

Athens Dinners – Host Information

This event is a relatively new tradition at Ohio University and is one that is growing throughout colleges and universities across North America. The idea is simple; attend a dinner with OHIO students to share a good meal, good conversation, and a good time.

Come to Dinner with 12 Strangers and leave with 11 new friends!

**Who can host a dinner?**  
All OHIO alumni and friends are welcome to host a dinner. If you are unable to host, whether because of location or schedule, consider being a co-host. Co-hosts help the host with planning and facilitating the dinner.

**Where is the dinner held?**  
Athens is the most convenient location for students but dinners can be held just about anywhere. Students will be asked to take care of their own transportation. You can serve a traditional dinner in your home or dine out at a restaurant. The Ohio University Alumni Association will help you find a good location once you contact them that you are interested.

**How much does it cost to host a dinner?**  
The cost of each dinner will be provided by the generosity of the Ohio University Alumni Association.  A casual dinner with plenty of good conversation and opportunity for networking will satisfy any bobcat’s expectations. If you would like to cover the dinner, you are more than welcome to do that as well and it can be processed as a charitable gift to OHIO.

**How are the students selected to attend?**  
The Ohio University Alumni Association will take care of pairing students with a host that expresses similar career goals or interests. Typically the university community is emailed based on organizations that have similar interests to the host, but anyone who is interested can sign up. The host will be notified of the guest list to prepare for the dinner. All you have to worry about is the time, place, and menu; we will take care of the rest!

**What happens at the dinner?**  
Hosts are asked to open the discussion by having every student introduce themselves. You can try playing some ice breakers to help ease the introduction process, and conversation topics will be provided. As dinner is served, the host can talk about various topics ranging from life at OHIO when they were a bobcat to sharing tips for successful job searching.

Hosting a Dinner

Becoming a Host

If you are interested in hosting a Dinner with 12 Strangers in Athens, you will simply need to email Katrina Heilmeier, the Associate Director of Campus Relations, at [heilmeik@ohio.edu](mailto:heilmeik@ohio.edu). In this email you can include the following information:

* If you have a co-host you are interested in hosting the dinner with
* Dates you are interested in hosting a dinner in Athens
* Restaurant Preferences (if applicable)
* A short bio of yourself to help publicize the dinner and find the best students to attend

Good Dates for a Dinner

* Try to notify the OUAA about **6 weeks before the date** **of the dinner** you would like to host in order to have time to recruit students, contact restaurants, and more
* Typically Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings work best for Athens dinners, but if another date is better for you, we can definitely try to accommodate
* Dinners are also only hosted during the academic year (August – May)
* Once you email the OUAA we will let you know if the date you propose conflicts with anything happening on campus (ex: spring break, winter break, etc.)

Setting Up the Dinner

Once a date has been set up, the OUAA will take care of next steps including:

* Working with the restaurant to work out specifics
  + If possible, a limited menu will be chosen for the dinner
* Setting up an online registration page
* Emailing students who are interested
  + A copy of the interest email will also be sent to you as a host in case you have any students you would like to share the invitation with
* Communicating with students
* Providing you with the registration list of students ahead of time
* Setting up the dinner on the night of the event including gifts for those attending
* Providing conversation topics for the dinner
* Payment (if you would like to make a charitable contribution and pay for the dinner, we will coordinate the gift processing)

Night of the Dinner

The night of the dinner we recommend doing the following things to help you feel prepared and get conversation started:

* Arrive 15-20 minutes early to find the table and meet the incoming students
* Start the dinner by having each student give an introduction, and give an introduction of yourself, how you got to where you are now, how Ohio University helped shape your experience, etc.
* Other conversation topics could also include:
  + What is your favorite memory so far at Ohio University?
  + What is your favorite part of your major? If you could choose an alternate major, what would it be?
  + What is your favorite book recently?
  + What are you most looking forward to after graduation?
  + What is one thing on your “bucket list”?
  + If you were given $1,000 today what would you do with it?
  + This time next year how do you see your life changing?
  + If you could only eat one meal, what would it be?
* At the end of the dinner the OUAA will cover the bill, if applicable, and will also distribute gifts
* Typically dinners last for an hour and a half, but could be longer depending on the speed of the service