Class Affairs Committee
Office of Alumni Affairs

Class Officers Handbook

Updated 2016
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DEDICATION

The Class Affairs Committee welcomes you!

This Class Officers Handbook is a tribute to the men and women who serve as officers of Princeton’s alumni classes, in appreciation of their untiring efforts to help keep Princeton the best place of all.

Welcome and thank you for joining the community of volunteers who serve as class officers. This handbook has been prepared for both newly elected/appointed officers and those who come with much experience but are looking for new ideas. Your class welfare has been entrusted to your able hands, and we have every confidence that under your stewardship your class will succeed. Please know that we are here to answer any questions, to provide guidance, or to simply act as a sounding board. We hope this handbook will become a go-to resource for you and will help you develop new ideas that will engage your classmates. But this is a two-way street, so to help make our Committee as vibrant and effective as possible, please share your thoughts and suggestions with us.

Best wishes,
The Class Affairs Committee
INTRODUCTION

Class affiliation has been the cornerstone of Princeton's alumni from the University's earliest days, when signs were hung outside recitation rooms at Commencement to announce gatherings of graduates by class. These days, classes meet throughout the year to plan activities and perform many functions important to Princeton's continued excellence as a university.

In no other university or college alumni organization does the class assume as much significance and importance as it does at Princeton. Belonging to a class is the one association with Princeton that most often eclipses all others.

You, as a class officer, are the steward of this relationship. Although Princeton's enrollment is larger than ever, and members of each year's class are more diverse with varied affiliations separate from their year of graduation, the tradition of identifying with a class remains strong. Your classmates demonstrate unwavering loyalty and recognize the importance of a close relationship between their class and Princeton.

This is the type of relationship we strive to foster with alumni around the world.
SELECTING CLASS OFFICERS

Class Leadership

The success of a class in serving the University and its own membership depends, as it does in any organization, on the quality of its leadership. Traditionally classes have elected slates of officers that change at every major reunion, which for Princeton classes happens every five years after graduation.

The president is the elected leader of each class and is responsible for promoting class unity and spirit, and administering class business. The president often is the main link between the class, the alumni body at large, and the University. The president serves as a member of the Alumni Council throughout his or her term of office and may be appointed or elected to national committees of the Alumni Association of Princeton.

Qualifications

Members of each class choose a president on the basis of the person’s qualifications to perform the requirements of the office. Presidents must command the confidence and support of their class members. Having been an active and well-known classmate during on-campus years is not necessarily an important quality of a good class officer. A prospective president must be willing to take on the job and tackle the work with enthusiasm and dedication. He or she should be a classmate who can unify the class and demonstrate concern for each member. Building class unity should be the number one priority of the president.

Candidates for class president must be aware that the work is not easy or simple. The best presidents often are people who are the most willing and eager to take on the challenge rather than those who might be considered the most able because of background or other attributes.
The president should be inclusive in dealing with class members and open to ideas from all sides. Successful classes organize a wide range of activities that are the product of many hardworking classmates who are willing to take on responsibility — the more the better. The president’s role involves identifying capable classmates for these activities, recruiting the volunteers and sustaining their involvement.

The president provides leadership and direction for those working for the class. Meetings that are regularly scheduled and well planned have proven to be the best means for carrying out this critical role.

Although many class functions are tied in with University activities, class meetings do not have to be held on campus. It is strongly encouraged that the president preside over class gatherings so that the class knows him/her. Because it is helpful to have an in-person relationship with other officers and with the University, it is useful but not mandatory for a president to be accessible to the New York/Philadelphia area.

Presidents should be careful to avoid being identified as representing a certain clique or faction of their class. They should select diverse volunteers from among the best available people in the class to encourage widespread participation in class activities and promote a sense of shared responsibility. (Effective regional representation in class councils helps minimize criticism about a New York-Princeton-Philadelphia connection dominating class affairs.)

A nominating committee of each class usually chooses prospective candidates for president and other class positions, with provisions for additional nominations from the class as a whole.

**Selection of Other Class Officers**

A cursory description is outlined here, with more involved details found in the class-officer sections of the handbook.

The **vice president** can be the second-highest vote getter among the candidates for president or a classmate who chooses to run specifically for the post. He or she must be qualified to act as the leader of the class if the president resigns or is absent or incapacitated. The vice president also must be prepared to represent the class at all class gatherings and functions when the president is unable to do so.
The vice presidency is a great training ground for future presidents, especially in classes that permit only one term. In some classes, incumbent vice presidents are automatically on the next presidential ballot.

The vice president is usually responsible for regional activities of the class and, as such, coordinates regional programs including Annual Giving solicitations, regional programs (with the help of regional vice presidents), and attendance at reunion promotions. He or she chairs a group of regional vice presidents or coordinators, and communicates periodically with them individually or as a group. In addition, in many classes the president delegates to the vice president the responsibility of chairing the Class Program Committee.

The secretary's job demands a volunteer willing to dedicate a significant amount of time to the class. Secretaries should have a flair for writing that will make their Class Notes column in the Princeton Alumni Weekly (PAW) a compelling read for classmates. Secretaries should be able to catalog and store information about classmates for use in their columns, and they should be well known and trusted by classmates who will submit personal and class information for the Class Notes column. The secretary must be diligent to observe PAW deadlines in order to make sure the class's news is in each edition. Finally, because one of the position's most important responsibilities is to track down missing classmates, secretaries should be in personal touch with as many classmates as possible.

The Treasurer is usually elected but sometimes appointed. The post requires attention to detail and accuracy, common sense in budgetary planning, perceptiveness in overseeing financial arrangements for special projects, and firm decision making. Like the secretary, the treasurer must be a strong writer (or at least must collaborate with other officers to produce strong writing) because dues letters are among the most important mailings a class sends to its members. Dues notices usually are included in the president's annual letter, but successful treasurers often send out a second dues request sometime in November. Many classes now use email for all of their correspondence and online payment services for collecting dues. The treasurer is responsible for maintaining an accurate record of classmates and their payments of class dues. The treasurer must also manage the regular payments in support of PAW and the Alumni Council.

Nomination and Election of Class Officers

Class constitutions provide different nominating procedures, e.g., by committee, by action of the standing Executive Committee or council, by presidential selection, by nomination from the body of the class, or by a
combination of these methods. There is no prescribed best way, although multiple-choice slates are the general practice. There is nothing sacred about a constitution, but it is an important document that should be updated when necessary to meet the needs of the class. The class officers can and should change the constitution to make sure it covers all important decisions that a class might have to make.

Often a nominating committee develops a list of candidates and obtains their consent, and then either the committee or the president mails or emails the slate to the entire class and, at the same time, provides for nominations by petition. The Class Notes column in PAW is a good way to announce the slate and request additional names of candidates. If no additional names are nominated, the slate can be approved by acclamation at Reunions.

The class constitution usually sets a deadline for nominations from the class. After that, ballots are sent or emailed to the entire class (usually listing candidates for each office in alphabetical order by last names) with a stated deadline for response. A ballot with a reply envelope or an easy online click-through or survey method of voting is efficient and will often help stimulate greater participation in the election.

Traditionally Princeton class elections involve no politicking. A simple listing of the candidates' names preserves complete objectivity, although some classes may feel it desirable to list the services of each candidate to the class and to Princeton.

The class may have a separate ballot for vice president, but the position often goes to the runner-up in presidential contests.

There is no rule of thumb about whether the remaining class leaders should be elected or appointed, although classes generally prefer to elect their treasurers and secretaries because the two offices are essential to the success of the class.

Some classes have found that an Executive Committee helps ensure continuity of leadership. Executive Committee members serve for three years or so, and vacancies are usually filled by rotation, with only part of the membership changing each year.
To enhance regional participation, the vice president and Executive Committee may appoint regional coordinators or vice presidents who may or may not become full voting members of the Executive Committee.

Specialized class officers — Agent for Annual Giving, Reunion Chair, Technology Chair, Archivist or Historian, and others — are appointed by the president with the approval of the Executive Committee. These positions require special qualifications, and the holders usually are experienced members of the Executive Committee for purposes of coordination. The class tech chair is an increasingly important position because most classes use Facebook, Twitter and other electronic media that require monitoring and rules for proper usage by administrators and classmates.

The term for elected officers should be five years, and changes of officers should occur at every major reunion or the year after. Classes often announce new slates of officers at Reunions because so many classmates come together. The new officers usually begin their terms July 1 following the Reunions announcement.

Rules about limiting self-succession and so forth are up to the individual classes, but regular changes in leadership are important to guard against the problems inherent in one-person rule. A president who serves too long may become so entrenched that classmates are reluctant to call for new leadership, and succession planning becomes problematic. In younger classes self-succession may lead to unforeseen burnout by the seventh or eighth year. However, in older classes where the abilities of current officers and the tenor of class activity are well established, self-succession by popular acclaim is often the rule rather than the exception.

One final consideration in the nomination and election of class officers: Be certain that the class constitution provides the framework for carrying out these important duties and for handling any contingencies that might occur, such as the sudden resignation of a president or the need for removal of an elected officer.

**SPECIALIZED OFFICERS**

The **Class Agent for Annual Giving** each year asks for donations to Princeton in the name of the class and the University. The class agent need not be a professional fundraiser but should be well known and respected by the class. Enthusiasm for Princeton and a sincere ability to connect with various members of the class is an important factor in creating a strong gifting program. The class agent is supported by the Class’s Annual
Giving office liaison throughout the year. Constant communication occurs between the class agent and the Annual Giving office before any communication to classmates occurs.

Princeton’s Annual Giving Committee, a diverse group of volunteers, meets twice yearly and maps out the overall strategy for the campaign, but the tactics within each class are left to the discretion of the class agent. The class agent must direct the class’s efforts, and success depends upon his or her initiative and leadership. The class agent’s responsibilities include sending out four letters each year to non-donor members of the class, usually in November, February, April and May. The class agent also must recruit classmates to serve as volunteers on your Annual Giving team.

The class agent provides leadership to the volunteer team through regular communication, including conference calls, memos, emails and individual calls. The class agent also must call classmates and solicit their gifts to Annual Giving. The AG office strives to make the job of a class agent as simple as possible.

The Reunion Chair's job is one of the most crucial for the success of the class. Reunion chairs should be able to manage people, develop a budget and stay within it, and organize a major event. Some budgets for major reunions these days approach several hundred thousand dollars, and the class can find itself in deep trouble if great care is not taken in management of the reunion.

Classes usually select their major reunion chairs well in advance to help the off-year chair, who presides over planning for annual reunions held between the major reunions that take place every five years. Some classes prefer to select their next major reunion chair immediately following their major reunion. That person then serves for five years, using the first four to develop familiarity and experience with the process of planning such events and the specific needs of the position. The disadvantage is that after three or four years of planning successive mini reunions, the reunion chair may begin to lose some enthusiasm for the task ahead. An alternative is for the president to appoint the major chair two to three years prior to the upcoming major reunion.

Reunion chairs work closely with class officers, particularly with the treasurer and president. Because they make use of the Class Notes columns in PAW to publicize reunions, they also deal with the secretaries.
Some classes also have a **Memorial Fund Chair**, separate from the treasurer or class agent, who oversees collections for the fund and its investments.

The **Class Technology Chair** oversees the way in which the class handles its electronic media and website. Depending on how the class uses social media and other forms of electronic media, the tech chair may want to have a committee of volunteers to help with the different areas.

The **Class Archivist** or **Historian** keeps a record of items of interest pertaining to classmates and to the class, and is a great resource when it comes time to write a yearbook. Obviously, talent for writing is important, as is affection for the class and for history and tradition. The Princetoniana Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council, is an excellent resource for finding out about what kinds of information the historian might want to keep.

It is necessary, as a class grows older, to have a **Class Memorial Chair** or **Class Necrologist**, whose responsibility is to see that class memorials are prepared and submitted promptly to PAW. This person should be a thoughtful, sensitive writer who knows the class quite well. Often it is the secretary.

In general, terms for these specialized officers should match those of the class leaders because it often takes a year or two of experience for the holders of these positions to master their responsibilities. In some cases, it may be preferable to extend or shorten the terms.

**CLASS COMMITTEES**

The most important committee is the **Class Executive Committee** or **Council**. Members of this committee should be chosen based on their availability, individual qualifications and diversity of professions and expertise. A good Executive Committee will combine experienced or past class officers with newcomers. Sometimes all past presidents are automatically members.

A **Finance Committee** supervises class investment. The treasurer should be a member, and others usually are people from the financial world. Because their advice is frequently needed regarding the financial
affairs of the class, members of this committee should be in a position to communicate quickly and effectively.

Classes also organize committees to handle special functions as they arise. The president is an ex-officio member of all such committees because of the position’s knowledge of similar activities in other classes, familiarity with class finances, and the ability to tie in discussion with other aspects of class affairs.

The size of a committee is less important than the quality of those who serve on it. The number of people to be appointed should depend on what the committee is to do, how much time there is to get it done, and how many varieties of experience are needed.

ORGANIZING YOUR CLASS BY REGION

Some form of regional program should be devised to provide representation and spur activity among classmates across the country, especially in connection with University Reunions and AG. Dividing the country into states or groups of states is probably the most convenient way to organize a class along regional lines. Other possibilities may reflect varied considerations. For instance, the activities and interests of classmates in New York City may differ from those of the surrounding regional associations.

In some more distant states or locations outside the country where alumni populations are scattered, regional organization is probably futile. In those instances, alumni should work within their local Princeton association or club and/or an affiliated alumni group rather than by class. It is also beneficial to work together in groups of classes who were on campus at the same time. Several classes often join together to sponsor successful events.

Successful classes often establish a coordinator for regional affairs at the Executive Committee level, with the responsibility of disseminating information and ideas to regional coordinators, apprising them of developments in other regions, telling them about movements in and out of their areas (address changes are received by the secretary), and representing them in Executive Committee sessions. Many classes assign responsibility for organizing regional programs to the vice president.
CLASS ADMINISTRATION

The Class President

The president should be knowledgeable about everything that is being done by or in the name of the class. Although the vice president shares that role, the basic responsibility is the president’s.

The president establishes a timetable — a permanent agenda of class activities — each year and shares the agenda with the entire class, highlighting specific activities as they come up month by month. He or she should consult the University and the Alumni Council calendars to plan class activities.

Certain activities take place at about the same time each year. The president should be aware, for example, of when the treasurer plans to start a dues campaign (usually in November). In addition to helping the treasurer collect dues, pertinent questions may be resolved well in advance, other materials may be prepared to accompany dues notices, saving postage (if mailed) and sparing classmates from receiving repetitive information (if mailed or emailed). The Office of the Alumni Associations provides an incentive to each class to help defray the costs of your president's letter (see more about the letter below) with the first and second mailings requesting payment of dues. Details regarding this dues incentive program are available at https://alumni.princeton.edu/volunteer/login/resources/class-volunteers/.

The president should know when the University will begin its AG campaign and be prepared to help the class agent and follow up the progress of the AG Campaign. The president also should be aware of all communications so that classmates don’t receive solicitations for both AG and class dues at the same time.

The president serves as the class contact for the University and selects class representative for Service of Remembrance (Alumni Day).

With adequate foresight, the class can combine class and University functions to boost attendance and save money. If it is known in advance that the University will provide a tailgate reception for a class party on a football weekend (as is traditionally done on the Harvard or Yale weekend), then a class may choose that option rather than select a more expensive location elsewhere on a different date. Meetings of the special
committees of the class can be scheduled in connection with Reunions, Alumni Day, class dinners, Alumni Council functions and other Princeton activities like football games. Such coordination boosts attendance at class functions and capitalizes on the availability of University representatives.

The president also should set up a reunion organization well ahead of each major reunion. The same applies for class dinners and class gatherings. Budgets for each activity should be prepared in advance in cooperation with the treasurer and Executive Committee.

The president should project a five-year plan that allows flexibility for changes. Some activities such as a major reunion and a class yearbook require more than a year’s advance planning. If a class president inherits a difficult AG or class dues problem, setting the issue straight may take a year or more of work and planning. The Class Affairs Committee and the Office of Alumni Affairs are eager to help address such situations.

**The Value of Communication**

The president must keep the class informed, because communication helps establish class unity and identity by reminding classmates (1) that they belong to group of outstanding individuals who, despite living in far-flung areas of the world, share a common experience and (2) that their organization is alive, well and keenly interested in them.

The President’s Letter, or annual report, is the main vehicle for disseminating information to all classmates and also is a great opportunity to recognize and thank fellow officers who have helped or volunteered throughout the year.

The letter, which often is prepared in conjunction with other class officers and project chairs, recaps the past year’s activities and announces plans for the future.

The letter should announce class prizes, describe Reunions and class events, and report the organization of any new committees. If the class has a scholarship fund, the president should provide a profile of the current recipient. If the class has won any interclass competition — Reunions attendance, dues-paying percentage, AG quota awards — the president should congratulate the class on a job well done. The president should include as many classmates’ names as possible, being sure to cite especially the achievements of those who have worked hard on behalf of the class. By the same token, the president should report any problems within the
class, such as low AG numbers, reunion deficits, weak attendance, low class dues participation, etc.

The best time to send out the president’s annual letter is usually in the late summer or early fall, soon after the close of the class fiscal year. It can be included in the first class dues mailing. Interim letters or emails may supplement the annual letter.

The president must work hard to encourage maximum participation in class affairs. If classmates see the same names cropping up as committee chairs or committee members year after year, they may get the impression that a small group of classmates runs the class and will continue to do so. By enlisting the active participation of as many classmates as possible, the president generates new ideas, new techniques, and new enthusiasm. New volunteers also build class engagement because each has close friends that may represent different segments of the class.

Personal contact plays an important role in building a strong class. The president should make time to add handwritten, personal notes to form letters or to personalize their emails by using mail merge to address classmates by name rather than just “Dear Classmate.” Secretaries often send birthday greetings to classmates. For security reasons the University only allows access to a classmate’s birth month, so the greetings can be sent during the month of a classmate’s birthday. Treasurers have found that a personal word helps to encourage dues payments, and reunion chairs have beefed up attendance by supplementing regular mailings with personal notes, emails and telethons.

The president must always be thinking of reasons to reach out to the class regarding matters of interest that have nothing to do with a solicitation. An effective way is to plan a variety of events that appeal to different segments of the class. Some examples might be to plan an event around the release of a classmate’s book, or consider throwing a “collective class” birthday party around a big year, for example, the year your classmates turn 50. The president should make sure that there is no perception of personal monetary gain in events involving classmates.

There are many good reasons to pull classmates together, and the class president should not hesitate to ask for volunteers to help with these events. Just remember to be effusive in your gratitude and help make it fun.
The president should embrace the Internet as a highly effective way to reach out to as many classmates as possible and encourage their feedback and participation. Social media and a class website allow a president to keep classmates up to date on the latest plans and activities. The president should appoint a technology chair to establish social media accounts such as Facebook and make sure that the outlets are up to date and open to posting by classmates. These tools should be updated frequently with photos, videos and information that draw the attention and interest of classmates.

Guidelines for Decision Making

Most administrative decisions are the president’s prerogative, while the Executive Committee generally makes major policy decisions. In fact, the division of duties is largely a matter of precedent and common sense.

The president should appoint special committees and chairs, set dates for class activities, and determine what communication will be sent to the class, after discussion with the Executive Committee.

Conducting Meetings

The president presides over the meetings of the entire class as well as of the class Executive Committee. The president also prepares the agenda and allots a specific amount of time for discussion of each item. The agenda should be sent to attendees in advance in order to allow for thoughtful and informed discussion of difficult issues.

The Office of Alumni Affairs offers a free conference line for conference-call meetings. You can reserve this line by calling or emailing any member of the Class Affairs team. There are other options for free conference lines if the Office of Alumni Affairs line is unavailable. One suggestion is www.freeconference.com. There are many other ways that classes are using to keep in touch, including Yahoo groups, Google chat and other services. Be creative and use what best serves the members of your Executive Committee.

The most important rule in running a meeting is to start and end it on time. Your volunteers must know that your respect the value of their time. The president must stick to the agenda and the schedule and be firm in conducting the business of the meeting. One of the obvious rewards of participating in the planning of class activities is the fun and informality of the endeavor. Nevertheless, a happy compromise must be reached so
that good-natured joking or long-winded speeches do not delay the progress of the meeting and interrupt the business of the class. Although in-person meetings are a wonderful way for your officers to get together, many can be handled easily and efficiently via a conference call.

Most class constitutions require an annual class meeting (normally held during Reunions, when the greatest number of classmates is present) to vote on certain questions such as constitutional amendments. It takes a high order of planning, full cooperation from fellow officers, and all the wit and skill the president can muster to carry off a successful class meeting during a festive reunion. While Reunions continues to be the best time to schedule such meetings, the gatherings should be regarded as somewhat akin to corporate stockholders’ meetings, where announcements are made but little significant business is carried out.

Ad hoc committees are great ways to get a great deal of class business done and involve a greater number of volunteers. These types of committees are particularly useful to handle contentious class issues that could take an inordinate amount of time to discuss at a large gathering. By presenting their findings or suggestions at the full class meeting, such committees encourage efficient use of your volunteers’ time. In order to avoid any appearance of bias, be sure that the committee has representation from both sides of the issue in question.

Handling Succession

Orderly succession of class officers requires a collegial exchange of information and insights. The outgoing president must counsel his successor and turn over all records, even while breathing a sigh of relief as his or her term of office ends. This practice applies to all officers. The secretary must notify Alumni Records in New South and the Office of Alumni Affairs staff at Maclean House of all changes in officers and addresses of key class leaders.

VICE PRESIDENT

The vice president plays an important role in class affairs. He/she supports the class’s regional and on-campus activities with an eye toward strengthening classmates’ ties with each other and the University. Successful vice presidents are creative, have a knack for organization, and are willing to do whatever is necessary to help generate class spirit, support class projects and promote class events.
Although each class generally defines the specific duties of the vice president depending on its particular needs, vice presidents should be familiar with the duties of the president and be prepared to step into the president’s shoes if that person is unable to fulfill his/her duties for any length of time. Doing so requires vice presidents to keep close contact with the president in order to quickly assume those duties without taking a lot of time to “get up to speed.”

The vice president should make every effort to be familiar with all class events and activities, attend all class meetings and participate in all class officer conference calls. If the president is unable to preside at a class meeting or conference call, the vice president should be prepared to lead the call or meeting. He/she should assist the president in his/her duties, including following up on class projects, Reunions plans, etc., as needed.

Successful vice presidents act as sounding boards for the president in developing ideas and creating new activities. Vice presidents also recruit regional vice presidents, and maintain contact with them regarding planning for special events and activities.

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

Regional vice presidents work to strengthen alumni ties to the University and fellow classmates by maintaining the Princeton spirit and connections around the world. Because Princeton alumni live are scattered widely, regional vice presidents play a crucial role in spearheading regional activities and thus maintaining a link between Princeton and its alumni. Regional vice presidents should volunteer or be selected in each class so as to cover a broad geographic base of classmates’ locations. In cities that have large numbers of classmates, more than one person should fill the role.

Regional vice presidents should organize one mini-reunion, get-together or class event every year and notify classmates in his/her geographic area about upcoming Princeton events. Although Princeton’s numerous regional alumni associations play an important role in maintaining regional connections, many classes have found that regional activities geared to their classmates strengthen Reunions attendance and class spirit. In regions that have only a few classmates, regional vice presidents can get in touch with liaisons from other Princeton classes or officers from regional alumni associations or alumni schools committee chairs to set up joint events. They should also consider serving on the regional alumni association board in order to keep
abreast of regional events in which the class could participate.

Regional vice presidents are individuals who maintain the spirit of Princeton away from the campus. They help classmates remain connected to the class, to each other and to Princeton. They generally do not focus on fundraising, although some may play a dual role with Annual Giving or the Office of Development.

**Planning a Regional Event: The Basics**

Consider a variety of possibilities. Class events do not have to be large or frequent, but a high level of interest generates strong attendance. Consider organizing mini-reunions held on or off campus, educational programs, tailgates and sporting events, Princeton performing groups, community service projects, social programs, class dinners, cocktail parties, family picnics or barbeques, lectures by university professors, holiday parties (Halloween is a natural orange and black opportunity!), shows or concerts attended as a group, or softball games at a local park.

You can also take advantage of a scheduled event you would like to participate in, e.g., a regional association event, an event sponsored by another class, or another local Princeton event such as a Triangle show, a Princeton athletic game in your area, the showing of a movie or play written or directed by a Princeton alum, etc. A good example of this is the Princeton Alumni Association of New England’s “Tiger Tent at the Harvard Game,” which relies on the participation of class mini-reunions to make the event a success. You can also tie into regional events with a class cocktail party or dinner before or after the event. Additionally, several classes have held “across the country” dinners, community service projects or other events on the same night. The classes of 1986 through 1990 combined to plan a happy hour in Washington, D.C. Some classes have also held various mini-reunions around the world all on the same day.

Involves classmates. Share the planning and implementation of the event with a few other classmates in your area. Ask them to contact people they know in the vicinity to encourage as many classmates as possible to attend.

Plan Early and Mind the Details. Start planning at least two or three months ahead of the event. This gives you time to consider all details, confirm the venue, mail invitations to classmates and follow up with them via
telephone or e-mail. Class vice presidents should help brainstorm ideas and answer any questions. Keep track of other classes’ activities by reading PAW, checking the Class Events Calendar on the Alumni Association website and reading Tiger E-news. You also can check the Office of Alumni Affairs website (alumni.Princeton.edu/events/) to find out about programs and upcoming plans in your region. Although the Office of Alumni Affairs does not actually help plan events, the office is available to help with ideas and best practice information. If the event takes place on campus the office will help arrange the space and any AV needs.

Make sure your event will be fun for all concerned. Create a Princeton table with orange and black tablecloths and balloons, Princeton napkins, orange and black tiger giveaways for the kids, etc. You can keep it simple and bring chips, soda and wine, make it a potluck dinner, or go more formal. Each class should decide whether they want to allocate a budget to reimburse part of the cost for regional get-togethers. Check with the Office of Alumni Affairs for contacts on suppliers if you want to order special items for your events.

Three months before the event, you should get a list of classmates in your region (as well as contacts for other classes, alumni schools committee chairs and regional association officers) from the Volunteer Services section of TigerNet or from the Class Affairs team at the Office of Alumni Affairs.

Two months before the event, send out invitations or save-the-date notices by mail and/or by e-mail. Be sure to provide specifics: the date, type of event, time, duration, exact location including directions, whether indoor or outdoor, rain date, attire, RSVP information by phone or mail, cost, and whether the event is just for classmates or for spouses and/or children as well. Invitations also should be sent to the class webmaster for posting on the website, the class secretary for inclusion (if time permits) in PAW’s Class Notes, and the regional alumni association for possible publicity.

With approval of your class officers concerning costs, the Office of Alumni Affairs can help with coordinating printing and mailing your invitation. Note that there is a 3-4 week turnaround time required for such mailings.

In order for an event to be successful, the regional vice presidents should be in close contact with their class vice president about upcoming events. In this way, the class vice president can help and can also publicize the
events in PAW, in class newsletters and on the class website.

**Enjoy your event.** Be sure to bring a camera and sign-in book. Send a picture of the event and classmates who attended to your class secretary and webmaster with a brief write-up of the event and who attended, so that it can be included in PAW and the class can have a web archive of all events. With social media, it is often exciting to be able to share almost instantaneous photos and news about an event so that classmates who cannot be with you can enjoy the event as well.

After each event, the regional vice president should send the class vice president information about the event (logistics, who attended, contracts, etc. using the attached Event Summary Form), so that the class maintains good records of events and ideas.

**Take time to evaluate your event.** A successful event is one that you and your classmates enjoyed, even if attendance was not as strong as you had hoped. Another measure of success is if the event drew new people outside the “core” group of involved alumni in your area. If there were people at the event that you didn’t know or hadn’t seen before, that is a successful event. Be sure to keep track of everyone who attended so that you can keep in touch, particularly with people who may be reengaging with the class.

**Work with regional alumni associations and other classes.** To maintain a regional presence, regional vice presidents should be in touch with and utilize the resources of your local regional club or association. Princeton even suggests that you join the boards of these associations and participate in the Alumni Schools Committee in your area. This way you can learn ahead of time about alumni association events and parties for admitted students in your area, and try to coordinate class involvement.

Setting up joint events with regional associations is particularly important in regions that have few classmates. You can also get in touch with members of other classes to plan events. Sharing the work and the costs can reduce the burden on each class and can increase attendance at events. For classes that graduated 25 or more years ago, this can also include inviting your “child” and “grandchild” classes to events, to increase a sense of connection between the classes.

**THE CLASS SECRETARY**
The secretary is a vital part of the team and plays an important role as a key communicator to the class. The secretary must be dedicated to the class, be able to write well, and be tireless in contacting and getting information from and about classmates to use in the class PAW column.

Ideally, a secretary should have flair and ingenuity—for organizing and maintaining class records, for communicating with classmates, and for writing the Class Notes. These qualities keep a Princeton class together, build class identity, and provide it with a capable spokesperson when necessary.

As one of the most visible leaders of the class, the secretary should be a creative thinker, serving as both a source of ideas and a sounding board for the other officers.

The secretary should be familiar with the governing documents of the class and the requirements that are stated by the class constitution and bylaws. For example, if the constitution or bylaws specifies that there is to be a class meeting at Reunions every year, the secretary should remind other officers that they should schedule the meeting. The secretary should maintain records of all class members including address updates, special accomplishments and deaths. These changes should be reported to Alumni Records so that classmates’ University records can be updated.

It is the secretary’s responsibility to know the deadlines for the Class Notes section of the Princeton Alumni Weekly and to write class columns for every issue. The secretary should work with the class webmaster to keep class web and social media pages up to date and interesting.

The secretary also answers classmates’ correspondence and questions in a timely manner, files and records committee report, sends out meeting notices and takes minutes of all class meetings, and works with other members of the class to locate missing classmates.

It can also be the responsibility of the class secretary to handle the administrative details of class officers’ elections; to prepare all class newsletters, directories and other publications; and to be alert to members of the class in need. A secretary might also find it helpful to take photos at all events that he/she attends.

**Class Files**
The Class secretary must keep records for all class members, preferably with an electronic filing system. Basic information may include nicknames; birth dates; dates of leaving Princeton; degrees awarded; dates of marriage; names and nicknames of wives or husbands; names and birth dates of children; publications, both written and electronic; lists of dates on which classmates were mentioned in PAW's Class Notes column along with some easy-to-understand reference that would indicate why each was mentioned in the column; all past change of address slips and any other material relevant to each member. Basic biographical information for classmates is available from the Office of Alumni Affairs. The class secretary may want to use this information as a starting point and add information as they see fit.

One of the most important duties of the secretary is to compile and submit the Class Notes column for publication by PAW. In creating the column for each issue of PAW, the secretary must be aware of content from past issues so that there is a wide array of classmates represented over the lifetime of your class, and no duplication with previous columns. PAW's published columns are accessible online for easy reference.

It is important to search for missing classmates. Maintaining careful records will minimize the number of classmates who sometimes get lost in the shuffle over the years because of address changes or different dates of graduation from the rest of the class. The secretary should do research periodically to identify classmates about whom no recent information has been received. For instance, an annual missing person column in lieu of Class Notes can list the names of those classmates who have not been heard from in some time and whose addresses are no longer current. Classmates can be asked for help to update information. Secretaries can also use their Facebook pages and other social media to call for help in identifying contact information for missing classmates. Often classmates can update information they have about their friends. Alumni Records has files of past addresses that can help in tracking down missing classmates.

If the secretary decides that certain material about classmates is not needed in the class files, the material may be sent to the University archivist, who will judge whether such items should be kept in University records. The class file should be considered a University file and should be kept in good condition so it can be passed to the University and become part of its permanent history. As classmates die and PAW memorials have appeared, the secretary can send the relevant files to Alumni Records alumrecs@princeton.edu.
Writing Class Notes

The secretary prepares the class’s column for the Class Notes section of PAW, which is published 14 times during the academic year. Class Notes is the publication’s most popular section. The column offers secretaries a chance to communicate the spirit, vitality, humor and warmth that connect their class, the achievements of their class, and important personal events of individual classmates and their families. The attitude that many alumni have toward their class and toward the University is heavily influenced by what they read in the Class Notes column.

The class secretary must never miss an issue of PAW. Your classmates rely on PAW Class Notes for news and important announcements. The Class Notes column is especially important because PAW itself is a constant reminder of Princeton for every alum. Most classes also send PAW at class expense to all honorary members and to the next of kin of all deceased members.

During the summer PAW’s Class Notes editor will send a schedule of deadlines and helpful hints to each secretary.

Class Notes columns are one way to spread the news about class dinners and reunions, but secretaries must take into account the substantial time lag between submission and publication. You don’t want your announcement to come out after the event takes place. Photos liven up the column and draw the attention not only of classmates but also of other PAW readers, but be aware that photos reduce the space available for copy.

Secretaries should work closely with the Reunions chair to give Reunions plenty of coverage. Many secretaries list the names of alumni who are attending Reunions or use class funds to buy pages in PAW to list returnees.

Filing Current and Past Addresses

The class secretary keeps an up-to-date file of current addresses and promptly notifies Alumni Records of all changes of address and deaths. When an address change is reported to Alumni Records, the class secretary receives a change of address notification for that class member.
Correspondence with Classmates

A continual flow of information between the secretary and classmates is vital. The secretary must use all possible sources of information and should respond quickly and helpfully to all inquiries and other communications. A network of trustworthy, well-informed classmates is a must. Newspapers and periodicals can be gold mines for every secretary. Social media are a good resource for mining ideas.

Committee Records

The secretary must keep files on the activities of all class committees and subcommittees, and supervise their records. Exhaustive file keeping isn’t necessary, but it is important for the secretary to keep basic files on class events and goings-on, including notices of class dinners, Executive Committee meetings, reunions and so on. Each class and committee officer must keep proper files and, when officers change, these files must be passed on to their successors. This can be done electronically or by paper, depending on how the records are kept.

Meeting Notices and Minutes

The class secretary is responsible for sending notices of all meetings, for keeping minutes of the meetings, and helping the president prepare an agenda if necessary. All minutes should be kept on file and periodically reviewed to insure that the matters mentioned in the minutes have been acted upon.

Election of Class Officers

The secretary may be asked to handle the administrative details of electing class officers. It is a good idea to have the secretary as a consultant or as a member of the Nominating Committee because the secretary is likely to be the most familiar with the activities of the potential nominees.

Class Memorials

The secretary must perform the duties of the class memorial agent if that position is vacant or non-existent. In any event, the secretary generally has editorial jurisdiction over any material that goes into PAW
regarding the class. The memorial agent (or secretary), of course, sends condolences of the class to the family of any deceased classmate, writes a memorial for PAW and takes care of any other duties immediately associated with the death of a classmate.

PAW limits memorials to 200 words, but longer versions can be posted on PAW’s website with the memorial that appeared in the print magazine. PAW uses only Nassau Herald photos to accompany memorials. If the deceased had no photo in the Herald, then no photo will appear in the magazine. PAW does not use photos of graduate alumni. Files from Alumni Records often are helpful for writing memorials. If possible, the family of the deceased classmate should approve the memorial and be given the opportunity to correct or change anything. PAW should be sent to the next of kin at class expense.

The class president arranges for the class to be represented at the annual Alumni Day Service of Remembrance, which honors alumni who have died during the preceding year. The secretary is responsible for making sure that the names of deceased classmates and their next of kin (sent beforehand by the Alumni Council for verification) are returned in time to be included in the annual Service of Remembrance. The secretary, at the discretion of the family of the deceased, handles all contributions and asks classmates in the area to represent the class at the funeral or memorial service.

Publications

The class secretary may be assigned the duty of preparing newsletters, directories, and other publications. He or she should also liaise with the technology chair to coordinate social media and webpage messaging.

In addition to normal mailings, many classes publish a class directory annually or every five years. The Class Affairs team at Maclean House (ClassAff@princeton.edu) should be asked to provide a list of current addresses for classmates. This list can be sorted geographically and by occupation. (One of the first things a new secretary should do is contact Class Affairs and learn what services that department can perform.)

The preparation of a five-year class yearbook is the job of the designee of the class president and the reunion chair, using material accumulated by the secretary and, commonly, the results of a class questionnaire.
Classmates in Need

The secretary should try to help classmates in need. Ideally, the secretary should be sufficiently close to the class to become aware of the needs of distressed classmates and to try to organize the resources of the class to help them. An encouraging letter in a time of crisis, a thoughtful gesture when fortunes are at a low ebb, or some remembrance supplied when things have gone badly, all demonstrate that unique spirit which characterizes Princeton alumni. While class funds cannot be used for these purposes, there are creative ways to support classmates in need without giving money directly from your accounts. Some classes post a list of “classmates in need” on their class websites and provide information regarding how classmates can provide help.

Regulations for Classification of Alumni

The class secretary should be familiar with rules regarding the classification of alumni and missing persons:

- Any person who matriculated as a candidate for an undergraduate degree at Princeton University, whether or not work toward the degree was completed, is an alumnus/a of Princeton and a member of a Princeton class.
- An alumnus/a who has received an undergraduate degree from Princeton University cannot be removed from the official alumni and class rolls for any reason except death.
- An alumnus/a is a member of a class until the person requests his or her name to be removed from the roll by approved procedures. The authority to determine whether or not the name of an alumnus/a may be removed is vested in the Alumni Council acting under established regulations.
- All alumni are members of the Alumni Association of Princeton University, and every undergraduate alumnus/a must be a member of an alumni class.
- No alumnus/a may be a member of any class with which he or she was not at one time affiliated as a candidate for an undergraduate degree (except on an honorary basis) and no alumnus/a may concurrently be a member of more than one class except on an honorary basis.
- An alumnus/a who has also earned a graduate degree at Princeton University will also be listed on the alumni rolls of the graduate college.
Definition of Class Rolls

The Alumni Directory includes the names of all living alumni, listed under the graduating class with which they were associated, unless they have asked to be listed with another class with which they were at one time affiliated. The names of all nongraduates are listed under their matriculated classes except when they have asked to be listed with another class, or to be officially removed from alumni and class rolls by established procedures.

The registrar of the University furnishes Alumni Records with an official list of the graduates of each undergraduate class year and (if applicable) graduate degree department on its graduation. Alumni Records in turn furnishes the secretary with a class list of all graduates and non-graduates, after first determining the appropriate class if someone is on two class lists. Each class secretary keeps five lists of class members: living members with addresses, living members without addresses, inactive members, members receiving no mail, and deceased members and widows. All awards involving class enrollment percentages are based on the class lists maintained by Alumni Services. Alumni Records sends a copy of the regulations governing Princeton alumni and class rules to each secretary when he or she takes office on graduation.

THE CLASS TREASURER

The treasurer is responsible for keeping class funds and maintaining timely and accurate financial records. A healthy treasury influences the class’s overall health and spirit, and allows the class to maintain interest in and contact with the University. A solvent class can afford to be active, alive, and involved in the life of the University and the broader body of alumni.

The class treasury holds the operating funds needed to administer class pays a variety of class costs, including PAW subscriptions for the entire class (regardless of whether classmates pay dues); mailings to classmates, including news of class projects and activities, and dues solicitations; scholarships awarded periodically to current undergraduates (if your class has a scholarship fund); the class website, which is increasingly the portal for most class communications and payments (if the Class is using a website that is not hosted by Princeton); and class events and mini reunions.
Principal Duties

The treasurer is entrusted with the management of the class’s money and must maintain orderly records. A class owns its money. Classmates contribute the bulk of it, and they are entitled to know how it is being spent and invested, and how they as a class stand financially. Financial figures are always interesting to class members.

Dues Timetable

The treasurer establishes a timetable for dues notices and an appropriate dues rate. Alumni are solicited for dues, Annual Giving, special interest group dues, and so on, not to mention the many non-University solicitations. The treasurer must coordinate with Annual Giving so that classmates don’t get two University financial requests at the same time. Annual Giving typically targets the end of the calendar year, so it is generally best to send your second dues request by the end of November.

Treasurer’s Report

The treasurer should report annually to the class about how the class’s money is being spent; for instance, on PAW, to a scholarship holder or for a class project. The report can be incorporated into the president’s annual letter. (All classmates receive PAW even if they don’t pay their class dues, so please avoid suggesting otherwise. For example, the treasurer’s letter might state: “Your class dues help defray the cost of sending PAW to our classmates.”)

Investments

Classes that are financially strong should invest excess funds rather than leave the money in a low-interest checking account. Although the treasurer often will have some financial expertise, a separate finance committee can be very helpful in making sure that many classmates share ideas regarding investment matters. Sound advice also can be solicited from financially knowledgeable classmates.

Class Dues

Dues are the single greatest source of income for classes. Interest, dividends, gifts and surpluses combined
will never cover normal operating expenses. Because the treasurer alone is responsible for the dues collection and recommends dues rates, fiscal success depends largely on that person. The habit of paying dues must be cultivated from the beginning of a class’s alumni life. The first years out of Princeton are crucial. Some classes have found themselves approaching their 10th, 15th or 20th year reunions without funds because their early administrators failed to tackle the dues-paying challenge with resolve. Classmates simply did not become accustomed to paying annual dues, or at least not enough of them did.

The widest possible participation in dues paying, as in any class function, is not only an indication of class and Princeton spirit but also a psychological spur to wider participation in all class and Princeton projects.

All classes should establish a merchant account (see Technology) to allow classmates to pay dues with their credit cards as well as by check. Dues participation rates can actually increase with the combination of an electronic dues request (targeted only at those who have not paid yet) and the ability to pay directly through a link in the email.

**Budgeting**

Accurate budgeting is essential. To calculate the amount of dues each classmate should contribute, treasurers have to estimate yearly fixed expenses and operating expenses. Study the records of the dues paid in the past. How many classmates will pay their dues? (The highest percentage of dues payment in a class is near 90%; the lowest, below 20%..) The record of all class dues payment is charted in the annual analysis of the Financial Report for Princeton Classes that is mailed out by the University Treasurer’s Office of the Controller. A treasurer can determine a lot about the class by studying its records.

By the same token, however, successful dues collection is more often than not a direct result of the Treasurer’s efforts. The success or failure of a previous administration does not make or break the incumbent Treasurer.

**Dues Rates**

In general, older alumni are better off financially and more likely to give contribute more to their Princeton classes. Alumni classes should consider this rule when establishing or changing dues rates. PAW rates are
based on this principle; older classes pay higher subscription rates. Classes approved for tax-exemption can declare and publicize the tax deductibility of each classmate’s dues.

New classes often begin their alumni life with a class surplus from undergraduate years, and their main concern is to find their identity and establish a sound fiscal structure. They will not be faced immediately with special projects; those will come later in major reunion years; on the other hand, they have no unplowed field of dues areas that may be cultivated for more income. Investments have not been made and should not be made until experience of at least a year’s operation indicates what may be expected in the way of regular expenses and income.

Because younger graduates cannot give as much immediately after graduation, new alumni classes can encourage wide initial participation by setting a low initial dues rate (for example, $25). The rates for older classes on the other hand should be higher, perhaps $45 or more. Avoid making minor adjustments in dues rates; experience has shown that there is no drop in participation when the rate is increased. The treasurer should not be afraid to move rates by $5 or $10 in one year. It is easier to collect dues at an increased rate from reliable dues payers than to collect dues at any rate from those who don’t pay regularly. Dues collection can be augmented by locating missing classmates. Treasurers should work closely with their class secretaries to promote the search for missing classmates and should use their own mailings as well as PAW’s Class Notes to assist in that effort.

Many classes have benefited by offering classmates multiyear plans for the payment of dues. For example, a class might ask $45 for one year or $195 for five years. Each class can be creative with the structure (lifetime dues, dues until next major reunion, etc.). Treasurers should be aware that any plan for multiyear payment of dues creates complications for recordkeeping and budgeting, but experience has shown that that such plans increase class participation and improve cash flow, particularly between major reunions.

Another way to improve the finances of the class is to create an honor roll for classmates who pay their dues consistently (see Back Dues) and to publish the list in the first mailing of the year, on the class website (particularly if the site is password protected), or both. While an honor roll can take any form the treasurer wishes, typically the goal is to recognize classmates who have a perfect record for paying dues either since graduation or over any other period (e.g., for the past 10 years or since the last major reunion).
As a courtesy, a treasurer should inform current officers of their standing and solicit back dues from them before publicly announcing the class honor roll and publicizing names.

The class often can raise revenue by encouraging classmates to pay past dues in order to join the honor roll. Some classes also use an honor roll to recognize classmates who pay premium dues rates. It may seem almost too easy, but offering classmates the opportunity to pay higher dues (for example, $95 versus $45) along with the recognition for paying that higher rate may prove fruitful for the class.

**Class Scholarships**

A class scholarship can be an excellent stimulus for contributions. Some classes, for instance, offer classmates the opportunity to make a voluntary contribution of $5 as a scholarship donation in addition to their regular dues of $45. Although classmates have the clear option to ignore the extra donation, the vast majority usually will include the scholarship amount in their dues payment. Class scholarships are paid to the University to support undergraduates and the class receives a list of recipients who receive their funding each year.

**Back Dues**

It is important to keep track of classmates who don't pay dues. As a class grows older and nears its major reunions, for instance the 25th, efforts should be made to collect back dues. Campaigns to collect back dues have been surprisingly successful, and the approach of a major reunion offers a good reason to reach out to classmates. Many classmates who don't donate during their immediate post-graduation years begin to give regularly later on, and others who may have given haphazardly for some reason are only too glad to make up their deficits.

It is important to avoid the urge to drop non-dues-paying classmates from class rolls. Continue to treat them as classmates, keep them informed about class activities and invite their participation. Paying for mailings and for PAW year after year for classmates who do not pay dues is a small cost if they later prove to be loyal alumni, as many frequently do.

**Dues Mailings and Email**
Managing an orderly dues-collection process is essential to the class’s financial success. Different classes use varying formats, different dates, and different follow-ups to collect dues. There is no standard formula. Notices themselves should not be elaborate. They should be distinctive year by year, with some thought given to the color of the paper, typeset, logo, and so on. Classes should balance print mailings with email, which is cheaper but generally easier to ignore. Some classes have gone strictly digital, but doing so requires caution, particularly for classes that don’t have current email addresses for all classmates. A class may want to test using an email format one year and gauge the response.

The Alumni Council office assists in all mailings and helps defray the cost through incentive programs. Class treasurers provide camera-ready copy for two deadlines and send the copy with printing instructions to the Alumni Council.

Individual letters to classmates are the most effective way to solicit dues payments, but the process is time-consuming. Treasurers often develop specific form letters for different groups, for instance, one for reliable dues payers, one for classmates who have never paid, and so forth. Doing so takes time, but it pays off.

It is important to send other interesting class materials with dues notices. Anything that encourages communication of any sort with class officials will help dues collection. Treasurers may comment on the fiscal picture, request prompt payment to reduce follow-up expenses, boost the missing-classmates campaign, remind classmates to send news with their dues, and so on. A well-written accompanying letter can make a big difference in any dues campaign.

One dues notice is never enough. The percentage of dues payers increases with the number of notices sent out, and the vast majority of classes send two to three dues notices a year. Experience shows that as many as four notices may be sent out profitably, but sending them too frequently reduces impact and effectiveness.

**Timing of Dues Notices**

As a general rule, the most successful dues campaigns sent out notices soon after Labor Day. The treasurer should avoid potential conflicts. Annual Giving conducts its campaign from the end of February through the end of June. By concentrating class dues efforts in the fall, sending out one notice in September, another in
the end of October, and following up in the spring, the class avoids conflict with Annual Giving, Class Memorial insurance, income tax week, and reunion fees.

The secretary helps the treasurer by using PAW’s Class Notes column to remind classmates about paying dues. Brief items like “350 classmates have paid their dues, have you?” serve as reminders to faithful but forgetful classmates. In turn, the treasurer helps the secretary by prodding members to send in Class Notes news with their payments and by urging them to locate missing classmates.

Many classes assign their treasurer the job of serving in the same position for major reunions. Although this added responsibility means more work for the treasurer every five years, the policy increases financial efficiency and control by consolidating class financial matters under the purview of a single person. Having the treasurer handle major reunion finances enables continuity in planning and budgeting, and avoids costly problems.