



# Introduction to a Useful Tool for Departments/Programs

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**Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences  
Career Mentoring Program**



**WEINBERG  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES**

## What Is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a networking site that helps people join and create networks for professional advancement. Basic LinkedIn accounts are free. LinkedIn has 175 million users worldwide and adds new users at the rate of two per second.

## How Can LinkedIn Be Useful to My Department?

LinkedIn can be particularly useful in tracking alumni, promoting alumni engagement, and connecting current students with alumni for mentoring.

Value to Department	Value to Alumni	Value to Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Keep in touch with department alumni</b></li><li>• <b>Demonstrate of career paths of alumni in attractive, visual format</b></li><li>• <b>Enable news dissemination</b></li><li>• <b>Gain access to potential event attendees and speakers</b></li><li>• <b>Assist giving campaigns</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Connect/re-connect with other alumni with a similar academic background</b></li><li>• <b>Connect with and mentor students</b></li><li>• <b>Continue intellectual engagement with the department</b></li><li>• <b>Keep up to date on department happenings</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Gain access to alumni with similar academic background</b></li><li>• <b>Learn about a key, career-focused networking tool</b></li><li>• <b>See visual illustration of possible career paths</b></li></ul>

## What Is Involved?

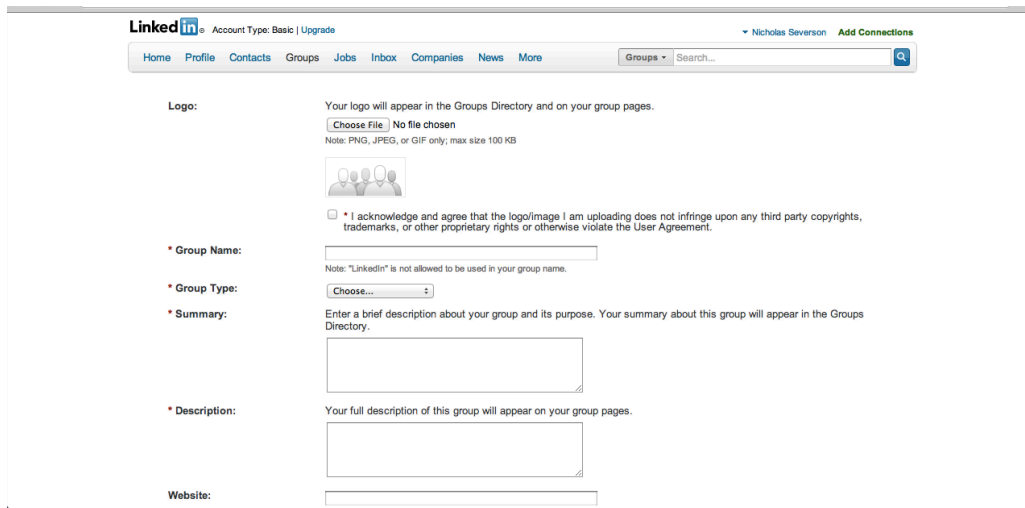
The Department simply creates a LinkedIn group, forming a sub-network within the larger LinkedIn universe that allows alumni and students to connect with one another. The primary effort required is in locating alumni of the department and encouraging them and current students to become members of the group. After that, a modest level of moderation and messaging will be needed on an ongoing basis.

## How Do I Get Started?

The “owner” of the Department LinkedIn Group should be either the Department Chair or Director of Undergraduate Studies. Additional members of the department should be set up as “managers” of the group. It is essential that this responsibility be shared to ensure continuity if one of the managers leaves the department.

In order to build the group membership, contact Catrina Dagostino in Development to get a list of your department's alumni. You may also want to invite the most recent graduating class, or even current students in the program.

LinkedIn makes creating a group easy and provides a great step-by-step process for group creation:



The image shows a screenshot of the LinkedIn group creation interface. At the top, the LinkedIn logo is visible along with the user's account type (Basic) and an upgrade option. The user's name, Nicholas Severson, and an 'Add Connections' button are also present. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Profile, Contacts, Groups, Jobs, Inbox, Companies, News, and More. A search bar is located to the right of the navigation bar. The main content area is a form with the following sections:

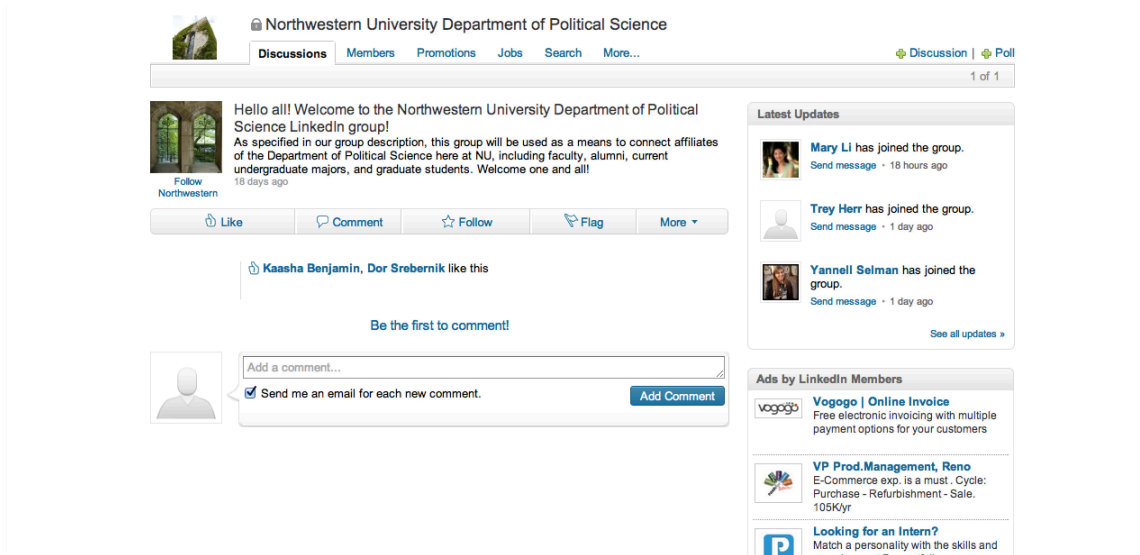
- Logo:** A section for uploading a group logo. It includes a 'Choose File' button, a 'No file chosen' status, and a note: 'Note: PNG, JPEG, or GIF only; max size 100 KB'. Below this is a placeholder image of three people and a checkbox with the text: '\* I acknowledge and agree that the logo/image I am uploading does not infringe upon any third party copyrights, trademarks, or other proprietary rights or otherwise violate the User Agreement.'
- \* Group Name:** A text input field with a note: 'Note: "LinkedIn" is not allowed to be used in your group name.'
- \* Group Type:** A dropdown menu with the text 'Choose...'.
- \* Summary:** A text area for entering a brief description of the group and its purpose. A note states: 'Enter a brief description about your group and its purpose. Your summary about this group will appear in the Groups Directory.'
- \* Description:** A larger text area for the full description of the group. A note states: 'Your full description of this group will appear on your group pages.'
- Website:** A text input field for the group's website.

Once your LinkedIn group is set up, it is important to monitor the group's membership and activity levels. If you need a refresher on how to set up your group, please visit the following websites:

<http://learn.linkedin.com/group-management/>

<http://careerservices.linkedin.com/engage>

We recommend that custom invitations, welcome emails and group rules be included for your department. These can be created during the group setup process. Examples of these custom invitations and rules are shown below:



The following template may be useful as you try to craft the appropriate language for your department:

*Welcome! This is a group for the alumni, faculty and students of the \_\_\_ department at Northwestern University. The purpose of this group is to provide an online forum for students and alumni to connect for career related networking and relationship building. We hope that students will use this group to explore the variety of career fields pursued by alumni in their academic major and that alumni will use this group to post internship and job opportunities and to mentor students.*

*This group also features a moderated forum to promote open discussion between participants on topics of mutual interest related to the field of \_\_\_\_\_. We encourage all of our group members to engage in these discussions and to post comments. Your insights and information will create a vibrant LinkedIn group community, and we encourage your active involvement.*

*We ask that you are respectful in your actions and comments. Please do not post:*

- *Advertisements and business solicitations*
- *Chain letters or “spam”*

*The Northwestern University \_\_\_\_\_ LinkedIn team reserves the right to remove discussion posts we deem inappropriate or offensive or any posts that meet the aforementioned content exclusions. We also reserve the right to terminate involvement by group members who post such content. The views and opinions expressed on the Northwestern University \_\_\_\_\_ discussion board do not necessarily represent those of Northwestern University. Northwestern cannot be held responsible for the accuracy, currency or reliability of information posted by external parties.*

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## Programming and Discussion on LinkedIn

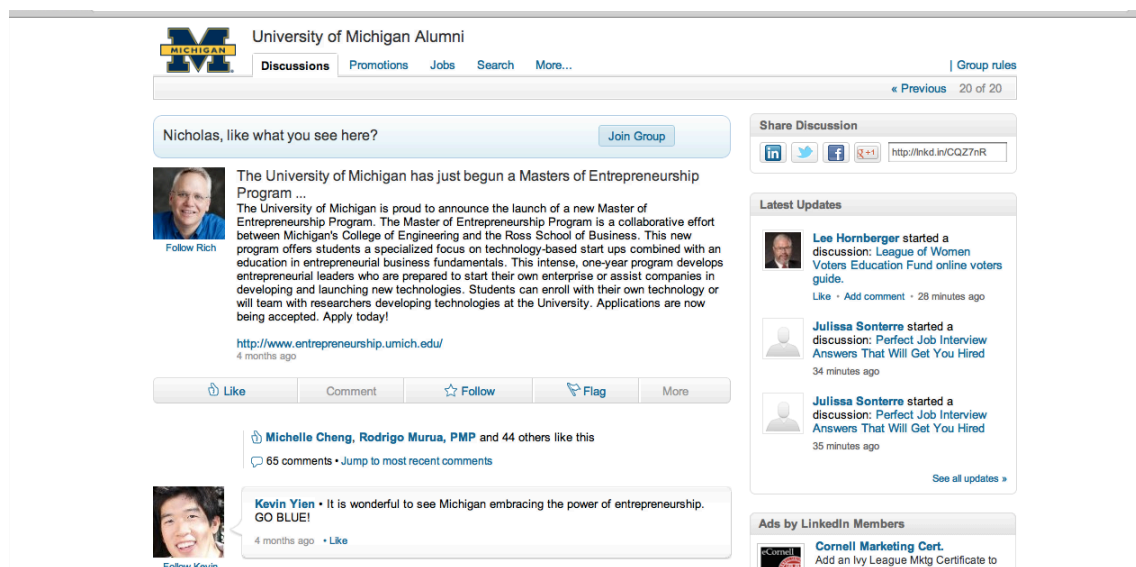
LinkedIn be used to engage group members in discussion on a variety of career related and academic topics.

Some ideas for using your Linked In Group include:

- Post highlights of physical meetings and conferences and invite comment from members
- Post news items and department newsletter
- Post job and internship openings received from alumni and other sources
- Provide content from or links to your department's Facebook or Twitter accounts
- Share links to relevant articles and websites

The Brady Scholars Program, for example, hosts weekly teas for its participants. The topics for discussion could easily be posted on LinkedIn to allow alumni of the program to continue the dialogue and maintain a connection with the group.

Below is an example of a discussion post on the University of Michigan Alumni page:



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn discussion post within the "University of Michigan Alumni" group. The post is titled "Nicholas, like what you see here?" and is shared by "Nicholas Rich". The post content reads: "The University of Michigan has just begun a Masters of Entrepreneurship Program ... The University of Michigan is proud to announce the launch of a new Master of Entrepreneurship Program. The Master of Entrepreneurship Program is a collaborative effort between Michigan's College of Engineering and the Ross School of Business. This new program offers students a specialized focus on technology-based start ups combined with an education in entrepreneurial business fundamentals. This intense, one-year program develops entrepreneurial leaders who are prepared to start their own enterprise or assist companies in developing and launching new technologies. Students can enroll with their own technology or will team with researchers developing technologies at the University. Applications are now being accepted. Apply today!" The post includes a link to "http://www.entrepreneurship.umich.edu/" and was posted "4 months ago". Below the post, there are interaction buttons for "Like", "Comment", "Follow", "Flag", and "More". A comment from "Michelle Cheng, Rodrigo Murua, PMP and 44 others" indicates "65 comments". Another comment from "Kevin Yien" says "It is wonderful to see Michigan embracing the power of entrepreneurship. GO BLUE!" and was posted "4 months ago". The right sidebar shows "Share Discussion" options, "Latest Updates" with recent discussions, and "Ads by LinkedIn Members" including a "Cornell Marketing Cert." advertisement.

## Starting, maintaining, and responding to group dialogue

When beginning a dialogue it is important to consider the goals of the department and group, as well as the overall nature and tone of professional networking on LinkedIn. Keep in mind the following guidelines.

- Tone and content should be:
  - Friendly

- Conversational
- Professional
- What the group posts reflect on:
  - Department/program
  - Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
  - Northwestern University

Because of the nature of a group, it may serve your best interests to provide a set of “rules” for members to follow. This can easily be done and help make moderating the group easier. The template above may be used as a “Group Rules” guide.

Of course, regardless of the rules, the type of responses provided by participants will be varied. Here is a simple guide to deal with the different types of comments you may encounter on your group page.d

<b>Positive Comments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question or request</li> <li>• Additional content related to an earlier post</li> <li>• Large number of enthusiastic comments</li> </ul>	<b>Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer the question (or say you are seeking an answer)</li> <li>• Take person-specific answers offline</li> <li>• Just say “Thanks!”</li> </ul>
<b>Negative Comment (Low Concern)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarcasm</li> <li>• Not destructive or hateful</li> </ul>	<b>Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor but typically don’t respond; other followers will often respond</li> </ul>
<b>Negative Comment (Medium Concern)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cites a specific faculty member, issue, class, student, etc.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and follow up with inquirer privately</li> <li>• “We’re sorry you had a negative experience. We appreciate your feedback and would like to invite you to discuss the issue in greater depth offline. Please contact us at 555-5555 or at xyz@northwestern.edu”</li> </ul>
<b>Negative Comment (High Concern)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of profanity, abuse of another follower, spam, continuous reposting of the same negative comment</li> </ul>	<b>Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove abusive comments</li> <li>• Post a reminder about the etiquette/rules</li> </ul>