



## Guidelines for Regional Chapters Heidelberg Alumni U.S. (HAUS)

### Background and Context

#### Heidelberg Alumni International (HAI)

**Mission Statement:** HAI is the central alumni initiative of the university – the worldwide network for all former and current students, researchers, administrative and teaching staff.

Heidelberg University's alumni relations and services organization, Heidelberg Alumni International, was founded in 1996 within the Akademisches Auslandsamt (International Relations Office). This international beginning drove the initial focus on alumni outside Germany. National alumni clubs were organized in different countries, starting with Heidelberg Alumni Griechenland (HAGR) in 2002. Local alumni clubs in different German cities started forming in 2010. Eventually, alumni groups within the university's various departments and institutes were also folded into HAI. See the HAI Society webpage for the current list of all the various groups:

[Universität Heidelberg - Heidelberg Alumni International: Netzwerk \(uni-heidelberg.de\)](http://uni-heidelberg.de)

#### Heidelberg Alumni U.S. (HAUS)

**Mission Statement:** Heidelberg Alumni U.S. (HAUS) is dedicated to building a mutually beneficial global network of current and former students, graduates, researchers, professors, staff, and other friends of Heidelberg University with a connection to the United States.

Heidelberg Alumni U.S. (HAUS) was founded in 2008 in New York City, where the university established the Heidelberg University Association (HUA), its legal representative within North America. HUA is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-free status in the U.S. HAUS is the alumni arm of this organization, under the umbrella of HUA.

The HAUS governing structure consists of its Leadership Committee and Regional Chapter Chairpersons. The Leadership Committee is a 6-member team that meets regularly to set annual goals and implement these goals and other initiatives. See the following sections for details on the Regional Chapter Chairpersons. See the HAUS webpage at [Universität Heidelberg - Heidelberg Alumni U.S.](http://uni-heidelberg.de) and click on the Leadership Committee or Regional Chapters links for current members.

### HAUS Regional Chapters

**Vision Statement:** HAUS Regional Chapters are dedicated to building and maintaining a network of current and former students, graduates, researchers, staff, professors, and other friends of Heidelberg University at the local level.



Given the challenges of building and maintaining an alumni organization over the vast geographical expanse of the United States of America, the Leadership Committee quickly moved to establish Regional Chapters across the U.S. A HAUS Regional Chapter can be formed anywhere in the U.S. where there is a geographical concentration of alumni and where common activities can be organized.

### **HAUS Regional Chapter Goals**

- Provide opportunities for networking among fellow Heidelbergers within a specific metropolitan area or geographic region;
- Create and maintain a sense of community among alumni and other individuals with Heidelberg affiliations, HAUS and the university;
- Encourage Heidelbergers of all generations to maintain contact with Heidelberg University and to foster a sense of pride in and understanding of what Heidelberg University is today;
- Promote commitment to the university's achievements and goals by encouraging volunteer assistance for its recruiting, mentoring, scholarship, fund-raising and other efforts;
- Offer events tailored to the desires and interests of the local group.

To establish a HAUS Regional Chapter, one or more persons in that region must be interested in planning and offering events and willing to undertake the local leadership responsibilities. Those leaders are called "HAUS Regional Chapter Chairpersons".

### **HAUS Regional Chapter Chairpersons**

Action Statement: HAUS Regional Chapter Chairpersons are crucial to the life and enduring success of a Regional Chapter, and they are empowered to communicate and collaborate with their local HAUS constituents, as well as with the local community.

Initial Regional Chapter Chairpersons (hereafter "Chairs") are recruited by the HAUS leadership team. Chairs serve two-year terms, which may be extended. Regional Chapters may elect the succeeding Chair when the first Chair's term ends, or the out-going Chair may recruit the succeeding Chair. A Regional Chapter may be led by a single Chair or by any number of Co-Chairs. The latter model can be very effective in "lightening the load" through shared responsibilities, so that no one individual feels overwhelmed.

The duties of Regional Chapter Chairpersons include:

- to communicate regularly with the local HAUS constituents
- to communicate regularly with the New York office Executive Director
- to organize and report on a number of events annually, optimally one event per quarter
- to promote recruitment of new HAUS members, through professional or personal contacts



- to gather contact information for newly discovered Heidelbergers and share that information with the New York office
- to groom or recruit effective Regional Chair successors
- to participate in HAUS Leadership Committee meetings and leadership training

*More detailed descriptions of Chair duties:*

#### COMMUNICATION IS KEY.

As a Chair, you serve as the liaison between the Regional Chapter and both the HAUS Leadership Committee and the HAUS Executive Director in New York. You should communicate with these individuals on a regular basis and in both directions, i.e., gather desires and needs from the Chapter constituents and share updates from HAUS and HAI to the constituents. You will consult about and report on all Regional Chapter events. You should also attend the expanded Leadership Committee meeting each quarter via conference call to discuss regional issues and brainstorm with other Chairs.

Examples of communication methods:

- Social media outreach, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter
- Direct contact by phone, text, or email
- Polls via SurveyMonkey or other applications

#### NEW MEMBERS

When new members join HAUS, the New York staff will inform Chairs if the new members are in their region and copy them on the welcome email. Chairs should “Reply All” to introduces themselves to the new member and welcome them to the chapter.

If Chairs would like to invite new members to join HAUS, they should do so using this registration link: <https://alumniportal-heidelberg.de/gruppen/haus/register>. Registering with this link enrolls new members in HAI and HAUS automatically, thus eliminating any confusion and additional steps to be included in both groups.

#### EVENT IDEAS

Consider the Chapter members’ interests and be creative in looking for ideas for Regional Chapter events. Try to vary the types of programs and focus on the quality, not necessarily the quantity of the Regional Chapter events. Here are some ideas:

- Poll Chapter members for their ideas.
- Host a “Willkommen zurück” event for recent returnees from the university, or a “Send-off” party for new enrollees.
- Highlight visiting Heidelberg “stars,” such as professors or staff members.
- Showcase a member’s recent achievement, workplace, or organization.
- Organize a career-oriented, networking meeting.
- Celebrate traditional German holidays.
- Visit a museum, concert, theater, or film showing.



- Explore the outdoors with a barbeque, athletic event, or “Wanderung.”
- Gather for a beer/wine tasting, or an informal “Stammtisch.”
- Volunteer for a community service activity.
- Involve the local German-American community, such as:
  - German Consulate
  - Goethe-Institut
  - German-American Chamber of Commerce
  - University-level German departments or K-12 German schools
  - German social or fraternal organizations

The items on this list are only examples. Feel free to explore other ideas with the New York office and your fellow Chairs. Please note that HAUS is an inclusive organization. Events centered around promotion or advocacy of religious or political ideas are not acceptable.

#### EVENT PLANNING

Begin event planning as early as feasible. Once the date for your event is set, create a planning calendar and “to do list” in reverse chronological order, beginning from the event date. In general, you will need 6-8 weeks to plan a successful event. (Note: a special event or event with a special guest speaker might require more time.)

Here is a sample event planning calendar:

- Event date
- Final attendee count due to event venue 3-5 days prior to event date
- RSVP deadline, 1-2 weekdays prior to deadline for final count due date
- Email invitations 4-5 weeks prior to RSVP deadline
- Create and sign-off on email invitation (New York office & Chair collaboration) 3-5 days prior to emailing the invitations
- Planning the event and finalizing details, 1-2 weeks prior to creating the invitation

#### EVENT COSTS

HAUS has no budget to support Regional Chapter events. Please bear in mind the demographics of your Regional Chapter when planning events and keep cost expectations in line with what your members can afford. We do not wish to discourage participation due to cost.

If you need to collect event participation fees or coordinate payment for some service, please consult with the New York office as part of your event planning process.

#### EVENTS AND FOLLOW UP

Enjoy your event and make sure the attendees do, as well! Beyond ensuring that the event runs smoothly, please remember the following for each event:

- Provide a sign-in sheet, in order to document participation
  - Request contact information, especially from new participants



- Encourage attendees to register as a member on the HAUS website
- Take a group photo, documenting the event, and give participants the option not to be included in any photo, as photos may be published
- AFTER THE EVENT:
  - Thank all participants for their interest and encourage continued participation
  - Provide all new participant names and contact information to the New York office, to further build the HAUS database
  - Provide the New York office with a short article describing the event, plus your group photo, for publication in the HAUS newsletter, website, and social media.
  - If you are a member of the HAUS Facebook group, please share a photo to the group.

#### NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT

How do we find new members? There is no magic formula, nor is there a “master list” to work from. Sometimes, new members find HAUS through a social media interest group. More often, it is via word-of-mouth, or through professional or personal contacts. Once contact and interest are established, the new member must be encouraged to fill out the registration form found here: <https://alumniportal-heidelberg.de/gruppen/haus/register>. There is no “automatic membership” in HAI or HAUS, due to personal information privacy protection laws and regulations (aka “Datenschutz”).

#### DATENSCHUTZ FAQ

“Datenschutz” or “data protection and privacy” is an important concern for any organization, including HAUS and HUA. As an organization that deals with citizens and residents of the European Union, the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) plays a role in how HAUS functions, and the ways in which data can be shared and stored.

What does GDPR mean for Chairs? You need to understand GDPR as it relates to HUA and HAUS because, as a Chair, you are the primary contact for HAUS members in your region. The New York office will work with you to make sure you are able to carry out your role as chair while ensuring that HUA remains GDPR compliant. Below are some FAQs about GDPR and Datenschutz. Please visit “Resources for HAUS Leadership” at the bottom of the HAUS Leadership page for more detailed background information on GDPR: <https://www.hua.uni-heidelberg.de/en/regional-chapters-leadership>.

**Q: HUA and HAUS are based in the United States. Why is an EU law relevant for us?**

**A:** GDPR protects the data privacy for all EU citizens, regardless of where they reside, as well as all EU residents, regardless of citizenship. HAUS has members who are EU citizens as well as a chapter in Heidelberg.



**Q: Will the New York office share the contact information for members in my region with me?**

A: No. However, we will maintain the member database, send invitations, manage RSVP lists, and forward any communication you wish to share with your region. You are also free to use any contact information members in your region share directly with you.

**Q: Can't the New York office share contact information for just the U.S. citizens?**

A: No, for two reasons: 1) Our members trust us to use their information judiciously. Even prior to GDPR, it was a best practice for member organizations to not share contact information. 2) HAUS members are a modern, dynamic, and internationally mobile group. Citizenship and residence change frequently. It would be impossible for the New York staff to maintain current details on members' citizenship and residency with any reasonable degree of accuracy and then to implement two different data streams. Like most organizations, we have to have a single approach to managing personal data in order to remain compliant and functional.

**Q: I updated my email address with the New York office. Why does HAI still contact me at my old address? (or vice versa)**

A: HAI and HUA (and therefore HAUS) are two, separate, legal entities. Therefore, we cannot freely share data with one another.

**Q: If HUA and HAI are separate entities, can't HUA do what it wants with its data?**

A: Technically, yes, but HUA does not exist without Heidelberg University. HUA must have policies and procedures in place that the university can support.

Please note that regulations pertaining to data protection and privacy change continually. The New York office will update Chairs on any new information pertaining to HAUS.

### **Support from the New York Office**

HAUS is a member-led and driven alumni club. The New York staff supports HAUS in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- Collaborating with the Leadership Committee to help Chairs with all logistical support for events and meetings, whether in person or virtual
- Providing properly branded materials and tools to Chairs, such as
  - Table signs for restaurant events, or signs to hold at hiking meeting points and at athletic events
  - Flyers for study abroad fairs or student information sessions
  - HAUS event invitations

HEIDELBERG  
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- HAUS event sign-in sheet template
- HAUS PowerPoint templates
- Heidelberg University business cards
- Maintaining a database of HAUS members and their contact information
- Managing payments for any event or activity that requires a fee
- Liaising between HAI, Heidelberg University, and HAUS membership
- Maintaining HAUS social media accounts
- Providing letters for activities where Chairs need to show 501(c)(3) non-profit status, e.g., requesting complimentary tickets to a local sporting event

**HAUS belongs to its members**, and the New York staff is there to help. As needs change and new ideas arise, Chairs should feel free to go to them with any questions, concerns, ideas, or needs.