

 Penn Alumni reunion  
**FACTS** 

**Name** Alumni Relations | Classes & Reunions

**Subject** Reunion Outreach & Planning Guide



# Reunion Planning Partners

## Development and Alumni Relations

Penn's 300,000 living undergraduate alumni are the lifeblood of the University. The participation and engagement of these alumni is vital to the strength of the University, directly impacting the quality of learning and life for all undergraduate students.

## Classes & Reunions

The Classes & Reunions team (C&R) is a key part of keeping alumni connected to Penn. Classes & Reunions includes a team of staff who work in partnership with volunteers to coordinate communications and events, most notably reunions, for all class years. Each reunion class has a staff partner from the Classes & Reunions team. Your C&R liaison will be your main resource throughout the reunion outreach and planning process and your link to your other planning partners in Development and Alumni Relations.

## Reunion Teammates - The Penn Fund and programs and Special Events

Each reunion is assigned a Penn Fund liaison and a Programs & Special Events planner. Along with your C&R liaison, this team works together to help make all aspects of your reunion successful!

## The Penn Fund

[www.alumni.upenn.edu/pennfund](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/pennfund)

Established in 1927, The Penn Fund—Penn's undergraduate annual giving fund—serves as the primary philanthropic vehicle for Penn's community of undergraduate alumni and students. Gifts to The Penn Fund benefit the University's highest undergraduate priorities through gifts of unrestricted support and individual endowed scholarships. Participation is the most important goal for The Penn Fund,

and gifts of all sizes play a vital role in its success. Alumni volunteers that work with The Penn Fund are part of the Gift Committee, and at times participate in the Reunion Outreach & Planning Committee as well.

## Programs & Special Events

In conjunction with Classes & Reunions, Programs and Special Events is responsible for the successful implementation of all the logistical requirements for the reunion. Each reunion is assigned an event planner from this office, who coordinates services and negotiates contracts, schedules entertainment, technology, equipment, food and beverages.

Your planner can turn any space on campus into a nostalgic and warm venue for your reunion party and works directly with your Penn Classes and Reunions liaison.

## Student Ambassadors

(Formerly known as CHAA) Student Ambassadors are student volunteers who work alongside the leaders of each reunion class to help plan and promote reunions. Students benefit by engaging with loyal alumni who can share a wealth of experience and their appreciation for Penn's traditions. Alumni benefit by being exposed to vibrant, enthusiastic Penn students.

## Alumni Class Leadership Council (ACLC)

The Alumni Class Leadership Council (ACLC) is comprised of volunteer alumni leaders dedicated to strengthening ties between alumni and the University by reinforcing class affiliation. The ACLC works closely with Alumni Relations to ensure that classes have active, engaged leadership and to facilitate communication between class leaders and the University.



Alumni Relations  
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215.898.7811



# Reunion Outreach & Planning Volunteer Role

Reunion Outreach & Planning Volunteers are the backbone of any successful reunion event. As a member of the Reunion Outreach and Planning Committee, your goal is to reconnect people with Penn and to encourage fellow alumni to return. The task of inspiring people to return to Penn is vital to the success of your reunion.

## Reunion Committee Goals

The primary goal of reunion committees is to engage classmates with each other and to celebrate Penn. To that end, the reunion committee seeks to:

- Encourage classmates to come back to campus and to reconnect with Penn
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all classmates at the reunion and related events
- Aim to break reunion attendance records by reaching out personally to every classmate
- Plan reunion events tailored to your unique class

## All Reunion Committee Member(s)

- Sign the confidentiality agreement at [www.alumni.upenn.edu/survey/Confidentiality](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/survey/Confidentiality)
- Contact classmates to encourage their participation in the reunion
- Host or attend a pre-reunion gathering (if feasible)
- Participate in reunion committee meetings or conference calls
- Participate in Homecoming activities and Alumni Weekend events
- Contribute to the Class Reunion Gift at any level
- Treat your fellow committee members and Alumni Relations professionals with respect and courtesy; be open to new ideas and amenable to compromise

## Volunteer Roles and Expectations

### Reunion Outreach & Planning Chair(s)

- Identify and recruit volunteers to join the committee
- Run meetings and conference calls
- Work in close partnership with C&R liaison and other staff
- Manage committee members and committee projects
- Manage the budget for your class events
- Consult with an Alumni Class Leadership Council (ACLC) liaison for advice

### Engagement Chair(s)

- Oversee peer-to-peer outreach among classmates during the reunion planning cycle
- Work with C&R staff liaison to provide affinity lists to outreach volunteers.
- Oversee the planning of regional pre-reunion events

### Communications Chair(s)

- Create and edit regular class communications
- Assist Class President and Reunion Outreach and Planning Chair with letters to the class, as needed
- Manage social media & social networking accounts such as Facebook

### Event Chair(s)

- Manage class-specific event logistics
- Attend walk through and tasting for reunion event (on campus)
- Assign volunteers to greet and welcome guests during the event

### Administrative Chair(s)

- Take minutes during meetings and send out minutes to the committee
- Keep track of deadlines and send reminders to the committee if needed

### Diversity Chair(s)

- Promote diversity at reunion and all class events
- Work with Reunion Outreach Chair(s) to identify diverse leaders to join the committee
- Create specific outreach strategy for members of Penn's diverse communities

### Education Chair(s)

- Research and compile list of classmates who may be appropriate for participating in the educational panels taking place during Alumni Weekend
- Working with your C&R liaison, solicit classmates to speak on the panel

### Parade Captain(s)

- Coordinate class's participation in the Alumni Day Parade of Classes
- Design class costume and/or keepsake
- Help direct your class during the Parade on Saturday morning of Alumni Weekend

# Outreach & Engagement Strategies

## Guidelines for Engaging Classmates

### Peer-to-Peer Outreach: Building Excitement for Your Reunion

The most critical strategy to draw classmates to the reunion is personal outreach. In a recent survey, more than 60% of alumni say that contact from a classmate influenced their decision to attend Alumni Weekend. All outreach is valuable, but the most effective way to sway a classmate is by phone call.

The Outreach Chair is critical to the success of the outreach effort. The Chair requests a list of student groups for which the University has alumni data. Then the Outreach Chair recruits a volunteer (or volunteers) from each group to contact classmates in order to encourage attendance. For instance, if a class had a large number of classmates on the football team, the Outreach Chair should find a football player to contact his fellow alumni teammates about the reunion.

### Class Communications and Newsletters

All classes will have the opportunity to send out an e-newsletter once a month. You can include fun information about the reunion, classmate profiles, surveys, and articles about what Penn is doing now in your newsletter. Newsletters can be a brief letter from the Reunion Chair and/

or Class President, or might be a longer piece. The goal of a newsletter is to get classmates excited about the upcoming reunion and the university. Please note that classes that graduated in 1969 or earlier will have the opportunity to send out one paper newsletter.

For newsletters to be sent out on time, the text must be written and submitted two weeks before the email send date. It is very important to be prompt with newsletter submissions; if the text arrives late then your newsletter will have to wait until the next month's send date. For a full calendar with newsletter due dates, please see the long version of the handbook.

### Diversity Outreach

All successful reunions have a diverse group of alumni participants. Penn Alumni's Multicultural Outreach program works with Classes & Reunions to involve alumni of color in the life of the University, but here are ways to welcome diversity into the reunion effort as well:

**Diversity Chair-** Recruit a volunteer (or two!) to serve as Diversity Chairs. The person in this role should be comfortable working with diverse groups and have an interest in promoting inclusiveness within the class.

**Reunion Planning-** The reunion committee should create a diverse array of

activities for the reunion. When choosing the music, food, and theme the committee should keep the entire class in mind.

**Reunion Marketing-** Remember your target audience as you market the reunion. Don't only use photos from one sport or student group; portray a variety of athletic teams, performing arts groups, and multicultural organizations.

### Phone-a-thons

Phone-a-thons can make the outreach process fun for alumni volunteers. Phone-a-thons are also a great way to utilize and create a relationship with the College House Alumni Ambassadors. By turning the calling session into a party, committee members enjoy reaching out to their classmates.

### Reunion Kickoff Events: From Regional Events to Reunions

Reunion Kickoff events are a meaningful way to engage your classmates before the reunion and build excitement for reunion. Volunteers must make the effort to either host the event or find an appropriate venue. A great resource for staging these events is your local Penn Alumni Club. Your C&R liaison can help you get in touch with a Penn Alumni Club for tips, venue suggestions, and local insights.



# What else do you need to know?

## Alumni Weekend Schedule - an overview

### Friday

#### **Concurrent Alumni Panels:**

Penn hosts reunions featuring faculty and alumni discussing contemporary issues. Alumni panels may also be held on Saturday afternoon.

#### **Franklin Fest: The All-Reunions Party**

Classes celebrating their reunions are invited to attend Franklin Fest; a night of games, dancing, artistry, and delectable cuisine and drink.

### Saturday

#### **Conversation with Dr. Gutmann**

Join President Amy Gutmann for her annual State of the University address.

#### **Alumni Day Parade**

All classes, from oldest to youngest, are invited to march in the Parade of Classes, each with their class flag to lead them. Those alumni who are not marching are encouraged to show their spirit along Locust Walk to cheer on Penn alumni as they pass by.

#### **Alumni Day Picnic**

The picnic will feature tents for alumni from each decade plus separate tents for the Old Guard, 50th, and 25th Classes.

#### **Penn Then & Now Campus Tours (Student Led)**

#### **Taste of Penn**

Spend an evening surrounded by friends, food, and music celebrating Penn's cultural diversity. Hosted by the Penn Alumni Diversity Alliance. All alumni are invited to attend.

#### **Reunion Party**

Celebrate your return to Penn at your class-specific party! (For some classes, this party will be Friday night.)

### Sunday

#### **All-Alumni Pancake Breakfast**

### Monday

#### **Commencement**

Open to all alumni; tickets not required. Gates open at 8:30 AM. The 25th and 50th reunions, along with a class leader from each year, will process down Locust Walk as part of the Commencement ceremony.

## Awards

Alumni Class Leadership Council – Distinction Awards

Two awards given to classes are presented at the Annual Alumni Award of Merit Gala during Homecoming, the Class Award of Merit and the David N. Tyre Communications award. All classes are eligible, and all decisions are made regardless of whether the class is in a reunion cycle. However, all classes celebrating a reunion are encouraged to apply for the award. The deadline for application submissions is in early June of each year. Applications, submissions, and past winners can all be found online at [www.alumni.upenn.edu/class/aclc/merit/description.html](http://www.alumni.upenn.edu/class/aclc/merit/description.html). Winners are selected by the Alumni Class Leadership Council.

## Budget

Penn heavily subsidizes Alumni Weekend and reunion class events. Starting with Alumni Weekend 2010, we provided a more consistent approach to Penn's subsidy of class events.

The Classes & Reunions budget pays for The Franklin Fest: All-Reunions Party; alumni programming/panels offered on Friday & Saturday; and Saturday's parade and picnic for each class. Penn Alumni Relations also covers the cost of the class reunion invitations and Alumni Weekend Guide.

### **Note:**

- Your decisions drive the expenses and fees
- Penn will cover many major event expenses to keep weekend fees manageable
- Reunion volunteers need to be able to talk to their classmates about fees, expenses and Penn's support

## Childcare

A variety of fun activities for children will be offered on Friday and Saturday evenings at the Penn Children's Center, a licensed child care facility located at 32nd and Chestnut Streets. You can drop your child off anytime Friday and Saturday between 6 pm and 12 midnight and there is a cost for childcare. Parents must pre-register for childcare when they register for Alumni Weekend.

## Class Cheers

Generation after generation of Penn Quakers has created individualized Class Cheers to celebrate and recognize their uniqueness. These cheers are printed on handheld signs for the Parade of Classes on Alumni Day. If your class does not already have a cheer, work with your committee members to create a class cheer for the Parade. Here's the cheer of the Class of 1946:

Pennsylvania's on the move  
'46 is in the groove!

## Educational Alumni Panels

To attract a wider audience and use resources effectively, we pool the expertise of alumni from different class years to host dynamic discussions with alumni panelists moderated by outstanding Penn faculty. Past topics have included politics, healthcare, entertainment and sustainability. You are welcome and encouraged identify classmates willing to serve on an alumni panel. This is a terrific way to show the entire alumni community what skills and talents your class has to offer.

## Elections

For the 5th to 45th reunion classes, elections for class officers are held after the reunion. This process is managed through the Alumni Class Leadership Council (ACLC) and facilitated through Alumni Relations. Nominations will be accepted from March through June of your reunion year, and the election will be held via email or web survey in the September following your reunion.

## Family Friendly Events

While the Parade of Classes and Alumni Day Picnic are always open to families, some classes design class events which accommodate families with children. If your classmates would prefer, plan your reunion to be family friendly. If your class chooses to gear the events toward adults, be sure to inform your classmates about the availability of child care.

## Hotels & Accommodations

It is important to book hotels far in advance, since Alumni Weekend falls on Penn's Commencement weekend and hotels in Philadelphia get booked quickly. Alumni Relations will provide a hotel room block at a downtown hotel and provide transportation to campus during peak periods of the weekend. Be sure to remind your classmates to book hotels early, and keep them well informed of the room block that Alumni Relations will offer.

## Parade

All classes from the 75th Reunion to the youngest Penn alumni are invited to march in the Parade of Classes on Saturday, each with their class flag to lead them. The Parade route will pass a reviewing stand where Penn's President, the Parade Marshal, and other Penn representatives will recognize each class. Each committee should have a volunteer Parade Captain who is responsible for understanding the parade route and ensuring that the flag is carried by a class representative.

## Registration

Beginning in early March, alumni can register at the Alumni Weekend website or by returning the reply card in the reunion invitation. Alumni who need help may call Alumni Relations at 215-898-7811 for assistance. Please note: some younger classes have electronic invitations only; registration for these classes is done either online or over the phone.

## Reunion Event

Classes hold a signature "Reunion Event" on one evening of the weekend. The reunion event should be about connecting with old friends and classmates. Your

party can be on Friday or Saturday night. Please note that Alumni Relations is hosting "Franklin Fest: The All-Reunions Party" on Friday for all reunion classes as part of the weekend package. If you decide to take advantage of this Penn party on Friday, then Saturday night would be ideal for your Reunion Event. Any alumnus who wishes may also attend the all-alumni party known as "Taste of Penn" on Saturday evening.

## Venue

C&R encourages all classes to host on-campus events. The most successful events are usually held on campus, to evoke fond memories of Penn and highlight new buildings. Think of campus venues that may have meaning for your class and work with your C&R liaison to find the best location. Rarely, and only if appropriate to a particular class, a class party will be held off campus.

## Catering

C&R partners together with staff in the Programs and Special Events office to identify a caterer who will provide the appropriate food and ambiance for your event. Through your event planner, you will have an opportunity to discuss menu preferences with your caterer.

## Entertainment

Music can immediately set the tone of an event. Depending on your tastes and the available budget, we can recommend a DJ, an mp3 player with a custom class-specific song list, or (on occasion depending on cost) a live band for musical entertainment. You may also opt to hire a student performing arts group such as Counterparts (a cappella jazz), Penn Jazz (instrumental jazz), Bloomers or Mask and Wig (rowdy humor), South Asian Dance (lively, interesting choreography), Penn Glee Club (traditional Penn songs), or the Penn Band.

## Theme

A theme helps make reunions fun! The theme can be nostalgic or trendy, and can provide a framework for marketing, the selection of a reunion keepsake and event decor.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Reunion Keepsakes

Reunion keepsakes (sometimes called the Class Costume) can be distributed at a central point on campus. Some popular items are music CDs, photo booth pictures, picture frames, or hats. The cost of the reunion keepsake will be included in your reunion budget, unless you elect to charge classmates separately for their keepsake. It is often advantageous to avoid items which require sizes.

### Slide Show

One simple effective display of nostalgia is a slide show of yearbook pictures and personal pictures that you have from your times at Penn, as well as photos of your classmates that have been taken since then. Our CHAA students are well versed in PowerPoint and other slide show programs, so you can work with them to incorporate photos from classmates into a fun slide show for your party.

### Reunion Events in addition to the class event

Most alumni events are funded through Alumni Relations and registration fees, such as your Class Event. However, some classes would like to have more than one reunion event. It is up to the committee to cover the cost of additional events by hosting the event at a classmate's home or in a nearby hotel, bar, or restaurant, with refreshments provided via cash bar.

### Volunteer Opportunities after the Reunion

There are many opportunities to stay involved and be a leader after your reunion. Organized Penn Alumni associations exist across the world, and many of them have volunteer and leadership opportunities.

### ***Why do reunion classes have to pay for campus venues?***

Each building and center on campus has its own budget. Some spaces on campus are more affordable than others; if price is a big consideration talk to your C&R liaison about the best "bang for your buck" campus locations.

### ***Why are there no longer dormitory rooms available for alumni?***

Since Penn students reside in the campus dormitories right up until Alumni Weekend, we unfortunately are unable to accommodate alumni in the dormitories. To make the weekend affordable, we have negotiated a deeply discounted group hotel rate for our alumni.

### ***Why are Penn reunions so expensive?***

Penn reunions are the most affordable out of our peer institutions. Alumni Relations subsidizes events and does everything possible to make events cost effective for alumni. Furthermore, reunions do not make any money for Penn. All fee charges go directly to offset the cost of programs. Throwing a nice event comes with a price tag. While Alumni Relations provides a subsidy for each class and while Events and C&R negotiates many of the costs, each line item adds up and certain costs are non-negotiable. Imagine that you are planning a wedding, but instead of someone hosting it, the cost for that wedding is spread out among all of the guests. This doesn't just include food, it also includes décor, music, lighting, furniture rental, housekeeping fees, security, etc.

### ***Why do e-newsletters have to be in two weeks before they are sent?***

We need your newsletter text ahead of time so that our web designers in Alumni Relations can work on designing the newsletter and getting it in the right format to send to your classmates. This two week lead time also gives the class an opportunity to edit the newsletter before it gets sent.

### ***What happens if I have a conversation with a classmate who is upset with Penn because their son or daughter was not accepted?***

When you reach out to alums, you might reach someone who is unhappy with Penn. A common disappointment is often on an admissions decision for someone in the alum's family. We realize conversations with fellow alumni can be difficult or awkward when their child or grandchild has been denied or waitlisted by Penn. The best thing you can do is listen.

### ***Is there a way for people to see who signed up for reunions?***

When people register for their reunion, they have the option to display their name on a "Look Who's Coming" list. Anyone with a quakernet ID can view this list through the Alumni Weekend website. Encourage classmates to display their name – seeing a familiar name can greatly influence someone to attend their reunion.