



## SIGs

### Background

Historically, Yale alumni have connected to each other and to the University through three traditional avenues: Yale College classes, regional clubs, and graduate/professional school alumni associations. Increasingly, Yale graduates are coming together to formulate groups on the basis of a “shared identity”, related to ethnicity, race, culture or sexual orientation, producing such groups as the Asian-American Alumni and Black Alumni Associations. Other graduates are motivated to affiliate on the basis of a “shared interest” which stem from a common activity enjoyed as a student or from a common professional interest, such as the Whiffenpoofs Singing Group and Yale in Real Estate Association. Collectively, “shared identity groups” and “shared interest groups” are referred to in shorthand as “SIGs.”

### Goals

SIGs provide significant opportunities to foster a greater sense of connection to and engagement between members of the alumni community and Yale.

Through events and activities, SIGs serve as ambassadors for Yale, supporting institutional goals and promoting the reputation of the University. SIGs also help to identify talented prospective students, as well as volunteer alumni leaders.



*Yale Lion Dancers at the NYC Lunar New Year banquet of the Association of Asian American Yale Alumni*

### Organizing Structure

The Association of Yale Alumni (AYA) offers SIGs the opportunity for formal recognition which brings about corresponding benefits. To receive official recognition from AYA, SIGs must satisfy the following five criteria: Membership threshold of at least 100 alumni; Volunteer leadership of, at minimum, two officers; Preparation of Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws; Preparation of a three-year strategic plan; and Submission of annual report. To date, the AYA has recognized a total of 61 SIGs. This number continues to grow.

### Benefits

Upon receiving formal AYA recognition, SIGs are granted permission for use of the Yale name. In an effort to help publicize the existence of a SIG, the AYA will include the group name and key information on the AYA website and provide web hosting for the group’s own website. AYA will also distribute two start-up broadcast e-mail communications to prospective members and provide updated member lists.