Federal and state laws governing tax-exempt and not-for-profit organizations unequivocally mandate the adoption of a constitution; therefore the University requires each class to enact a constitution as a pre-condition to securing the benefits of the University’s tax-exemption umbrella for its alumni organizations. Class bylaws, on the other hand, are not mandatory. But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t have them – and periodically update them. To the contrary, the adoption of bylaws is widely regarded as a best practice for all non-profit organizations, and experience has shown that they are particularly helpful in those rare instances where class members express concerns or raise questions about how you and your fellow officers are leading the class.

Controversies about class leadership are fortunately quite rare at Princeton, but they do arise from time to time. Occasionally, individual class officers are unable or unwilling to perform their duties to the class; more frequently, especially with first-term officers, those duties are simply unclear. And that can lead to disputes or, more commonly, inertia and an erosion of camaraderie and enthusiasm.

As The Center for Non-Profit Resources succinctly explains,

Bylaws are used to guide the board’s actions and decisions. They are helpful in preventing or resolving conflict and disagreements. They can protect the organization from potential problems by clearly outlining rules around authority levels, rights, and expectations.

https://tinyurl.com/y83fx5li

The University’s Office of the General Counsel also strongly urges all classes to adopt bylaws, and provides helpful guidance in a document entitled “ Constitutions, Bylaws and Finances” on the Class Volunteers Resources page of the Alumni Association website:


(See especially slides 11 through 13 of the presentation, which include an easily customizable template.)

Among the key items that class officers should address are the governance structure (officers; standing committee chairs; perhaps class trustees, if you want them); nomination, election, and appointment processes, as applicable, for each of those positions; rules for meetings of the class as a whole and for class leaders specifically; and procedures for amending the bylaws.

Speaking of which, it’s ideal to review the bylaws every few years and consider amendments that will promote smoother operations within the class. We especially recommend that a slate of officers nearing the end of its five-year term highlight provisions that have worked well and those that haven’t, and that incoming officers consider that advice and amend the bylaws early in their new term.

If you have questions or would like additional advice on this topic, please contact John Nealon ‘77, Vice Chair of the Class Affairs Committee, jnealon77@alumni.princeton.edu, or reach out to the Class Affairs team at the Office of Alumni Affairs.
HOW TO SUCCEED AS CLASS TREASURER WITH JUST A LITTLE BIT OF TRYING

Mary Jo Sisk ’98

According to the Class Affairs Handbook published by the Office of Alumni Affairs, the Class Treasurer’s job is defined as “keeping class funds and maintaining timely and accurate financial records.” How this is executed, however, is largely up to each treasurer’s discretion and varies significantly from class to class. Most treasurers are either starting from scratch, in the cases of newly graduating classes, or inheriting a system of books and practices from the treasurer(s) that come before them. To help start a conversation about “Best Practices” for treasurers, we reached out to a group of experienced treasurers across a range of classes for their insight on the secrets to their success.

Repeated and Personalized Contact Drives Dues Payments: When it comes to maintaining strong class funds, every treasurer knows that the percentage of classmates who pay dues is a strong indicator of a class' financial health. Our focus group comprised treasurers with some of the highest dues paying percentages of all classes. One common theme emerged as these treasurers detailed their dues campaign processes: repeated, and personalized to the extent possible, contact with classmates drives dues payments.

- Andrew Lewis, ’12, sends “semi-customized” dues appeals via email to groups of classmates segmented by payment history. These emails include both current dues payable as well as amount of dues in arrears so classmates know exactly where they stand. These emails are sent once a month, September through May, with multiple final call emails in June.

- Most classes with high participation rates tend to send President’s letters via mail or dues appeal emails (or a combination of these) at least three times per fiscal year. Formats vary, but the key is a minimum of three “asks” per year.

Donor Recognition Gets Attention: It’s no surprise that recognizing donors incentivizes many to give. After all, this is a standard practice for any fundraising organization. But how do you effectively thank your classmates who have paid dues so that they want to give again? And how can you use recognition as a tool to motivate those who have not? For an organization with a defined donor base, do you make note of those who aren’t contributing?

- George Webb, ’54, includes a Dues Honor Roll in each of three annual letters from the Class President. This Honor Roll lists all classmates in alphabetical order with a symbol next to their name denoting their level of dues payment…or not. George notes that if he makes a mistake, he is sure to hear about it from his classmate.

- Class of 2012 maintains an Honor Roll on its website of “All-Time Dues Payers” as well as dues payers from the most recent fiscal year.

- Several classes use on-campus housing during major Reunions as a reward for classmates with a strong track record of dues payment. While the requirements for this reward vary among classes utilizing this approach, most classes require classmates to have paid at least the preceding two years of class dues. Since demand for on-campus beds often greatly outweighs supply, this requirement can be a powerful incentive for classmates to pay current dues as well as arrearages in the year leading up to major Reunions.

Use Your Time (and Class Funds) Efficiently: Steve Lardieri ’93 uses TechSoup which allows non-profits to subscribe to QuickBooks Online for just $50/year. By connecting directly to bank accounts and credit cards online and setting up the proper account structure, there is no need to manually input data and reporting is automated. While this involves set-up time, the software allows for easy reporting to the class officer team and saves a ton of time on the required annual financial report during July and August when you really want to be enjoying the summer instead of laboring over your class books!

Provide Dues Tiers or Prepayment Option to Increase Revenues: Providing dues options for your most-committed classmates to contribute larger amounts and for your most-
forgetful classmates to pay in advance can help to increase your revenues.

• According to Treasurer Doug Mallach ’91, the Class of 1991 provides options to pay not just the current year’s dues at a rate of $50, but several prepayment options ranging from two years at $91 to 25 years (all the way to the 50th) at $1,000. The Class of 1991 also offers couples’ dues for those couples who are also classmates at $91 year.

• The Class of 1982 offers “Green Dues” for five year prepayment. Jenny duPont ’82, Class Treasurer, reports that this system does have pros and cons. Some classmates will pay dues annually even after they have prepaid, while others will assume they have paid even when their prepayment timeframe has lapsed.

• The Class of 1998 provides a regular dues rate of $40 and a leadership dues rate of $98. In the last fiscal year, while leadership dues payers comprised just 35% of the total dues payers, they contributed 61% of the revenue, allowing the class to meet its revenue goal.

A “Connected” Class is a Financially Healthy Class: While most treasurers did not have a way to measure connectivity and its impact on class finances, many treasurers did comment that they felt initiatives to drive class camaraderie in turn increased dues participation. Class initiatives can range widely from the more involved and capital intensive, to quick and no or low cost.

• The Class of 1953 rallies around both service and social initiatives. Treasurer Bob Kenagy ’53 reports that his class has supported the “Class of 1953 Memorial Scholarship Fund” every year since graduation. This fund is now able to provide $400,000 per year to undergraduate students who need financial support. Bob also reports that ’53 has had many successful and well attended mini-reunions. Note that the Class of 1953 has a striking percentage of class dues payers, with an average annual participation rate of over 65%.

• The Class of 1998 promotes connectivity through its Facebook group where it holds photo contests 2-3 times per year typically around holidays or in preparation for class events, like Reunions.

For more information on any of the topics covered above, please feel free to reach out to Mary Jo Sisk at mjsisk@alumni.princeton.edu or the Class Affairs and Reunions team at the Office of Alumni Affairs. Stay tuned for more information on a new online forum for Class Treasurers to connect.

Special thanks to those Class Treasurers who contributed to this article including: Andrew Lewis ’12, Stephen Lardieri ’94, Douglas J. Mallach ’91, Jean Averill Young DuPont ’82, George Webb ’54 and Bob Kenagy ’53.

Class Stones

“For nearly 150 years, graduating classes have continued the tradition of placing a stone engraved with the class numerals (accompanied for years by a sprig of ivy) on the exterior of Nassau Hall. But space on the iconic structure has finally run out, and the University is looking to start a new class tradition next spring.”

Read more at: https://paw.princeton.edu/article/altered-tradition.
For fiscal year 2016, the average class dues participation rate for all classes was 31%. For the youngest 50, it was only 22%. As most class officers are likely aware, these numbers pale in comparison to Annual Giving participation rates.

To improve dues participation, the Class of 2012 implemented a “Class Points” system soon after graduating. Class Points are awarded primarily for dues participation, with 100 points earned for each year of on-time dues participation. To encourage latecomers to become fully current, back-payments are also rewarded. For these payers, the amount awarded is reduced by 10% for each year late in order to prevent classmates from paying their way to the top if and when they choose. The Class also awards points for other forms of service to Princeton and the Class, such as participation in Annual Giving bootcamps and volunteer activities.

Our first meaningful application of Class Points was to award priority access to on-campus housing at our 5th Reunion last spring to those with the most Class Points earned. For some years, we had signaled to the Class that Class Points would be used for this purpose but, perhaps unsurprisingly, many classmates took little notice until Reunions approached. That year (fiscal year 2017), the Class of 2012 reached a record class dues participation rate of 47%. Many classmates covered back-payments to become fully current, driving the portion of our class with a perfect class dues record from 36% in fiscal year 2016 to 45% in fiscal year 2017. Experience shows that Class Points motivate best when spotlighted in clear and regular communications.

Accordingly, we target sending one email monthly to all classmates reporting class dues that are outstanding, including each classmate’s personal dues history and instructions on how to become current. Upon receiving a dues payment, we send each classmate one thank-you email, then no more until the following fiscal year.

One challenge in maintaining the Class Points system is the amount of time required to send monthly communications and maintain complete and accurate databases to account both for Class Points and dues collections. In addition, a small number of classmates have been unhappy with the volume of emails – although, since the emails are sent using the University’s iModules system, unsubscribing is easy.

On balance, though, we are finding that the Class Points system works well for us. Our collections rate for fiscal year 2016 (a non-major Reunions year for 2012) was higher than all classes younger than 1967, with only two exceptions: the 25th Reunion class (1991) and the most recently graduated class at that time (2015). Designing this system has required thinking outside the box and more work but, now that it is up and running, we are finding that the combination of Class Points and monthly communications is incentivizing an exemplary increase in class dues participation.

I am happy to discuss and answer questions with any and all Class Officers! Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me at ANielsenLewis@gmail.com.

1 Latest available information for all Classes

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

alumni.princeton.edu/volunteer/resources/

Your main source of information for class business, including:

- handbooks for Class Officers and Reunions
- printing and mailing how-to’s
- event dates and planning tips
- PAW class notes schedules and fees
- financial reports
- links to past ClassExchange newsletters
One of the best ways for classes to stay connected, away from the usual on-campus events, is through class trips/mini reunions. These can range from small gatherings on a local level, to national trips which focus on themes such as Civil War battlefields or National Parks. Another avenue for classes to get together is through the many offerings Princeton Journeys has throughout the year. A recent Princeton Journeys Trip on the Columbia and Snake River is a great example of how shared interests by classes can result in an even broader alumni/ae experience.

I approached Princeton Journeys a year ago about putting together a trip on the Columbia River to retrace the end of the Lewis and Clark journey, which was such an important part of our history as we became the nation we are today. As it happens, the trip they recommended also encompassed other delights such as a wine tasting in Washington, some fascinating museums, a tour of the Hanford Project REACH Museum, and the fun of going through the locks associated with the many dams that now are on the Columbia River. I approached the class of 1976 to join us, and they put together an interested group of classmates. The leaders of the Class of 1951 heard about the planned trip, and they too put together a group to join us.

In early October, 53 members/guests of the Classes of ’51, ’72, ’76 (with one ’77 spouse) convened in Portland Oregon to start the journey. A gathering with the Princeton Club of Oregon the night before our departure added to the breadth of the Princeton affiliations. We set sail the next day for what turned out to be a memorable trip. Scholarship was provided by James McClure, Editor of The Jefferson Papers, which has been an ongoing project at Princeton since 1943. His lectures about Jefferson and the expedition were interesting and thought provoking. But one of the most important facets of the trip was the ability of members of all four classes to mingle at meals, on hikes, and in the bar to share Princeton stories and experiences. The group disembarked the ship seven days later with many shared stories and a new appreciation of Princeton through the years.

Class trips are a great way to stay current with classmates and pursue a common interest. With the addition of other classes, the experience only becomes broader and more fruitful. Working with Princeton Journeys is an easy way to facilitate a multi-class trip, and the breadth of their many offerings makes it easy to find the right experience. They will gladly work with you to bring your custom journey ideas to fruition. Whether one class or more, these gatherings tend to get the black and orange juices flowing and remind alumni/ae why Princetonians are such a special group.

For more information on Princeton Journeys, contact Bridget St. Clair, Assistant Director for Princeton Journeys at bstclair@princeton.edu or visit alumni.princeton.edu/journeys.
PAW’s Class Notes columns are the heart of the magazine. We know that it's not an easy job, so here are some tips on how to find news and prepare your column.

There are various ways to collect information:

★ Be your class reporter. Don't wait for classmates to send you news; reach out to them. Perhaps plan to email or phone a few classmates for each issue. Try to bring in people who haven't been in the column before.

★ Use social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram to connect with classmates. But don't use information in your column without getting permission from the source.

★ Check in with alumni who attend Reunions and other events. The details they provide about an event can bring your reporting to life for those who couldn’t make it.

★ Network. Ask questions. The most interesting class note for me was one in which a classmate sought information about a medical condition; classmates responded and helped. Reaching out like this can bring in useful and interesting information on all kinds of topics.

What should you cover in Class Notes? You don't have to stick to major events.

★ Family matters. Everyone likes to know about milestones in classmates' lives, such as weddings, births, retirements, and relocations. You can also find great Class Notes stories in small moments in everyday life – tell classmates they need not wait for a momentous occasion.

★ Celebrate your classmates. Promotions, new jobs, honors and awards, and professional accomplishments all make great announcements. We want classmates to tell us about whatever is meaningful to them. Meeting a personal goal or challenge can be as important as winning a major prize – and it can often be more interesting.

★ Use your space to bring classmates together through mini-reunions and other events.

Remember, however, to respect classmates’ privacy. Make sure to get your information directly from the person involved – not everyone wants to share. When the topics are personal – such as illness, engagements, pregnancy, etc., this is especially important.

The Class Notes column is a great way for alumni to connect, reconnect, and even to learn about someone you didn’t know as a student. Keep up the great work with your column! If you ever have questions don’t hesitate to reach out to me at 609-258-6486 or deviton@princeton.edu.

SUBSCRIBE TO PAW EMAIL ALERTS!

paw.princeton.edu/email

Get the jump on the latest news before the magazine is mailed and receive additional updates about Alumni in the News, Princeton Books, and Princeton Sports.

Tip: It’s a great idea for Class Officers to let classmates know via email or social media when one of your own appears in the news!

JUST HAD A GREAT EVENT?
YOUR CLASS COULD WIN A PRIZE

Engrave your class name on a silver cup for outstanding attendance at a non-reunion event! Please submit an Event Report online at alumni.princeton.edu/volunteer/resources or call 609-258-5451 for a paper version of the report.
The sight of a freshly-painted house rising in a blighted neighborhood. The gratitude of a victim of abuse or illness after a gesture of compassion. The smell of a hot meal from a truck on a cold street corner. The sounds of children playing in a once-overgrown park.

We serve others in so many ways as Princetonians – with our time, our money, our work, our creativity, and our day-to-day commitment to justice. But nothing can be as satisfying, or as vital, as hands-on service in our local communities.

January on campus is the “Month of Service,” during which students, faculty and staff join together to serve local communities in need. This year, the Alumni Council’s Committee on Community Service is launching a similar program in January and February 2018 (the extra month being a concession to reality!). During these Tigers in Service months, we hope that all alumni classes, regional associations and affiliate groups will plan and participate in some kind of fun but meaningful hands-on service project. We need your help to do that!

The Tigers in Service initiative invites each class or regional alumni association to plan a community service event or project, on a date or dates of its choosing, during the January/February timeframe. We know that many of you already perform community service in your day-to-day lives, and that for most classes a community service project is a key component of Reunions each year. For example, five classes celebrating major reunions in 2018 – The Classes of 1978, 1983, 2003, 2008 and 2013 – have banded together to create an intergenerational community service plan for Reunions 2018. Although still in its planning stages, the plan includes projects throughout Reunions weekend at a youth and community development center in Newark, an HIV/AIDS clinic, a LGBTQ youth afterschool program, and a food bank, among others.

We see Tigers in Service as a compliment to these incredible Reunions projects, and as vehicle for non-major Reunions classes that have not yet coordinated such projects to begin doing so – or for alumni groups that have projects underway to launch something new and special. Given what is happening on campus in January, this is an ideal occasion to forge closer ties between alumni and current students. For classes about to celebrate a major Reunion, this initiative can be a “dry run” for the projects you plan to conduct near campus in June, or it can simply be the occasion to start planning your actual Reunions project. But the idea is for classes, like regional or affiliated groups, to create a sustainable model for community service rather than a singular event focused upon Reunions.

In short, at this stage, we are asking simply that you plan and carry out some kind of project as a class during January or February 2018 that reflects to the extent possible the core goals of Princeton’s commitment – among students and alumni alike – to hands-on community service.

We know that organizing a hands-on project as a class outside of Reunions can seem daunting given the geographic diversity of your classmates. It is daunting enough planning an initiative just for Reunions! But there are ways to make it happen. Here are just a few ideas:

★ Promote a “Weekend of Service” within the month. Ask each
member of your group to perform some hands-on service task in his or her community on a particular weekend during January 2018.

★ If your group has a concentration of alumni in multiple areas, you can task alumni in those locations with the groundwork for any of the hands-on projects described above, perhaps to be performed on the same weekend. Although your projects may be inaccessible to some or even most of your members, they still represent an excellent opportunity to build relations among your members and make a class/affiliate wide contribution beyond donating money or waiting until Reunions.

★ If your group can realistically only organize one project in one location where a group of alumni are concentrated, you can solicit alumni outside the location to make donations that will further the projects. For example, if a group has a significant concentration of alumni in Los Angeles, members of the class who are not able to participate personally can send supplies or money (consistent with University guidelines) to further the project. Online registries such as Amazon’s Universal Registry can provide a platform for geographically diverse alumni to purchase necessary items for a facility that local alumni can then distribute to the center in person.

If you are ready to plan a project, or have questions, contact Laura Bartels Zalewski ’98, Chair of the Alumni Council’s Committee on Community Service (laurabartels@gmail.com), or John Shipley ’91, Vice-Chair (tigersail91@gmail.com). Thank you again for your commitment to service, your support for our communities, and representing the best of Princeton!

**COMMENTS PLEASE! YOUR DUES INCENTIVE PROGRAM IS CHANGING**

As many of you know, the Office of the Alumni Association provides a cash incentive to classes as part of its annual Dues Incentive Program. Classes can receive $200-800 (based on the number of years since graduation) for sending two snail mail dues requests to classmates during the year by a specific deadline. Directed dues solicitation is proven to improve dues participation, and the extra cash can help offset the cost of the mailing.

Unfortunately, most classes don’t participate in the program, in part because many class officers don’t see the value of physical mailings. As a result, only a few classes benefit from the current Dues Incentive Program.

The Class Affairs Committee of the Alumni Council has been working with the Office of the Alumni Association to update and modernize the Dues Incentive Program. While physical mailings have proven to be highly effective over time, the Alumni Council is interested in promoting alternative efforts to improve dues collection. The goal is to improve dues participation across all classes and to provide financial assistance to motivate this goal.

We will provide to you details of the revised plan in Spring 2018. In the meantime, we would encourage all of you to reach out to the Class Affairs Committee or the Office of the Alumni Association with any and all of your thoughts on the current program. Whether your class relies every year on the current cash incentive to meet your budget goals, or whether you have never received an incentive payment, your feedback will be welcome. Email us at classaff@princeton.edu.