

The Collegiate Amateur Radio Initiative



If you're in a college amateur radio club, or are wondering what it takes to start one, the College Amateur Radio Initiative (CARI) offers resources to help college hams start, manage, and promote clubs and activities.

Find CARI:
facebook.com/groups/ARRLCARI



Launched in 2016 as an ARRL program, CARI is based at facebook.com/groups/ARRLCARI, where a growing community of more than 900 students, alumni, faculty members, and other interested hams discuss everything from advice on equipment and operating techniques, to perspective on issues unique to college clubs. The Facebook group also maintains a collection of files for download, including a master list of college radio clubs.

CARI hosts exhibit booths and forums at popular ham gatherings like HamCation in Orlando, Florida and Hamvention in Xenia, Ohio. Forum topics center on challenges that college clubs face, like funding the club and its station, finding and maintaining a location for the station, and recruiting and retaining members. Forum speakers have also extolled the benefits of being a college ham — namely the leg up it can give you when applying for jobs, in terms of the range of practical experience the hobby affords,

and in terms of the professional network of hams that you gain as you become active in amateur radio. CARI often organizes a dinner meetup at ham conventions, to give college hams an opportunity to build that network and make friends.

In 2018, the Collegiate QSO Party, an on-air event just for college hams, made its debut. Run by the Gator Amateur Radio Club (GARC) at the University of Florida, W4DFU, this event is a way for college clubs to engage with each other on the air, in the spirit of amateur radio contesting — and the spirit of CARI. The most recent running of the Collegiate QSO Party was in September 2021. Information can be found at collegiateqsoparty.com.

If you're looking for ways to make your college club more vibrant, whether you're a current student or an alumnus, check out what CARI has to offer.