MSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
DATA BEST PRACTICES

ABOUT THE DATA & BEST PRACTICES
- 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. As such, the information we provide is the most up-to-date. **Alumni clubs should not maintain separate or shadow databases of contact information.**
- 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 person requesting it, the alumni club is responsible for sorting and refining the data for their purposes.
- The data, as it is received from MSU, should be saved as a master document prior to any sorting or refining.

HOW TO REQUEST DATA
Alumni clubs are able to request email and mailing lists for alumni, non-degree, friends, current students, and incoming freshmen. All requests for this information should come through the MSU Alumni Association.
- For alumni, non-degree and friends information, refer to the document titled “Request an Email/Mailing List – Alumni” at [https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Request-Email-Mail-List-Alumni-2017.pdf](https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Request-Email-Mail-List-Alumni-2017.pdf)
- For current students and incoming freshmen information, refer to the document titled “Request an Email/Mailing List – Incoming Freshmen and/or Current Students” at [https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Request-Email-Mail-List-Students-2017.pdf](https://alumni.msu.edu/assets/PDFs/Request-Email-Mail-List-Students-2017.pdf)

Alumni clubs should not contact MSU University Advancement, Office of Admissions or the Registrar’s Office directly for email or mailing list requests.

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.
  o 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:
  o 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.

IMPORTANCE OF ALUMNI CLUBS IN MAINTAINING DATA INTEGRITY
Alumni club communications help MSU improve its data. How?
• Data is always changing. In addition to the datasets MSU has access to, we rely on our alumni clubs to communicate updates to us.
  o Each time your alumni club sends an email, be sure to send updates to the MSU Alumni Association so that we can abide by the preferences and wishes of our alumni.
    ▪ If your alumni club uses iModules, this happens automatically.
    ▪ If your alumni club does not have iModules, 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.”
      • Send your updates to Vicki Essenmacher at vicki@msu.edu
      • NOTE: Both Constant Contact and MailChimp “manage” unsubscribes, so that information does not need to be conveyed to the MSU Alumni Association.
  o Each time your alumni club sends a mailed communication, if you receive any returned mail, be sure to send updates to the MSU Alumni Association
    ▪ Send your updates to Vicki Essenmacher at vicki@msu.edu.

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.