

## Membership Matters Session – Discussion Group Notes June 9, 2021

### Since the pandemic, how has your thinking of membership changed?

- Several clubs and SIGs have seen membership increase with the increased offering of virtual programs.
  - You can email attendees after the event to push membership
  - With virtual programs, alumni join from outside of the club region
  - SIGs are looking to increase international membership and recent grads.
- Pandemic caused the HCUK strive to maintain membership.
  - Began offering free virtual events and membership decreased and now thinking of a new membership campaign targeting new grads.
  - Currently, what members pay is based on graduation year.
- For newer SIGs, the pandemic may have been a help as they were just launching. They were able to meet and build membership without in-person event logistics.
  - Now the task is to determine how they want to operate coming out of the pandemic.
- Clubs noticed that alumni began to shift their affiliation to a region rather than one specific club.
  - Has caused some clubs to re-think its membership model and maybe begin charging dues because there is a much larger number of alumni in the region.

### Has your club/SIG membership model evolved since last year?

- HC of the UK used to offer perks in the past for members, such as the Harvard Magazine, but this ultimately wasn't cost effective, so they made the decision to pull back on a few offerings to keep operating costs low.
- HC of San Diego has increased partnering (and advertise HAA SIG events) on events and aims to continue this strategy in the coming year. The Club uses their dues mostly for young alumni events and summer internships. The San Diego Club is unsure about keeping the dues system or not. Has hosted free virtual events during the pandemic. They have 140 dues paying members but manage a list-serv of 4,000.
- HC of Central FL -evolved in two ways – transition to remote programming, which expanded their geographic focus, which expanded membership – 35 new members who would have had to drive 60-90 mins for in person. They typically have churn - ~300 members come and go. Analyzed that and realized that people come in and out at different stages of life, so targeting those people, also targeting newcomers to the area.
- HC of Boston – Closed clubhouse, pivoted to virtual events. Invested in Zoom platform. Had significant membership drop-off, as our dues are high and we had no member or private events. Extended focus to national and international perspective. Going forward, we're seeking to offer a hybrid experience for members going forward.

### Will you carry these changes forward post pandemic?

- Most attendees noted they would retain virtual events.
- Harvard Alumni Association of Utah – COVID resulted in more efficient administrative meetings – they went quicker, but we lost the camaraderie we had in the past. Hope we'll continue that in

future in a hybrid fashion. Missed Harvard/Yale gathering this past year. Could have used outdoor options more to our advantage during COVID.

- Harvard Alumni Association of Utah– Always trying to recruit youth. Emphasizing diversity of options for different alumni constituents.
- Broadening the reach of the clubs – outdoor programming works for some segments – is there a way to continue the broadened participation? It may mean more programming overall to maintain engagement online without capacity and travel concerns.

### **Other Questions**

- What about charging different fees for different events depending on membership status?
  - Many groups do different tiers for different events
  - Gives membership dues a benefit vs. just helping the club
  - Some clubs find that it hasn't made a difference if people paid membership dues and got a lower event price (smaller clubs)
- How/what do you communicate out as a “perk” if members pay dues? It's hard to make the case for a payment if it's not clear the benefits.
  - Exclusive access to certain events throughout the year, discounted prices to ticketed events, sometimes even a tangible token such as a lapel pin (pin example is from the HC of Louisiana).
- How do you finance your club if you are not charging dues?
  - Make with that you have! Tag onto events already happening around you and invite your membership to it to have a Harvard cluster at the event.
  - Charge for events. Increase the ticket price by a few dollars to bring in a small amount of money for the club to help fund future events.