living within a geographic chapter area are members of that chapter. Chapters may not charge dues or membership fees.

Chapters are encouraged to break-even for an event through registration fees when feasible. Certain events will be subsidized by the Law School. Chapters requesting

budgetary support for a chapter event should contact the Director of Alumni Relations at least four months prior to the event.

6. Are my actions as a volunteer covered by Villanova University's insurance policies?

Every volunteer working under the auspices of Villanova University School of Law and the Villanova Law Alumni Association are covered by the University's general liability insurance, **provided** that their actions are coordinated with and approved by the Villanova Law Alumni Association.

7. What is the privacy policy for Villanova Alumni Association Volunteers?

The Villanova Law Alumni Association values the privacy of its alumni. All names, addresses, phone numbers, graduation information and any other contact or alumni information can only be used by volunteers approved by Alumni Association staff members for official Alumni Association purposes.

8. Are chapters exempt from paying sales tax?

Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Florida are the only states in which the University has sales tax exemption. The Villanova Alumni Association will provide this information to the vendor when requested to do so by the chapter.