



## Employee Affinity Groups Policy

Effective Date: *April, 2018*

Office: *If detailed questions, which office is best contact?*

Office of Equity & Inclusion

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements and guidelines for introducing new Employee Affinity Groups at the University of Indianapolis. The policy is intended to provide guidance for employees who wish to form these groups.

**SCOPE:** The University of Indianapolis Employee Affinity Groups Policy applies to all employees of the University. It further applies to the creation and formation of Employee Affinity Groups and all associated activities, including the creation, revision, and amendment of group charters and operating procedures.

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS/ RELATED INFORMATION:

- [University Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
- [University Branding Guidelines](#)
- [Employee Affinity Group Application](#)
- [Registered Student Organization Handbook \(pp. 22-23\)](#)
- [Faculty Handbook \(7.7\)](#)
- [Student Handbook \(pp. 8, 54\)](#)
- [Staff Handbook \(p.39\)](#)
- [Employee Charity Request Approval Form](#)

**POLICY HISTORY:** N/A.

# Employee Affinity Groups

**POLICY STATEMENT:** *State the policy here. The policy statement should include the principles of the policy: What is permitted or prohibited, what is required, or how issues will be handled. If viewers read only this section, they will know what the policy is and how it extends to the University. If procedures are short in nature, please include in policy. If procedures are lengthy, please provide separate document.*

Employee Affinity Groups are voluntary associations of employees who share common interests. These groups can play an important role in articulating, promoting, and supporting their collective concerns, as well as assist the University in achieving its goals and strategic priorities. Their primary focus of Employee Affinity Groups at the University of Indianapolis is to help advance inclusive excellence throughout the institution. The groups can assist the University with the recruitment, retention, and development of employees, as well as provide support for students. By empowering its members, Employee Affinity Groups can also help increase morale, provide insights, and enhance institutional community engagement efforts.

## I. Guidelines for Employee Affinity Groups:

University of Indianapolis Employees who wish to form an Employee Affinity Group must follow the following guidelines:

- A. Employee Affinity Groups must be formed voluntarily, and individual employee membership and participation in such groups must be voluntary.
- B. Membership, meetings, and activities of Employee Affinity Groups must be open to all employees.
  1. In accordance with the University's non-discrimination policy, membership and participation must be open to all employees, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation (or gender identity or expression), or age in its programs and activities.
- C. The mission and purpose of Employee Affinity Groups should include alignment with the mission, values, and strategic priorities of the University of Indianapolis.
  1. Mission statements must be included in the Charter of Employee Affinity Groups, and will be reviewed by the University.
- D. All Employee Affinity Groups must adhere to University policies, protocols and guidelines regarding space utilization and event planning for meetings and events.
- E. During the initial formation stage, at least two (2) full-time employees must serve as the organizers of the Employee Affinity Group. All subsequent members must be employees of the University.

## II. Procedures for forming an Employee Affinity Group:

The successful formation of an Employee Affinity Group typically requires the identification and commitment of a small nucleus of dedicated and interested employees. It takes commitment from these individuals to ensure the group organizes itself in such a way as to guarantee continuity. The following are the recommended procedures for establishing an Employee Affinity Group at the University of Indianapolis.

1. Employees identify at least two employees to serve as the organizers of the Employee Affinity Group. Organizers are responsible for:
  - a. Confirming employee interest in establishing the Employee Affinity Group
  - b. Coordinating the development of the Employee Affinity Group Charter.
  - c. Submitting the Employee Affinity Group application and Charter to the Office of Equity and Inclusion.
  - d. Organizing the initial meetings and activities of the Employee Affinity Group.
2. Develop Employee Affinity Group Charter document:
  - a. The Charter document describes the mission, purpose, and objectives of the Employee Affinity Group. The Charter also communicates procedural information regarding membership, leadership roles and selection process, meeting and event notices, and the primary activities of the group.
  - b. Charter must demonstrate adherence to the guidelines identified in this policy.
3. Submit application for new Employee Affinity Group and Charter to the Office of Inclusion and Equity. The office will review the application and charter and provide determination of approval within 30 days of submission.
4. Upon approval, organizers must attend an *Employee Affinity Group Organization* meeting sponsored by the Office of Inclusion and Equity. Among the topics that will be discussed in the meeting include:
  - a. Group goals, activities, and resources.
  - b. Best practice strategies on building and sustaining momentum.
  - c. Protocols if the need for dissolution of the Employee Affinity Group arises.
5. Organize and promote first membership meeting.
  - a. Groups are responsible for all meeting logistics, including securing the meeting location, desired refreshments, technology needs, speakers, and any other resources needed to achieve the goals of the meeting.
  - b. The first meeting should include a presentation of the group's approved Charter, including all information identified in items 2(a) and 2(b) of this Section II of this policy.

### **III. Approval**

For any Employee Affinity Group to be officially recognized by the University, it must request and gain approval. Approval will allow official name recognition and usage of facilities. In order to be approved, the Charter of an Employee Affinity Group must contain specific comprehensible language that states the group adheres to all policies of the University. The University has the right to reject any groups that violate University policies and regulations and procedures, and are not aligned with the mission and values of the University.

### **IV. Use of the University Insignia**

The use of the University of Indianapolis' name, insignia, and other branding assets is subject to approval by the University's Department of Marketing and Communications.

### **V. Membership and Participation**

Groups must refrain from discrimination as defined by University policies and procedures. Group membership must be inclusive and open to all persons who support the Affinity Group's mission. The Affinity Group cannot admit an individual to membership who is not a current employee of the University of Indianapolis, which includes all faculty and staff. Non-university employees may participate in group events at the discretion of the Employee Affinity Group.

### **VI. Use of Facilities**

The use of University facilities, equipment, and systems is governed guidelines administered by the department of University Events. Employee Affinity Groups are required to abide by all guidelines administered by the department for facility use.

### **VII. Fundraising**

Employee Affinity Groups must follow University fundraising policies, procedures, and goals. All fundraising activities must, pursuant to University policy, be cleared through the Employee Charity Request Approval Form process for each and every activity, and must also be coordinated with University Advancement prior to start. Fundraising activities cannot conflict with University fundraising policies, procedures, or goals, and must be related to the core mission of the Employee Affinity Group. Additionally, the Employee Affinity Group cannot start or invest in any commercial enterprise or outside activity.

### **VIII. Policy Administration**

This policy shall be administered by the Office of Inclusion and Equity under the direction of the Vice President and Chief Inclusion and Equity Officer. All questions related to this policy should be referred to the office or Vice President.

## Employee Affinity Group Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are Employee Affinity Groups?

Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs) are institutionally supported employee groups drawn together by common interests, shared characteristics, or life experiences, and play an important role in articulating, promoting, and supporting their collective concerns. EAGs assist the University in achieving its goals and strategic priorities, as well as helping to advance inclusive excellence at UIndy.

### 2. Why establish EAGs at UIndy?

In support of the University's mission and commitment to advancing inclusive excellence, the Office of Inclusion and Equity works in collaboration with all areas of the University to create and maintain a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive campus community for all employees and students. EAGs will assist the University with:

- Engaging colleagues throughout the University in advancing our mission and strategic priorities.
- Enrich the personal and professional development of all employees.
- Encourage operating and interacting as a networked university.
- Foster an inclusive campus community that values the rich diversity of identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of our employees.

Accordingly, UIndy's EAGs will promote intercultural engagement across all disciplines and at every level of the University.

### 3. What are some areas that EAGs can help with?

- **Recruitment** – Support and assist in recruitment efforts to identify and attract diverse candidates and top professionals to join UIndy.
- **Employee Development & Retention** – Develop, promote, and support learning and networking opportunities.
- **Employee Engagement** – Help increase involvement and foster a sense of belonging through greater personal investment in advancing the University mission and promoting inclusive excellence.
- **Community Engagement & Outreach** – Help build and grow connections between UIndy and surrounding communities that are mutually beneficial and result in positive impact.

### 4. Who can be a part of an EAG?

Membership in UIndy EAGs is voluntary and open to all employees. Employees may participate in any EAG, provided that they are committed to the group's mission. The charter of each EAG shall govern the expectations of its members.

## **5. What are some types of EAGs?**

EAGs can represent a wide range of shared interests, backgrounds, and experiences among UIndy employees. EAGs should be organized as groups dedicated to helping advance inclusive excellence at UIndy. Some groups may organize in support of backgrounds, such as race/ethnicity, nationality, gender-identity & expression, sexual orientation, religious/faith identity, etc. Others may organize to represent other interests, and whose collective insights help to promote an inclusive, equity-minded campus community.

Some employees may wish to organize socially due to shared interests that are not related to supporting the University mission through inclusion and equity, and advancing inclusive excellence. While this is not prohibited, these informal associations do not qualify for recognized as an official UIndy EAG.

## **6. How do EAGs get approved?**

Any group of employees wishing to form an EAG at UIndy must complete an application to form an EAG and develop an EAG Charter that defines the mission and purpose of the group. EAG applications and Charters must be submitted to the Office of Inclusion and Equity. The EAG Application Review Committee will review the application and charter to ensure that the proposed EAG (1) is aligned with UIndy's mission and strategic priorities, (2) is being formed to help advance inclusive excellence at UIndy, and (3) upholds UIndy's EAG Policy guidelines. The EAG Application Review Committee is a sub-committee of the Inclusion and Equity Council, and includes UIndy's Vice President for Mission as a standing member. Failure to meet all of the above criteria may result in denial of approval to form the EAG.

## **7. How do I appeal the decision of the EAG Application Review Committee if my application is not approved?**

EAG applications may not be approved by the Application Review Committee if meeting the criteria listed throughout this policy and in question 6 above have not been sufficiently demonstrated in the application. However, in the event that an EAG application has been denied by the EAG Application Review Committee, the applicants may re-submit their request to the Application Review Committee for reconsideration. In the event of a second denial, the applicants may submit a written appeal to the Vice President for Inclusion and Equity. The appeal must include supporting information/documentation that provides evidence that all EAG formation criteria have been met. Applicants will be notified of a final decision within 30 days of the appeal submission.