SIPA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
Mission and Structure  
June 2020  

Mission  
The mission of the SIPA Alumni Association (SAA) is to strengthen SIPA’s global alumni community through initiatives that connect alumni with each other and the School. The SAA is a conduit for graduates to engage with each other and with SIPA, which further strengthens the School’s relationship with the alumni community.  

To accomplish its mission, the SAA works with SIPA to:  

1. Inform alumni about SIPA’s programs, community, and strategic initiatives.  
2. Give voice to the interests and/or concerns alumni may have with the School.  
3. Engage alumni in SAA initiatives including signature events such as Alumni Day and Class Reunions, career programs for students and alumni, and recruitment of students for the School.  
4. Increase involvement of alumni around the world through its regional communities and collaboration with the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) regional clubs.  
5. Encourage alumni to support SIPA through participation in the annual fund and other fundraising initiatives including Giving Day and Class Reunions.  
6. Encourage SIPA alumni leaders to become active with the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) and its regional clubs.  
7. Initiate additional activities that benefit and engage alumni and can be sustained by the SAA.  

While the SAA’s leadership role in guiding, planning, and evaluating SIPA’s alumni programs is critical, the Dean and the administration of SIPA maintain ultimate authority. The Director of Alumni Affairs will serve as the key SIPA liaison for the SAA and will include other offices within SIPA as appropriate.  

This document updates the Mission and Structure of the SIPA Alumni Association which was last revised in Fall of 2015 and that of the SIPA Alumni Council, which existed from 2009 through 2014. The Alumni Council was an outgrowth of the 60th Anniversary Planning Committee. This document is intended to provide guidance and structure for the SAA. The SAA’s mission, structure and membership may evolve to accommodate growth within the alumni community and the School.  

Membership in the SIPA Alumni Association  
All graduates of SIPA degree programs automatically become members of the SAA upon receiving their degrees.
The Alumni Association Board and Selection Process

The SAA will be governed by a Board consisting of a maximum of 20 members, selected through the nominating process described below, with the exception of the representatives from four SIPA specialty programs: Executive MPA (EMPA), MPA in Economic Policy Management (MPA-EPM), MPA in Development Practice (MPA-DP), and the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy (MPA-ESP). All members of the Board will have full voting privileges. The SAA’s officer positions will be a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

The SIPA representatives to the Columbia University Alumni Trustee Nominating Committee and the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) will serve as ex-officio members of the Executive Committee, if they are not already members. Other ex-officio members of the Board may include the (immediate) Past Chair and a representative of the SIPA Advisory Board.

For Alumni Association Board meetings, a simple majority of members will constitute a quorum.

The SAA’s officers will be nominated annually by the Nominating & Governance (N&G) Committee and approved by the Board. Officers may serve up to three consecutive one-year terms, if re-nominated by the N&G Committee. The N&G Committee will seek self-nominations and input from Board and will consult with the Dean in making officer nominations. Each of the remaining Board members will serve as leaders or members of SAA committees, coordinating any projects with the Alumni Affairs Office, which shall manage administrative and budgetary matters for the SAA. Projects and leadership assignments may change annually according to the priorities of the School and the Board.

**Terms:** Board terms will last three years. Members of the Board may serve two consecutive terms if re-nominated by the N&G Committee. Board terms will be staggered to ensure continuity. As stated above, the Board will elect new officers (or re-elect the current officers), as nominated, annually. All Board and officer terms will commence July 1 and end June 30.

**Nominations:** Board Members will be selected through a nominating process, managed by the N&G Committee.

**Criteria/Qualifications:** The N&G Committee will be charged with producing a slate of nominees for the Board with broad representation reflecting the wide diversity of the SIPA alumni population. The N&G Committee should strive to include members from all degree programs, a range of graduation years, and a mix of home countries. The N&G Committee is encouraged to draw from members of SAA committees and/or other alumni who have demonstrated prior leadership by volunteering for SIPA and SAA initiatives.

**Process:** The N&G Committee will work with the Board and the Alumni Affairs Office to generate names of prospective Board members. The N&G Committee will finalize its recommended list of candidates to replace outgoing Board members in the spring and will review the list with the Dean, the Director of Alumni Affairs and the Board Chair prior to presenting it to the Board at its April meeting.

The Board will then select its new members from the slate of nominees by majority vote.
Representatives from EMPA, MPA-EPM, MPA-DP and MPA-ESP programs will be nominated by their respective degree programs and be reviewed by the Dean, the Director of Alumni Affairs and the N&G Committee, prior to being submitted to the Board for approval.

_Filling Vacated Positions:_ If a member of the Board is unable to complete his/her term, the N&G Committee will propose a new member to serve to the end of the vacated term for approval by the Dean, the Director of Alumni Affairs, and the Board.

**Committees of the SIPA Alumni Association**

The SAA will have six standing committees:

- Admissions Ambassadors
- Careers
- Programs
- Reunion
- Alumni Awards
- Nominating & Governance

Additional, or ad hoc, committees may be created by the Board. Committee descriptions are appended to this document.

**Nominations and Governance Committee:** Members of the N&G Committee will be named by the Board Chair for two-year terms and will include a group of SAA members who, if practicable, represent both MIA and MPA alumni. The N&G Committee will be chaired by a member of the Board and will also include the Board’s Secretary.

**Nomination of members of standing committees:** Members of the other standing committees will be selected through a nominating process to be managed by the N&G Committee.

**Criteria/Qualifications:** The N&G Committee will be charged with producing a slate of nominees with broad representation that reflects the wide diversity of SIPA’s alumni population. The Committee should strive to include members from all degree programs, a range of graduation years, and geographic diversity where possible. It is the N&G Committee’s responsibility to recruit standing committee members by conducting outreach to SIPA alumni and by coordinating with SIPA’s administration (e.g. through the SIPA website, announcements at alumni events, emails and other communications to alumni, and proactive outreach to alumni leaders).

**Process:** The N&G Committee will work with the Alumni Affairs Office in the fall of each year to generate names of prospective committee members through the outreach described above. The N&G Committee will develop application materials for prospective candidates to complete and will assess their qualifications. The N&G Committee will finalize its recommended list of candidates to replace outgoing committee members in the spring and will review the list with the Dean, the Director of Alumni Affairs, and the Board Chair prior to presenting it to the Board at its April meeting.
The Board will then select new standing committee members from the slate of nominees by majority vote.

Committee members will be asked to serve for an initial two-year term. Terms are renewable if re-nominated by the N&G Committee for one or two years according to the needs of the Committee.

NOTE: In years when the SAA is not seeking to add a significant number of new committee members, the N&G Committee will not conduct a broad outreach campaign, but will source prospective candidates from alumni who have become active in SIPA alumni affairs.

Regional Representation

The SAA will also support the growth and leadership of regional SIPA communities, with the nomination of Regional Ambassadors who will be responsible for acting as the primary point person representing SIPA alumni in their geographic area. Regional Ambassadors may be engaged in a variety of activities including, but not limited to:

- Serving as a liaison with the local CAA (Columbia Alumni Association) club to promote CAA activities to the SIPA community and identify opportunities for SIPA to partner with CAA.
- Organizing or hosting local events for fellow SIPA alumni.
- Supporting SIPA’s recruitment efforts by speaking with prospective students or recruiting other SIPA alumni to volunteer as Admissions Ambassadors.
- Using professional and personal networks to promote SIPA’s programs to prospective students or communicate about employment opportunities for SIPA graduates to SIPA’s Office of Career Services.
- Assisting the Office of Alumni Affairs with updated information about local alumni and alumni activities and identifying sources of alumni news and profiles to be featured on the SIPA website and other publications.

Regional Ambassadors may be invited to join standing Committees of the SAA. During the CAA Alumni Leaders Weekend and SIPA Alumni Day in New York, the Board will meet jointly with any Regional Ambassadors who have travelled to New York.