



## Growing Your Vassar Club

Board Outreach Committee

November 2003

*A focus group facilitated by AAVC Board members Martha Frey '82 and Nina Feldman Smiley '73 at the Volunteer Leadership Conference (October 11, 2003) identified best practices in integrated marketing. We would like to thank the following participants for sharing their time and expertise: Liz Orton Davis '61 and Grace Yang '72 (Vassar Club of New York); Liz Nagy '77 (Vassar Club of Washington, DC); Kerstin Warner '86 (Fairfield County); Jan Wiles Churchwell '63 (Chicago Vassar Club); Jo Ann Brown Gray-Murray '70 (Vassar Club of Wisconsin); Monica Boguski Calzolari '81 (Vassar Club of Boston); Frannie Prindle Taft '42 (Cleveland Vassar Club); Laurie Padolf Mokriski '69 (AAVC Board).*

*The following ideas can help you “grow” your club!*

### Understanding Why Members Join Vassar Clubs

Why do you value membership in your local Vassar club?

- I value the friendships I have made through my local Vassar club.
- Being involved in the club is an outlet for my creativity.
- I meet interesting people by working on Vassar club projects.
- I have made valuable professional contacts through Vassar club volunteer work.
- The local Vassar club provides me with a connection to the college.
- I like meeting prospective students through the admissions program sponsored by my local Vassar club.
- Attending VLC is a reward for my involvement in my local Vassar club.

### Advertising Themes to Promote Local Vassar Clubs

Send a mailing to all alumnae/i in your club area using one of the following themes:

- **Publish a series of testimonials about why the local Vassar club is important.** People join for a wide variety of reasons. These can be used to draw others in!

- **“I wonder what my old roommate is doing now.”** Join your local Vassar club and connect with new and old Vassar friends.
- **Publish personal stories about how the local Vassar club can help your social life.** For example, profile the couple that met at a Fairfield County Vassar Club event and eventually married.
- **Showcase the wide range of local Vassar club events.** Show recent graduates at a black–tie dinner and not–so–recent graduates hiking in the mountains. Make ’em laugh.
- **Paint a picture of the global network of local Vassar clubs with facts and figures.** Alumnae/i will be impressed with the number of VC’ers in their own backyard as well as around the world.
- **Promote the local Vassar club as a career networking resource.** Recent alumnae/i just starting out and not so recent alumnae/i thinking of a career change will appreciate sharing secrets and ideas with those in the same situation.
- **Highlight the intellectual side of local Vassar clubs.** Mention recent and upcoming faculty lectures at your club.

## **Tricks of the Trade**

### **Club Newsletters**

- **Publish your club membership form in every newsletter.** Making it easy to join makes a difference! The Boston Vassar Club gets a 5% response rate to its membership offer each time the membership form is inserted in the club newsletter.
- **Recruit a graphic designer to publish your club newsletter.** Is there a Vassar alumna/us with graphic skills to help your club enhance the look of your newsletter? That person may be pleased to be asked to share her or his expertise!
- **Seek donors of newsletter printing and graphic design services.** There may be a local alumna/us who can donate these services. Can’t hurt to ask!
- **Publish people pictures in the newsletter to put a face on your Vassar club.** Everyone loves to be seen! And...those who did not attend will regret missing an event where people were having so much fun.

- **Expand the geographical reach of your club newsletter to draw in alumnae/i from nearby communities.** Explore the idea of sending your newsletter to nearby cities that do not have a local Vassar club.
- **Promote club events by integrating email alerts with your print newsletter marketing.** Try staggering your announcements. A lengthy description of an event followed by an email reminder a few days before the event can help capture last-minute attendees.
- **Publish names of local students who have accepted Vassar in the spring edition of the club newsletter.** Alumnae/i may be pleasantly surprised that their son's babysitter or neighbor's daughter will be a Brewer!
- **Publish names of club officers and contact information on the front page of the club newsletter.** Always include the club's Web address and method for alumnae/i to subscribe to the club's email list. No excuses about "out of sight, out of mind!"
- **Publish club newsletter on colorful paper and stand out from the crowd.** A neon yellow newsletter or envelope isn't easily ignored or misplaced.

### **Club Websites**

- **Establish an easy-to-remember URL for your club.** The Chicago Vassar Club is [www.chicagovassarclub.org](http://www.chicagovassarclub.org). It's top-of-mind when you're looking for information and an "easy guess" for newcomers to the area. While the domain name incurs a minimal cost, the club Website is housed on the AAVC server free of charge! Alumnae/i will be able to link to your site via the URL or through the AAVC Website as well.
- **Recruit a club Website coordinator with book or magazine publishing experience.** Mine your member list and pool of admission volunteers for professional help. Logon to the AAVC Online Directory (<https://alum.vassar.edu/>) to connect to the VNet files to search for alumnae/i by career.
- **Promote your Website through your club newsletter and your email alerts.** Your Website is the most economical way to promote events and keep members up to date. The more you advertise your site, the more alumnae/i will visit.

**The AAVC Board Outreach Committee wants your feedback.  
Send your comments and suggestions to [chlarson@vassar.edu](mailto:chlarson@vassar.edu).  
Keep the ideas coming!**