

## **CBAA Membership Dues Proposal by Sub-committee Members:**

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Questions: To pay or not to pay dues? Who is a CBAA member?

CBAA membership has been afforded to those who join CBAA by completing a membership form and paying applicable dues (a) in response to CBAA annual mailings (via U.S. Mail) and the CBAA listserv messages, (b) via online websites sponsored by CBAA and/or Cornell, (c) at CBAA events (e.g., Reunions, General Body Meetings, social events), and (d) via discounted joint membership arrangements with Cornell Club of Washington (CCW) and Cornell Club of Atlanta. The dues rates last posted on CBAA website ([www.cbaa1976.com](http://www.cbaa1976.com)) are:

<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Dues Amount</b>
Current student/graduates	Exempt (i.e., Free)
Parents/Friends	\$15
Alumni Individual	\$30
Alumni Couple	\$45
Joint CCW/CBAA Individ.	\$50
Joint Atlanta/CBAA Individ.	\$45
Joint CCW/CBAA Couple	\$60
Life Individual	\$300

Annual dues paid after March 31 each year are good thru the end of the next fiscal year (e.g., a 4/1/12 payment would be a membership thru 6/30/13). Association activities and events have been funded from annual dues collected and part of the interest from life dues account at Cornell. Past Cornell Alumni Affairs support of CBAA activities has included processing dues payments sent to Ithaca, maintaining various CBAA accounts, maintaining a listing of all self-identified Black Alumni (that can be sorted by region, class year and interests), funding/assisting/printing CBAA mailings (by U.S. mail and email), and co-sponsoring CBAA scholarship fundraising and other activities. Currently there are 532 paid members (including over 350 Life members).

A recent Cornell Participation Model gives alumni affinity groups (including CBAA and other minority organizations) that forgo dues collection annual funding based on association budget requests (and apportionment at Cornell's discretion) as a means to enable groups to focus on other ways to engage and excite alumni. Cornell's view is that collection and solicitation of dues (by other than Cornell classes) has been a detriment to alumni engagement.

### **Pros of the Participation Model (non-dues collection):**

- focus solely on programming without dues collection
- self-identified Alumni would be "members" without respect to their ability to pay annual or Life dues

### **Cons of the Participation Model (non-dues collection):**

- Would depart from CBAA's over 30-year history of collecting dues
- CBAA has established scholarships while collecting dues

- Would prevent CBAA from tracking Scholarship donations submitted with CBAA membership forms, reducing our ability to dispel Cornell statements that “Black Alumni are not contributors”
- Would end dues collection mailings that have been vital in maintaining updated alumni contact info and keep Alumni connected to Cornell (not all Black Alumni respond to their class mailings)
- Dues have been collected during the Model trial period and not refunded
- Would end membership discounts at events, diminishing the value of previously paid memberships (particularly Life memberships)
- Reliance solely on Cornell would diminish CBAA’s autonomy/independence to advocate issues that are relevant to Black Alumni, but not favored by Cornell
- Membership and voting eligibility (e.g., quorum numbers) would be difficult to determine and need to be redefined via changes to the CBAA Bylaws
- Dues payers have a stake in CBAA programming and hold CBAA leadership accountable to offer meaningful activities to the membership
- Gives CBAA a unique identity, clarifying to Cornell that not all self-identified alumni are CBAA members (i.e., Black Alumni are not a monolithic group)
- Discourages CBAA’s self-sufficiency and fiscal responsibility to members who contribute hard earned membership dues
- Events that result in numerous dues payers gives immediate feedback on whether CBAA programming meets the needs of Alumni
- No evidence that payment of CBAA dues has prevented Alumni from being engaged and connected with Cornell
- Would damage the long term solvency of CBAA due to end of Life dues. Interest payments from Life dues would not grow, resulting in less flexibility in CBAA event planning
- Would be difficult to resume dues collection in the future if Cornell funding is not available or severely restricted
- Alumni Affairs services made available to Classes (and other organizations) that collect dues would still be available to CBAA
- Due to short duration of the model, there is a lack of information regarding how allotments are determined and the long term benefits of the Model

***Based on the above, the consensus was to recommend the following:***

The Membership Sub-Committee recommends to the executive board of CBAA that CBAA retain the membership model and resume dues collection for the maintenance of CBAA autonomy and self-determination.

## Addendum

### Other Concerns/Questions:

1. Why classes are encouraged to collect dues, but affinity groups are discouraged from doing the same?
2. What is the affect on overall Alumni Affairs support?
3. How is the calculation determined and what opportunities exist for a review of the formula if the amount fluctuates over time?
4. If all self-identifying alumni are considered members, what mechanism would be used to remove those who may be listed as Black but have no interest in being affiliated?
5. What assurance is there that CU can fund all planned budget items year after year?
6. If organizations rely on the model, how strong will the fiduciary responsibility to the club and current members be? Would officers that collect dues (and have personal contact with members at events) feel a greater sense of responsibility to expend funds wisely than those that receive lump sums from Cornell?
7. What happens to member discounts offered at events? For example, CBAA Reunion attendees have come to expect a lower price for members and it also encourages membership.
8. Should Life and Annual members be expected to pay full price when they have provided funds to sponsor current activities.
9. Is there a summary of pros and cons as experienced by clubs using the participation model available?
10. Is the Model better suited to organizations that are not well organized and have never successful in soliciting dues and donations?
11. Are classes still being encouraged to collect dues? Are classes participating in the model? The Cornell website still shows dues being collected by classes.
12. Is the Model intended to end the independence of and distinction among minority organizations in an effort to merge all minorities into one "Mosaic Organization?"
13. If CBAA does not collect dues (and continue to have line entries for scholarship & AS&RC donations), will donations by CBAA members be counted with each person's class instead-- the current structure of the Cornell gift site?
14. In times past, Cornell Alumni Federation charged each club \$1 annually per member for participation on that body and eligibility for grants. How are such funds to be paid if organizations do not collect dues?
15. How will "member" numbers be determined?
16. If CBAA doesn't send a fall membership mailing, is it reasonable to expect that self-identified Black alumni, who have not donated with their class in the past, will now do so through their class?
17. Are the small dues amounts preventing people from contributing to Cornell?
18. Can Life dues still be collected under the Model?
19. If dues payments are processed primarily in Ithaca, how burdensome is it for CBAA to handle the few dues received at events?