**REPORT TO THE ILRAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Date: October 15, 2016**

**From: The Committee on Affinity Groups -** Susan Panepento, Dean Burrell,

Ames Collins, Tonya Hallett, Robert Landau, Mary Millman, and Marty Schmelkin.

The Affinity Group Committee met on three occasions to discuss the following issues as requested by the Board of Directors:

Whether the ILRAA should establish Affinity Groups?

·        If not, why not?

·        If yes, under what circumstances.

·        And how should these groups be supported both financially and logistically by the ILRAA?

There was consensus among the committee members around the following statements and recommendations:

**The ILRAA Board of Directors should be encouraging the formation of Affinity groups.**

**It is necessary for the ILRAA to develop a structure to acknowledge, accommodate and encourage Affinity groups.**

**At this time, the Committee does not recommend that there be strict rules defining what types of groups will be authorized.**

**The committee recommends the Affinity Group Guidelines attached to be used by the Board and serve as a basis for the Board to consider requests by groups to become an ILRAA Affinity Group.**

**The committee recommends that the ILRAA By-laws be amended to acknowledge Affinity Groups and how they operate.**

**To the extent possible the ILRAA should treat Chapters and Affinity Groups similarly. Therefore, it is recommended that the Chapter Guidelines be reviewed and updated to [as much as possible] conform with the Affinity Group Guidelines.**

**The committee recommends that the ILRAA update its Event Planning Guidelines in order to provide current information to Chapters and Affinity Groups.**

**The committee recommends that the ILRAA investigate and to the extent possible create an electronic Affinity Group Application form on the ILRAA website.**

**AFFINITY GROUP GUIDELINES**

The ILRAA will endeavor to encourage the establishment of Affinity Groups. This effort is consistent with the mission of the organization and with the efforts commenced under the 2015 dues model to increase alumni participation in the organization. The operation and activities of the ILRAA and its Affinity Groups should be mutually beneficial. In establishing Affinity Groups the ILRAA will consider the proposed role of the group and the intended benefits its operation will bring to alumni, students, the ILR school and the ILRAA.

1. **Definition of an ILRAA Affinity Group (AG)**

 AG's are self-organized groups of ILR alumni who have common interests.  AG's support the professional growth and development of the ILRAA and its members by providing networking, education, mentoring, fundraising and/or career development activities and by leveraging the group’s knowledge to enhance and build the ILRAA. The role of an AG is to complement, not compete with, other ILR School and/or ILRAA activities and events.

1. **Formation**
2. In order to form an Affinity Group, interested alumni must submit a written application to the ILRAA Executive Committee.
3. The proposed AG must have a mission statement that is consistent with the mission statement/purpose of the ILRAA and demonstrate a relevant impact to the overall goals of the ILRAA.
4. In addition to a mission statement as described above, applications to establish an AG should include the following:

a. Name of the AG proposed

b. Brief description of the AG and the geographic location in which it intends to operate

c. Name(s) and contact information for the lead person(s)

d. Benefits this AG will provide to ILRAA and its members

e. Proposed initial activities

f. Relevant history concerning the group or related groups

4. All AG applications will be reviewed by the ILRAA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will recommend approval/denial of the application to the Board of Directors. The ILRAA Board of Directors has the discretion to approve or deny any application to become an Affinity Group of the Association. With the consent of the Executive Committee, an AG may operate temporarily pending approval of the Board of Directors.

5. The ILRAA Board of Directors has the right to withdraw its approval and authorization from any AG, should the group fail to adhere to these or other ILRAA guidelines or its actions are not consistent with the mission and purpose of the ILRAA.

1. **Operation/Governance of Affinity Groups**

1. ILRAA AGs may determine their own structure and activities, but must comply with the guidelines set forth herein and the ILRAA By-Laws concerning the group’s operation.
2. Each AG shall be headed by a “Chair” appointed by the ILRAA President and approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.
3. ILRAA AGs must use approved ILRAA communication templates and formats for all communication, including using the “ILRAA” in the group’s name, the ILRAA logo and any other ILRAA approved branding.
4. ILRAA AGs may not exclude any interested alumni from participation on the basis of any legally protected characteristic or class.

5. ILRAA AGs must report regularly on the activities of the group to the Board of Director’s President or the President’s designee, including but not limited to, meeting dates, locations and topics discussed. In addition, a formal written and oral report on the membership and activities of the group shall be made twice each year to the Board of Directors. One of these reports will be made at the Board’s annual Fall Meeting. The Executive Committee may require an AG to provide more frequent updates.

1. ILRAA AGs must follow all Cornell University policies and rules concerning their operation that the ILRAA is required to follow.
2. ILRAA AGs must endeavor to follow the ILRAA’s Event Planning Guidelines.

8. Alumni or sponsored speakers of an AG may not represent the ILRAA on political or other issues without express permission of the Board of Directors.

1. **AFFINITY GROUP RESOURCES**
2. ILRAA AGs will have access to the resources of the ILRAA, including but not limited to the ILRAA web site, and financial support.
3. AGs are encouraged and expected to be financially self-sufficient. Requests for funds by ILRAA AGs will be considered in the same manner and funding requests by the Chapters. See ILRAA Chapter Guidelines. Requests for funds may be presented to and approved by the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors.
4. The Board of Directors or Executive Committee may deny any request for funding based on a group’s failure to adhere to these guidelines or any action by an AG that is not consistent with the mission and purpose of the ILRAA.