MSU ALUMNI OFFICE
DATA BEST PRACTICES

// GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DATA

- **Data is always changing. People move, change jobs, get a new email address, etc. and students graduate and become alumni.**
  - **As an institution, Michigan State University has access to a number of datasets e.g., NCOA (National Change of Address) and is continuously updating contact information in our database.**
  - **Additionally, the MSU database also notes if people have opted out of receiving specific communications. It is important to respect individual's requests regarding the type and frequency of communications they receive from MSU.**
  - **As such, the information we provide is the most up-to-date and alumni clubs should not maintain separate or shadow databases of contact information.**
- **University Advancement maintains data on alumni, non-degree and friends**
- **The Office of Admissions maintains data on incoming students, which includes:**
  - **Freshman**
  - **Transfer students**
  - **Graduate students**
  - **TIMING A DATA REQUEST - Beginning in early February through the start of classes in the fall, the status of incoming freshman, transfer and graduate students changes on a weekly basis, as students confirm their attendance at MSU. Therefore, alumni clubs should submit a request for data to the MSU Alumni Office no more than six weeks before their event in order to ensure that they are communicating with students who have committed to MSU.**
- **The Office of the Registrar maintains data on all current students, which includes:**
  - **Undergraduate students**
  - **Graduate students**
- **Data should only be used for a single event/communication, not multiple events/communications that are months apart.**
- **The data request and subsequent pull is a static list. Alumni clubs will be provided with the most up-to-date information as maintained by MSU.**
- **Since the data is sent directly to the alumni club board member requesting it, the alumni club is responsible for sorting and refining the data for their purposes.**
  - **As a general best practice, the data, as it is received from MSU, should be saved as a master document prior to any sorting or refining. Subsequent refinements of the data can be saved using other names.**

// PERMISSIBLE USE OF DATA & DATA CONFIDENTIALITY
Any data obtained from Michigan State University is considered confidential and can only be used in conjunction with official business related to the requesting alumni club. It is expressly forbidden to provide or sell this information to other parties.

// HOW OFTEN TO REQUEST DATA
- **For major events, e.g. scholarship fundraiser, etc:**
  - **Email and/or mailing addresses should only be used for a single event, not multiple events that are months apart.**
- **For regular email communications, e.g., monthly newsletter:**
  - **A new email list should be requested prior to each email if your alumni club is using Constant Contact or MailChimp.**
    - **Why so often? The data that is maintained by Constant Contact or MailChimp is static and may not reflect your community's current alumni population and their contact information.**
  - **If your alumni club is using iModules, you should use the query created for your alumni club. Do not save a list and use it multiple times.**
    - **If you have any questions about queries or would like a new query created, please contact Vicki Essenmacher at vicki@msu.edu.**
- **For mailed communications:**
  - **A mailing list should be requested prior to each mailing. This will ensure that you are sending to valid mailing addresses and not wasting money on postage.**

// HOW TO REQUEST DATA
Alumni clubs are able to request email and mailing addresses for alumni, non-degree, friends, incoming students and current students.

All data requests should be made utilizing the Mailing List Request tab of the Club Admin Panel at https://alumni.msu.edu/get-together/club-admin/index.cfm.

Alumni clubs should not contact Office of Admissions or their regional Office of Admissions representative and/or the Office of the Registrar directly for student data requests.

If an alumni club utilizes the iModules platform for email, up-to-date alumni, non-degree and friends data is in the query created for the alumni club. There is no need to request email data from the MSU Alumni office.

For more information about the data and basic instructions to complete the data request, go to "Request an Email and/or Mailing List" at https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Request-Email-Mail-List-Updated-2020.pdf

All student data requests are subject to approval and compliance with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and University policy. Michigan State University does not release student names and addresses for commercial purposes. For the full university policy, see the "Michigan State University Access to Student Information" section at https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s542 .

// THE ROLE OF ALUMNI CLUBS IN MAINTAINING DATA INTEGRITY

Alumni club communications and events help MSU improve its data. How? Data is always changing and in addition to the datasets MSU has access to, we rely on the information that our alumni clubs provide to us. The email and mailing lists we provide to alumni clubs is updated with the data we collect from communications and events. So, each time your alumni club requests data, you'll be getting the most up-to-date information.

There are three kinds of contact information updates alumni clubs can provide to the MSU Alumni office:
- Email
- Mail
- Email and/or mail due to an event registration

EMAIL UPDATES
- If your alumni club utilizes iModules, email updates happens automatically.
- If your alumni club does not utilize iModules, each time your alumni club sends an email, be sure to send any updates to Vicki Essenmacher at vicki@msu.edu so that we can abide by the preferences and wishes of our alumni.
  - What is considered an "update"?
    - Any email address that bounces or is inactive
    - A personal message sent from the recipient to the alumni club, e.g., "please update my email address to abc@gmail.com."
    - NOTE: Both Constant Contact and MailChimp "manage" unsubscribes, so that information does not need to be conveyed to the MSU Alumni office.

MAIL UPDATES
- Each time your alumni club sends a mailed communication, if you receive any returned mail, be sure to send updates to Vicki Essenmacher at vicki@msu.edu.

UPDATES RECEIVED THROUGH EVENT REGISTRATIONS
- All alumni club events should be created in Eventbrite using the Nvite hub
  - Collect good data on all guests. Refer to "Tips for Creating an Event in Eventbrite & How to Collect the Best Guest Information" at https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Tips-Eventbrite-Updated-2020.pdf
  - You do not need to send update or the MSU Alumni office. At the conclusion of the event, the MSU Alumni office accesses the guest list and updates the MSU database.
- Why is it important to access Eventbrite through the Nvite hub? If you don't use the Nvite hub:
  - The MSU template will not be applied and your event will not be placed in the Alumni Club Events section of the MSU Alumni office website.
  - The MSU Alumni office cannot access guest list at the conclusion of the event and make updates the MSU database.
    - Updates are important in making sure we have the correct contact information for future communications.
    - The email and mailing lists we provide to alumni clubs is updated with the data we collect from events, including club events.
  - If you created your event in Eventbrite, but forgot to go through the Nvite hub initially, you can connect your event to the Nvite hub later.