

3.25 YEARBOOK

3.25.1 *The Job*

It used to be that it was rare for a major reunion class not to publish a yearbook of some kind. This is no longer the case. The 25th, 40th and 50th Reunions often turn out very substantial yearbooks: hardbound volume printed offset on coated paper and running to hundreds of pages, complete with senior year photos, family snapshots, scrapbooks of past reunions, extensive polls and more. With the advent of TigerNet however, many classes choose to forego this major expense. Some take the middle road, having an extensive online yearbook behind the firewall on the class web site, with a simple photocopied address/e-mail list available to reunion attendees.

The cost varies significantly with print medium, number of copies, number of photos, nature of binding, and distribution. It can be among the largest line items on the reunion budget, and thus the reunions committee should discuss and decide carefully just how much of its reunion resources it wants to devote to publishing the “periodic life reports” of its classmates.

Just as cost varies, so too does the work. The more ambitious the project, the more important the selection of the editor and publisher. This can be very time-consuming, so you need a volunteer who has the time to devote to the job. While related experience in a classmate’s current or past employment can be helpful, familiarity with desktop publishing beyond simple word-processing is merely a plus, not a requirement.

The key tasks of the job are:

1. Determine with the committee what kind of book is wanted, weighing costs of different kinds of reproduction and different numbers of copies – for the whole class or just reunion attendees.
2. Name an editor to create a book outline and sample survey/bio forms, working from the previous year’s materials or those from a past major reunion of the class.
3. Discuss how best to collect information – by mail, e-mail or web site, or a clearly defined combination of all three. It can triple the work if people submit three different entries. Work closely with your class officers to determine how to best communicate with the class.
4. Coordinate mailing a letter and bio info/essay form with the overall class mailing. Work with the Publicity Chair to develop methods of boosting response rate. The more ambitious the project, the more important it is to get the best response. Set a schedule of follow-up reminders and coordinate with general reunion mailings and broadcast e-mails.
5. Choose the publisher/print vendor early and get input on streamlining the process of receiving, editing and compiling classmates’ responses. Get a firm and clear proposal and negotiate a payment schedule. Set deadlines working backwards from your desired date of delivery or mailing. Allow for at least two “clemency extensions” for tardy classmates and secretly build them into the schedule. Remember, the goal is the highest participation.

6. Receive and edit book materials. Proof final version and deliver to the vendor.

3.25.2 Timetable

We strongly recommend you use the detailed Reunion Planning Checklist with all relevant deadlines, available on the Office of the Alumni Association Reunions Volunteers web page.

3.25.3 Related Information and Pointers

Creative financing. While usually part of a reunion budget, a yearbook can be paid for from class funds if it is mailed to **ALL** members of the class, regardless of whether they pay class dues or attend Reunions.

Inspiration and where to find it. Copies of past reunion books are available at the Office of the Alumni Association in Maclean House and at the Seeley-Mudd Archives across from the Engineering Quadrangle. Reviewing past copies published for your anniversary can prompt some creative thinking about a class survey and about categories of individual information. Copies of past *Daily Princetonians* are on microfilm at Firestone, and the *Princetonian* can provide photographic copies of past pages to be scanned for inclusion in a book.

The Web and E-mail. Coordinate the book process carefully with the Technology Chair. Options such as Rich Text Format template files downloadable from a class web site can be very efficient. Properly formatted, filled in and returned as e-mail attachments, they can cut significant time from the task of collecting information. They are also a great solution to the late responder. Also if you wish to post responses on the class web site, they must be in a password-protected site, with a high level of security.

Virtual Yearbook. Publishing your yearbook on CD-Rom is a creative and relatively inexpensive way to go. It can allow classes on lower budgets to publish color photos and textual content can be placed in a variety of formats. It also saves on mailing costs and eliminates most printing costs. If you decide on a virtual yearbook, do not include contact information, as data is far more easily harvested for inappropriate use when in electronic format. Instead, refer people to TigerNet, which is password-protected.

Getting the best response. Coordinate with Registration Chair, developing a process to share names of respective respondents. Consider sending special reminders to people registered for Reunions who haven't supplied information for the yearbook. Collect 10 to 20 "sound-bites" of one- or two-paragraph clips from early respondents to use as a one-page anonymous teaser in follow-up mailings. A wide range of reaction will often inspire reluctant writers who think there is nothing to say if they can't relate years of soaring success.

Deadlines. Meeting deadlines is critical if you want your books to be delivered on schedule. Some classes even publish supplements to be able to include those classmates who don't make the yearbook deadlines. This has the advantage of including their entries while still keeping the project on schedule.

Piggyback on registration and/or fundraising calls. Coordinate the collection of information for the book with your Registration Chair and Class Agent. These are great opportunities to remind classmates to submit their entries if they haven't already.

Work smart. Work closely with your printing vendor to establish the most efficient methods of editing and formatting material for the book. This is very important if you do not have a seasoned editor experienced in delivering "camera-ready" materials. Establishing the right procedures in the beginning can save considerable time and exasperation later on. Define style points early and adhere to them consistently. Work out all details of software packages and any compatibility questions.

Who should publish it? Most classes use University Printing Services, Reunion Press, Inc., or a local copy shop or job printer. If you intend to mail the book, get firm numbers on packing and postage.

Mail ahead? Mailing to all class members may be done ahead of the reunion as a publicity device. Or, you may print enough for attendees and for any who request one through the mail. Determine whether your class will charge non-attendees for mailing them a book or give it to them. Determine early on the mailing details. It is crucial to fully reflect these decisions in your budget--yearbook overruns are a common cause of financial troubles.

Extra copies. Please add four books to your order and send to the Office of the Alumni Association for campus distribution.