

AIGA

Student membership + student groups

A guide to create and nurture them.

Build your own!

When student members organize to become a group, they serve as a microcosm of AIGA—complete with their own board, programming and needs for community, inspiration and organization. It's vital that student groups know about every opportunity available to them and take advantage of the organizational structure of the AIGA Iowa chapter to be successful in their own right.

Student groups also represent the single best link between student life and professional practice. Guided by faculty advisers who actively support them, student groups become leaders of on-campus programming and events, which unite students into a larger community and prepare them better for their careers as professional designers.

Requirements for student groups

These requirements reflect AIGA's experience of what makes a successful group. Adhering to them will help ensure that the group runs smoothly and enables students to get the most out of their AIGA memberships.

- ▶ Each group must have at least 10 students with active AIGA memberships at all times.
- ▶ The faculty adviser is the recognized liaison between AIGA and the student group.

Background information and required forms are available at www.aiga.org/student-groups-about for proposed faculty advisers. Once all of the requirements are met, AIGA will recognize that an official AIGA student group has been formally established at the school and list it on the website.

Who's in a student group?

A minimum of ten students who are all AIGA members.

A faculty adviser who serves as the liaison between the student group, the school, AIGA Iowa board, and AIGA National.

A student group president, the student leader of the group and liaison between the student group and the Iowa chapter. He or she is encouraged to keep in touch with the Education Director to report on the activities of the student group.

Some student officers, other student members who lead the group with the president. Positions may be modeled after the local chapter board and are explained further in the next section, [Leadership roles for student groups](#).

What is the faculty adviser's role?

The faculty adviser is the recognized liaison between AIGA and the student group and must sign the adviser agreement form in order to activate the group and renew it each year. A new agreement must be signed once a year.

He or she is required to maintain an accurate roster of who is in the group by logging into my.aiga.org and using the “Roster Management” feature to link students who have created accounts.

The faculty adviser must encourage students to keep their contact information updated (e.g., change of address, email, graduation date, major) by logging in to their own profiles at my.aiga.org.

The faculty adviser assumes accountability for programming funds collected and spent.

He or she must submit a year-end report outlining the group's activities throughout the year, due by June 1.

In recognition of the service faculty advisers give their student groups, AIGA offers them a free membership at the Supporter level.

Naming guidelines for student groups

A student group has two possible name options:

- ▶ AIGA [School] Student Group
- ▶ [School] AIGA Student Group

Requirements for using AIGA identity elements

Once a new student group has been formed, the Iowa chapter Education Director will forward a copy of the AIGA logo to the faculty adviser to be shared with students.

This folder includes:

- ▶ EPS and Illustrator files of the AIGA logo and tagline.
- ▶ EPS and Illustrator files of the AIGA Iowa logo.
- ▶ A PDF of AIGA's identity guidelines document, “Thinking Inside the Box. AIGA identity and branding guidelines.”

Student groups must utilize the logo on all communications the same way chapters do, as well as follow the identity guidelines outlined in the document above.

Dues reimbursements and funding

One of the great benefits of being a part of a student group is that part of your dues can fund your events and programs. This is done through a formal process—like completing an event plan—in order to train student leaders in the process of programming, planning and financial responsibility. Student officers submit a [event grant](#) outlining its content and estimated cost and why they seek funding from the chapter. Faculty advisers are responsible for guiding their student groups through this process.

The Iowa Chapter Board of Directors first reviews the proposal. If approved, the student group must submit receipts and a form, available through the Education Director, for reimbursements following the proposed event.

The Iowa Chapter typically works on programming six months in advance. We recommend that student groups work on programming at least three months ahead. This way, the board can review the event plan and make recommendations if it is not initially approved. The student group can then resubmit their proposal for the next monthly board meeting.

A background image of a musical score with various notes and staves, rendered in a dark, textured style.

Leadership roles for Student Groups

An effective student group requires leadership by members of the group. The faculty adviser does not serve as the group leader, but rather the facilitator and AIGA liaison—it's up to the group to elect its own leadership. The group works with the faculty adviser and chapter Education Director to determine the roles needed for its leadership structure, and then finds volunteers in the group interested in serving in those roles. All those who serve as student officers must be AIGA members in good standing, as this sets a good example for other members.

AIGA recommends that student groups follow the standard chapter election procedures: create a slate of nominees for open positions and present the slate to the group's members to approve or reject. Once approved, the nominees become officers. Make sure there's only one nominee per position and that members are given ample time to vote—two to three weeks is more than sufficient.

Because students may choose to become officers at any time in their college career, AIGA recommends that officers' terms run for one year.

Descriptions of leadership roles for student groups

The number of roles may vary depending on the size of the particular group. The following is AIGA's recommendation of roles to provide a well-rounded structure and allow each officer to serve a distinct function.

President The president is the leader of the student group and works with the faculty adviser on the agenda of meetings. The president introduces speakers and guests at events, leads meetings, delegates responsibilities to other officers and facilitates group functions. The president is usually the single student representative of the group to the chapter board and is also the representative to both the school and other student groups. The president needs to keep aware of what's happening in the community that would be relevant for student designers and make sure that information is provided to them.

Student officer duties and activities

In addition to performing the roles and responsibilities of specific positions, student officers must also agree to take responsibility for fulfilling certain functions including:

Being familiar with the mission of AIGA and dedicated towards furthering that mission.

Educating other students on the purpose and mission of AIGA.

Abiding by the standards and ethics endorsed by AIGA.

Serving as a liaison to the full community of students outside the group.

Serving as a liaison to the chapter board.

Attending all student group meetings.

Keeping the faculty adviser, the chapter's Education Director and the national office informed of current contact information.

Serving as a leader to the student group.

Actively promoting AIGA and the student group.

Creating and organizing effective events and activities.

Vice-president The Vice-president assists the president as needed. If the president is absent, the Vice-president performs the president's duties, such as introducing speakers, leading student group meetings and attending chapter board meetings.

Secretary The secretary keeps the group's records, including meeting agendas and summaries of events and activities. These records need to be shared with the faculty adviser and the chapter's Education Director.

Treasurer The treasurer takes money at events, provides a report of current finances at group meetings and assists the faculty adviser in keeping track of funds. The treasurer does not hold funds, however—this responsibility is held by the faculty adviser (who has access to the group's bank account).

Communication Director The communication director utilizes all possible online and in-person tools to keep all student members, nonmembers and faculty at the school reminded of upcoming events and current activities. This can include maintaining the group's Facebook page, updating a Twitter account, calling student members, posting bulletins, creating a Google Groups calendar, sending out group-wide emails and making promotional posters for events. Communication directors are strongly encouraged to contact other student groups' communication directors. Next to the president, this position is the most important for a successful student group and for creating strong programming that reflects student membership.

Programming Director When the group decides to hold an event or activity, the programming director outlines the necessary steps, determines the programming team responsible for executing it, keeps in close contact with the team's progress and reports to the group. The programming director stays current with and reports back to the group on what the chapter is doing. The programming director seeks programming opportunities within the school, with other student groups and around the community.

Membership Director The membership director assists the faculty adviser in distributing and collecting applications and keeps contact information current for each member.

Other officer positions can be appointed as needed.

Student officers meetings

The group leaders must hold regular meetings and advertise them publicly. The student officers work with the faculty adviser to select a regular meeting schedule. Advertise these meetings for the benefit of other students who may wish to serve as officers or get involved in the group's activities. This can be done through Twitter, Facebook groups, by email and with flyers posted around campus.

Officers' meetings need to be run by the president, with the faculty adviser assisting. Groups are free to structure their meetings however they like; many model theirs after their larger chapter. Each student group officer must attend every officers' meeting, or give advance notice of their absence.

Serving as an AIGA leader

As an officer, you're expected to carry the purpose of AIGA and the vision of your local chapter to the members of your student group. Fellow students—members and nonmembers alike—will look to you for guidance, information and leadership. Ultimately, the group will be what you make it. You have the power to motivate other students, share your knowledge and ideas and lead by example. The faculty adviser is there to guide, consult and provide support for your group as well.

- ▶ **Actively promote AIGA and the student group.** This can be done in a variety of ways. In order to be effective, you first have to be familiar with the mission of AIGA. AIGA.org is a great resource for what AIGA does and supports.
- ▶ **Have the group organize an “open house” about AIGA.** Offer a little food as an incentive to get students to show up.
- ▶ **Have group officers visit design classes** to introduce themselves and talk about the group and AIGA. This allows students to stay in their comfort zone and can encourage them to come to a future meeting in a group.
- ▶ **Talk to other students one on one.** This can be more effective than a group setting because you're able to speak to individual students' questions and concerns.

In all cases, contact AIGA Iowa in advance of these activities for any membership materials that might be available for you to share with potential members.

The chain of communication with the chapter board

The Iowa chapter principally uses email to communicate with students and student groups. If there is a need to get ahold of the board, students should follow this chain of communication.

- ▶ Students at schools without a student group should contact the Education Director at education@aigaiowa.org. The Education Director then communicates to the Board of Directors.
- ▶ Students in a student group should contact the group president and/or faculty adviser, who contacts the chapter's Education Director.

AIGA recommends using this chain of communication so that all levels can be informed of each group's activities and to ensure that students work with existing resources.

When seeking additional resources or funds, AIGA encourages all student group officers to communicate through their group president, who then takes the request to the faculty adviser and on to the chapter Education Director or other board member(s) as needed. See the [Dues reimbursements and funding](#) section on Page 2 for more information.

The student group needs to keep the local Board of Directors informed of their events, decisions and progress through the recommended channels. This can be accomplished by sending a brief update of the student group's status that can be included in each month's chapter board meeting.

Maintaining current contact information

Each student group member must keep their faculty adviser informed of their contact information by logging in to my.aiga.org to update their profile. To do so, they need their username and password to create or update their profile. A link to have their login information sent to them is available on the login page.

Keeping contact information current for all members is important because AIGA provides news and updates to your email address and publications and notices to your mailing address. AIGA asks all student groups and officers to help make sure all student members are aware they need to maintain current contact information and to ask their adviser to link them to the group.

In addition, when updating their profiles, students should make sure that their status is accurate. AIGA members with the attribute of student will receive discounts automatically when registering for events.

Attending local chapter events

One of the benefits of being a student member is being able to attend local chapter events at a discount. Student group officers are strongly encouraged to attend as many chapter functions as possible. This provides a great networking opportunity and learning experience. Stay informed of what your local chapter is doing and inform your group as well.

Tips for running a **successful** *Student Group*

- ✓ **Have a goal or mission for the group.** The first meeting of the school year should address a mission or set of goals for that coming school year. What does the group want to accomplish? Some examples might be: increase membership, have more design education events, have more field trips or studio tours or hold fundraising activities so students can attend distant events like the AIGA Design Conference. Group officers are encouraged to keep the goal simple and not try to accomplish everything in one year. Often one or two small programs a semester alongside chapter events is a reasonable level of activity.
- ✓ **Be a part of AIGA Iowa chapter.** Look to see what the chapter has planned for the coming year. Keep up to date by visiting AIGAIowa.org frequently, liking us on [Facebook](#), following us on [Twitter](#), and contacting us at education@aigaiowa.org. Be sure to promote the chapter's events to your fellow students, both members and nonmembers. Organize carpools or supplemental activities “on the town” that will encourage more students to attend chapter events. The AIGA Iowa chapter also almost always needs volunteers to help execute our events—this can be a great way to get to know professional members and make contacts beyond your school.
- ✓ **Create effective events and activities.** When creating events for any group of people, always begin by polling the target audience for what their interests are. In the case of student groups, your target audience is you. Ask yourself what you want to see from a student group. What's missing that can be done easily? What can benefit the widest possible group of students? What would supplement what you're learning in classes and studios? Generally, the events you create will have been events students in the past have requested, and will be the same events the following students will want. Plan and organize your events as though they will be the standard for years to come.

- ✓ **Plan programs well.** Your group will have a much better experience if your programs are considered with careful planning and preparation. Use budget sheets, event timelines, communication plans and other documents that cover every detail of your program. These documents are often used by your chapter. Decide who will be the program chairperson for each event who will lead the rest of the group in planning and executing. This person is ultimately responsible for keeping records and receipts, organizing the event's volunteers, filling out the program summary and final budget form and doing post-event items like sending out thank you letters or returning equipment. The program chairperson does not have to do everything, but they are responsible for making sure it gets done.
- ✓ **Keep things simple, inexpensive and fun.** Planning and programming is most effective when it's all three of these. Ask yourself, "What's the main goal of this event?" Is it to educate fellow students? Inspire them? Bring them together? There are many possible goals for events, but try to stick to the main goal like it's a mission statement.
- ✓ **Have regular meetings.** See the [Student officers meetings](#) section on page 5 for more information.
- ✓ **Meet your chapter board members,** especially the Education Director and President. Encourage them to visit your school when preparing to start a student group or for kicking off a group's programming year.
- ✓ **Keep all students informed and included.** More than likely, your entire student group will meet less frequently than your student officers. But to have a successful student group, all students need to know what's going on with your group. This means both AIGA events on campus, AIGA events in your chapter and non-AIGA events on campus and in your community. This includes both members and nonmembers—keeping in constant communication with nonmember students can make a serious difference on getting them to join later. AIGA strongly recommends holding a kick off event each semester as a way to get everyone to meet each other and stay informed about upcoming activities.

Funding programs

See the [Dues reimbursements and funding](#) section on page 2 for information about how chapters work with student groups to provide funding in the form of dues reimbursements.

Sponsorship possibilities for student programming

One of the challenges of running any nonprofit organization is finding the funds to produce effective programming. Just as with AIGA chapters, funds can often come from companies interested in sponsoring your group. In the last decade, sponsorship possibilities have widened beyond traditional businesses to encompass ones that seek to build relationships with the "creative class;" there are also

a number of businesses that seek to build strong relationships with student designers that can continue when they become professional designers.

Before you approach any company for sponsorship, AIGA requires that you discuss it with your local chapter first—it's possible they have an existing relationship or are working on creating a relationship with that same potential sponsor. Bring your proposal to your faculty adviser and Education Director. The board may have recommendations or ideas that may help.

It's important to have the topic and resource needs for each event understood in advance before approaching potential sponsors. Do as much as you can to create a good match between event and sponsor. For example, if you hold a workshop on writing good resumés, consider using a paper vendor or copy shop that would supply paper or offer copy services that would help students when they prepare to create resumés after graduation. Approach those potential sponsors with a pitch that describes how attendees can remember and utilize them in the future. These sponsors may be interested in paying for a smaller portion of event costs, such as refreshments, or may want to fund the event provided they get to make some brief opening remarks before the event starts.

Can your school help?

Finally, be sure you're aware of your school's policy on providing matching funds for campus organizations. Many schools offer funds for organizations per semester or year to hold events and promote the school. These funds may be available immediately or after completing some paperwork, so it's important to check with the faculty adviser or other administrators.

Many schools also let nonprofit organizations use facilities like meeting rooms and auditoriums to hold programs. Many AIGA chapters utilize relationships with area schools to take advantage of this to have a free venue. A student group at such a school is encouraged to leverage this relationship as well.

It's important to think creatively in your situation. The goal of every student group's programming is to at least break even financially at all events. Have the group work towards reducing costs at events wherever possible.

Who are potential Sponsors?

Art/craft supply stores

Technology retailers, specifically those who specialize in products by Apple or Adobe, since those are almost universally used by design students

Paper merchants

Area printers

Publications, such as your town's alternative weekly newspaper

Restaurants

Food or beverage brands headquartered in your town and popular with students (not alcohol-based, however)

Record stores and other lifestyle retailers

If vendors aren't interested in sponsoring an event, don't be afraid to ask them for a donation for the student group instead.

Student Group programs + events

Examples of programs and events

Lectures are a great way to supplement the academic side of being a student member. Many speakers are always interested in visiting schools, especially if the school is nearby. This can be a great way to bring in speakers who are less well known to students.

For increased exposure, host the lecture in the evening and make it open to all AIGA members or the public. By setting the lecture up in advance and making sure it doesn't conflict with a scheduled AIGA Iowa event, you can alert the chapter and ask them to help promote it by email, social media and the events calendar. The chapter will appreciate having another event listed and the community will be glad to know it's happening.

Recommended cost: Free if the speaker is local; \$5 or \$10 per attendee to cover the speaker's travel costs if he or she has to travel.

Panel discussions are a way to bring in multiple speakers on a compressed schedule, consider holding a panel discussion on a particular topic. Hold panels on topics that appeal primarily to students, like how students can prepare their portfolios or how to be a successful freelancer, etc.

Recommended cost: Free.

Workshops can include anything from academic topics like software or resumé's to hands-on demonstrations like screenprinting or using a letterpress, depending on the resources available at your school. Find a topic your school currently lacks the resources to teach and contact a local professional to lead a workshop on that topic. This requires relatively little preparation on your part, but does need thorough planning and respect for the professional's time.

Recommended cost: Free or \$5 per student, depending on the length and materials needed for the workshop.

Field trips provide the opportunity to learn more about a single topic in an on-site visit than a semester's worth of a class. It's extremely easy to call printers, design firms or paper merchants and schedule a visit—many vendors are eager to share knowledge with students, who are seen as potential future customers. This is a way to combine educational and networking opportunities.

Recommended cost: Free.

Studio tours are an excellent way for students to learn about what it means to be a designer after graduation. The Iowa Chapter has implemented its own formal studio tour program under the name **DETOUR**, which occurs every other month. Depending on its size, a studio hosts a number of designers for a tour of the space, including looking at its work. A tour can also include short presentations by designers who work there. It can be particularly useful if a designer who graduated from the school leads or participates heavily in the tour—this helps students connect with the professional who was once in their position.

Recommended cost: Free or \$5 per student. All expenses are taken on by host studios, but if enough studios participate, a small charge can increase the importance of the tours without being cost-prohibitive.

Design critiques offer an informal opportunity for students from various classes to get together and present their current projects for peer review and feedback. The Iowa Chapter has a program called **Passion Projects Critiques** that uses this model. A critique outside of class helps give participating students a new perspective on their own projects and allows them to see what other students are working on. The low-key nature of the critique—often held in the evening, during lunch or after class in the afternoon—allows students to feel comfortable critiquing others' work. Ask the faculty adviser to attend and provide parameters for the critique.

Recommended cost: Free.

Fundraising programs can have several useful outcomes. Primarily, they can generate money for the student group to use in programming or special events. But they can also provide education on design or networking with professionals. Student groups are encouraged to avoid more typical college fundraising programs, in order to differentiate themselves from other campus organizations and enhance the AIGA experience in the community.

Fundraising ideas that involve students creating design work that can be used in their portfolios can be logistically difficult to implement but highly rewarding for all involved. By keeping quantities relatively low, the group can be truthful in claiming a product is “limited edition.”

Community service fulfills one of AIGA's goals to educate the public on design and its value. Many cities already have groups, high schools or middle schools looking for volunteers to assist in programming and educating youth on the arts. Offering your group to visit these programs and discuss your experiences can be highly beneficial for them. This can be an excellent opportunity to partner with the chapter by asking them to send professional designers who can share their post-college experiences.

What can the Iowa Chapter do for you?

[The Iowa Board of Directors](#) represents a microcosm of the design industry. Our members include experts in magazine publishing, marketing designers, fine artists, Adobe® Certified Experts, social media mavens, public relations gurus and more. If you need a workshop or demonstration, ask us! We can help you make connections.

Tips on creating successful programming

Partner with other student groups. One major benefit to becoming active in AIGA is networking. There is no better time to begin networking with fellow designers than at the student level. Putting on programs jointly with other [student groups](#) allows for the sharing of resources and for students to make contacts beyond their immediate classroom environment. Programs can often take a large amount of work to plan, organize and execute—by sharing the workload and process, groups work together for the benefit of all.

Share your programming calendar. Work with other local groups to plan a well-rounded calendar of student events at each school. If one school holds a screenprinting workshop, invite other schools or ask the workshop leader to visit other schools too. If one school organizes a group of studio tours, make sure all local schools are invited. Students will appreciate the ability to connect with others from the area as frequently as possible.

Create your own library. Student groups can start their own library, where books and materials can be checked out from the student president or faculty adviser. [Resources at AIGA.org](#) like videos from “Gain: AIGA Design and Business Conference” make instant, low-key events. Get the student group together to watch videos posted at AIGA.org or from another online source.

Start a student group newsletter. An e-newsletter can be used to share information and updates within an individual student group and with other groups. It keeps both members and nonmembers informed, brings students together and gives students the opportunity to engage in design work. Content can focus on upcoming events and AIGA happenings, but can be expanded to include any of the following: internship and job opportunities, inspiring links, online articles, member spotlights, advice from professionals, software tips, community events and more. This can be a great project for multiple student members to work on together.

Make sure your events are well publicized. With the tremendous growth of social media, it’s easier than ever to promote your group’s events starting the day they go on the calendar. Particularly if there was a financial investment in the event and the group might lose money if attendance is poor. Use your members and the larger chapter to help spread the word about your activities.

Don’t forget that small programs can have a big impact.

We have a mission:

... AIGA advances design as a professional craft, strategic advantage and vital cultural force. As the largest community of design advocates, we bring together practitioners, enthusiasts, and patrons to amplify the voice of design and create the vision for a collective future. We define global standards and ethical practices, guide design education, enhance professional development, and make powerful tools and resources accessible to all.

You already know that joining AIGA is a good idea. You will connect with a national network of like-minded professionals who share your passion for design.

Student members receive awesome benefits:

- ▶ Exposure from posting a portfolio in the [AIGA Member Gallery](#)
- ▶ Job and internship listings at [AIGA Design Jobs](#)
- ▶ Gaining opportunities for networking and knowledge at local and national events
- ▶ Access to the invaluable members-only content on [AIGA.org](#)
- ▶ Discounted or free-with-I.D. access to [Iowa Chapter events](#)
- ▶ Reduced entry costs for national events and competitions
- ▶ Free access to webinars and workshops to grow students' skill sets and knowledge base

If you're not already a member, you should join. Check with your design department at your college or university or visit www.aiga.org/student-groups to find out if your school has an active AIGA student group. If there is an existing group, let the faculty adviser know when you've joined online so that you can be linked to the group.

If your school does not currently have a student group, information to start one is available at www.aiga.org/student-groups-about, or right here in this booklet.



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