

Working at Cornell

WAGS

Workforce Affinity Groups

Guidelines & Expectations

Updated August 18, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Workforce Affinity Groups (WAGs) are volunteer employee-run connection groups for faculty and staff based on shared interests, not identity. A Cornell WAG is inclusive, supports [Cornell's values](#), and provides a sense of community. It helps employees to thrive and feel they belong professionally and personally. Participating in a WAG helps you connect to a passion or purpose beyond your job role... *"Any person, Any passion!"*

Do you and a colleague have an idea for a WAG? **Fill out a [WAG Application](#) to get started!**

WAG LEADER EXPECTATIONS

- Commit to the thoughtful development and visibility of the WAG.
- Maintain the alignment of the WAG with the university's values and commitments.
- Engage fellow WAG members to encourage a welcoming and inclusive environment during meetings and events.

- Monitor the posts and comments on the WAG's Viva Engage platform.
- Support the membership in following Cornell University's [Skills for Success](#), [Campus Code of Conduct](#), and the [University Policy 4.6: Standard of Ethical Conduct](#).
- Should you decide to organize an event (virtual or in-person), take your time to make it safe, inclusive, and high-quality to energize your community.
- Seek guidance and provide regular updates to the Director of Employee Engagement on events, activities, and any concerns.

FOUNDATION OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- **Shared Interests and Values** - The members seek out this community because of a shared respect for the activity or interest.
- **Clear Expectations** - The community members are clear on how they will behave and treat others. They will not demean, devalue, or dismiss people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.
- **Community Understanding** - One of the great pleasures of being part of a community is that the members feel seen and understood without explaining nuances or intricacies. The members trust that people are doing their best and assume positive intent.

BASICS FOR STARTING AND GROWING A COMMUNITY

#1: Welcome Participants

- Write a message that serves as official recognition and welcome into the community. Clearly define your expectations of behavior. Provide follow-up messages that extend invitations often, i.e., social gatherings, special events, or small gatherings, to help newcomers fully engage in the group.

#2: Host a Signature Event and Activities

- Create an inclusive special activity or event, in-person or virtually, that generates enthusiasm among the community for the shared interest. This may be reoccurring or one-time only.

#3: Tell the Story

- Sharing your WAG's story is how members and future members learn the values of the WAG and how to express them within the WAG community. Include how the WAG founders were inspired to form the community.
- The purpose of the WAG must be communicated so members can understand

the WAG's objective and identity.

- Design a logo that represents the overall WAG identity and reminds everyone of the values, identity, and commitment to their community. **Do not misuse Cornell's name or branding as stated by [University Policy 4.10, Use of Cornell's Name, Logos, Trademarks, and Insignias](#).** Work with the Director of Engagement on all images.
- Provide members opportunities to share their stories. This helps members feel that they are seen and understood.

#4: Honor the Diversity of Skills and Knowledge

- Respect and support each individual's journey within the WAG (e.g., novice, intermediate, and expert). Allow members to enter and serve in capacities aligned to their skills and knowledge.

LEARN MORE ABOUT VIVA ENGAGE

- [Watch the Microsoft Video about Viva Engage](#)
- [Instructions on How to Join or Create a Community in Viva Engage](#)
- [Additional Information on Viva Engage from CIT](#)

If you have any other questions about workforce affinity groups, please contact Cassie Pierre Joseph at cpj25@cornell.edu or 607-255-6783.

WAG GUIDELINES FOR USING VIVA ENGAGE

Microsoft Teams Viva Engage (formerly Yammer) is the platform for all WAGs. It is sponsored by the Division of Human Resources and Cornell Information Technologies. WAG leaders and members are responsible for keeping it a safe, professional, collaborative, and up-to-date space for all employees. You must comply with our WAG Guidelines and Cornell's [core values and policies](#).

Add value to your WAG with each post. Be aware that anyone may read your posts. Think about how your comments might be read by others, especially as conversations aren't face to face. Make what you mean clear, so nothing is received in a way it wasn't intended.

Keep it kind and professional. Always remember that Viva Engage is an online workspace. Feedback and opinions are welcomed, but please be polite and constructive in your comments. Do not use exclusionary, discriminatory, or offensive language.

Share information and resources responsibly. Do not post or comment about any restricted or confidential information on Viva Engage. Do not sell or market items for purchase. Do not give medical advice. Share reliable, peer-reviewed articles from reputable sources. Do not share

posts from within the WAG's Viva Engage to other platforms. (For example, no public social media posts or re-tweets).

Understand that content is not reviewed, verified, approved, or endorsed by Cornell University. Users are responsible for the content they upload and should avoid contributing anything violating any Cornell policies. Please ensure the information and resources you share are accurate and up-to-date.

All activities on this platform are subject to monitoring by the Division of Human Resources, Risk Management, and University Counsel to protect Cornell assets, maintain confidentiality and integrity of information, prevent malicious activities, and detect violations of Cornell policies and procedures. Failure to comply with Cornell policies or procedures may result in disciplinary action.

A post or comment can be removed without prior notice if the WAG Leader deems it to be inappropriate or goes against the guidelines.

As Cornellians, we must create and maintain a respectful workplace for all employees. Cornell's [core values](#) and policies remain in effect during all interactions as we strive to create an equitable and inclusive atmosphere for all employees. Please have fun creating an engaging and responsible community.