It takes hard work to be an effective class president or vice president, but the rewards and satisfaction you and your class will receive are more than worth the effort. The Class Officers’ Handbook lists the responsibilities, but even more important than familiarizing yourself with the responsibilities is finding creative ways to fulfill them.

First and foremost, it is paramount that you appoint a diverse group of classmates to work with you and the other elected officers. You’ll want to reach out to as broad a spectrum of classmates as possible — and they can do that for you, because they’ll probably know classmates you don’t know.

Once you have put together your working group of officers and appointed committee chairs, the key to a successful term is to empower those who work with you and engage as many classmates as you can. Think of those two E-words as the variables in a word equation: $E^2 = \text{SUCCESS}$.

There are several key opportunities throughout the year that can help engage your classmates and thus strengthen the community that is your class. One of the primary opportunities is

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Finding Out About Classmates

This regular feature of Class Exchange answers questions that class officers are asking, or should be asking. Its name is a nod to Princeton's tenth president, John Maclean (1800-1886), whose enthusiasm for engaging alumni in the life of the university was legendary.

Dear John Maclean,

I have been trying to arrange events for my classmates in various parts of the country through our team of regional vice presidents. We have tried looking at TigerNet, but there's a limit: We can only look up 50 classmates per day. Isn't there a way to find out where large concentrations of classmates are living?

—Stretched in All Directions

Dear Stretched,

As a class officer, you have options that are not available to just anyone. Contact the Class Affairs team at Maclean House. Simply send an e-mail to ClassAff@princeton.edu.

On short notice, the team can generate a list of where your classmates live, sorted by Princeton alumni regional association or club.

That amounts to the geographical breakdown that you are looking for. It’s the kind of information that will be helpful as you focus on where to concentrate your volunteer efforts.

Dear John Maclean,

Our class secretary was looking for help, so I volunteered to write memorials for classmates who have died. I thought I knew most of my classmates, but I’ve discovered I am stumped on a few. I have been trying to locate information about them—who their roommates were, what eating club they belonged to, etc. Is there a central source for that kind of information?

—Need to Know

Dear Need to Know,

Once again, it’s the Class Affairs team to the rescue. Send an e-mail to ClassAff@princeton.edu with the name of the classmate whose life you are researching. The team will provide you with any information that’s on file with the university. That usually means the names of roommates whom you can contact for reminiscences that can make a Class Memorial in the Princeton Alumni Weekly all the more meaningful. Other biographical information is often (but not always) on file, including eating clubs that classmates joined and sports in which they participated.

Also, a word to you: Thanks for tackling something that is unquestionably important to your classmates as well as to their families and their non-Princeton friends.

There may be times when you think you've taken on an unbearably thankless task, but please remember this: You are upholding one of the great Princeton traditions by documenting the lives of your classmates in this way.

Use the Class Affairs team as a source for information on classmates.

Dear John Maclean,

Our class secretary was looking for

Orange and Black
On the Great White Way

Thinking bigger is one of your challenges as a Princeton alumni leader. And if thinking bigger means arranging a stunt that sounds just a little audacious at first, consult other Princetonians—or the professionals at the Alumni Association.

That is one way of explaining how the New York-based members of the Class Affairs Committee got the “I ♥ Shirley” campaign on a billboard in Times Square.

The idea originated with ADAM LICHTENSTEIN ’95 *10 (far left on billboard), whose office is nearby. The committee chair, JAMES T. BARRON ’77, called MAR GUERITE VERA ’79 h83 at Maclean House. Soon he was scouting locations and planning a gathering at a store that puts customers up in lights. Two other committee members took their places in the picture: GARY K. PAI ’99 and MARIA KOUREPENOS ’85.

The store’s one requirement? A purchase. The group chose a $20 polo shirt—gray with orange trim, of course.
Setting a New Standard With a ‘Grandchild’ Class

The grandparent- or parent-peer class relationship is one that several classes have been nurturing recently. The Classes of ’52, ’56 and ’57 fondly remember their grandchild classes and joint gatherings for career nights and tailgate parties. The Class of 1980 hosts a parent relationship with the Class of 2005 at home and away football games every year.

This year, the Class of 1966 has set a new standard for connecting with a “grandchild” class — the Class of 2016. Over intersession, ’66, under the direction of its grandfather liaison, WALTER BLISS ’66, invited ’16ers to a pizza party at Campus Club.

More than 150 members of the Class of 2016 turned out to meet their grandparent class. ’66 invited them to sign up for other opportunities to participate in events with ’66ers. How can your class bridge the generations and build such a relationship? Here are some possible first steps.

- Take part in the Pre-rade in September, welcoming the new class to Princeton.
- Identify a member of the freshman class who can help you make a plan for interacting with the class.
- Meet with leaders from the freshman class to interest them in establishing a relationship.
- Host an event in Princeton. You don’t have to have a huge turnout from your own class. Your sponsorship of the event will start the connection.
CLASS MANAGEMENT

Empowering and Engaging for Effectiveness

Continued from Page 1

to write a “President’s Letter” in the summer to be sent out in early fall. This is important, so just do it, even if you don’t consider yourself a “natural” writer. Most classes use this communiqué as the cover letter for their first dues mailing of the year. But a president’s letter will also allow you to review past successes and outline your vision or strategy for the coming year. Be sure to meet the deadlines for the Dues Incentive Program, which you can find on the Class Volunteer Resources page of the Alumni Association’s Web site.

Collecting class dues is important, but so is developing ideas and reasons to reach out to your class that have nothing to do with a solicitation. There are essential university gatherings that you can use to engage your classmates — Reunions, of course, as well as football tailgates and Alumni Day.

Other potential class events will probably require a little more creativity and advanced planning on your part. A mini-reunion that celebrates a classmate’s achievement, book readings and signings anywhere in the country, a get-together around a Princeton sporting event in your hometown, or an event on campus can often bring many classmates together.

Other proven ideas include a Princeton Journeys trip that is tailored for your class or an evening featuring a distinguished alumnus (a doctor, politician or comedian, for example).

Your success in planning and carrying out class events will depend on where your class is in the arc of post-Princeton life. Are most of your classmates starting new careers? Have they reached the stage where they are mostly empty nesters, or are they in the trenches with young children?

The challenge for you is to come up with reasons to connect them and create reasons to be a part of the class community that have nothing to do with an “ask.”

That’s the ENGAGE part of the E² equation. The other variable that is also essential to becoming an effective class president or vice president is to EMPOWER your officers and committee chairs. Give each a specific responsibility. But keep things collegial, so everyone among your officers and committee chairs knows what everyone else is doing — and can contribute ideas and hands-on help as needed.

The best-run classes avoid a “hub-and-spoke” structure in which everything flows from, and flows back to, the president and only the president. Such an arrangement tends not to empower the other class leaders to do the most to ENGAGE classmates.

EMPOWER your officers and committee chairs, lead by example, reach out and listen, and create opportunities to connect and have fun. And, in the process, prove the E² equation.—MARIA KOUREPENOS ’85

Drawing a Crowd
By Laughing It Up

Class events don’t have to be the same old, same old. The Class of 1985 proved that with a get-together in Manhattan that featured a standup comedian, JEFF KRIESELT ’95. MARIA KOUREPENOS ’85, the class president, borrowed the idea from “Funny Princeton Live,” the Princeton Alumni Weekly’s comedy show at Reunions in 2011. ’85 invited ’84 and ’86 to the gathering, which took place in the apartment building of a classmate (and whose building conveniently has a public space large enough to accommodate a crowd of 40). ’85 charged $20 per person to cover appetizers and beverages.

Having had some fun, ’85 turned serious for an event with the New Jersey state treasurer, ANDREW SIDAMON-ERISTOFF ’85. Class gatherings “don’t always have to be about a classmate,” Maria says, “but it’s good when they are. He’s knowledgeable, and he’s interesting when it comes to leading a discussion.”

To motivate classmates, first motivate your fellow class officers.
One of the most important items that new class officers should ink on their “to do” lists is to review their class constitutions. Why is this so important? For some obvious and some not-so-obvious reasons.

First, the obvious: It is simply a best practice. And making sure the class constitution is up to date can protect the class, and its officers, from being bound by a document that has become obsolete.

In many cases, the class constitution was “given” to class officers upon graduating. It was a boiler-plate document, written by the university in the most general terms, to cover some of the most obvious — and broadest — governing scenarios. As your class matures, the way the class operates will undoubtedly change, and the constitution may no longer reflect the character or the needs of the class.

Another reason to keep the constitution current is that a specific class administration (or, for that matter, an individual class officer) may have placed language in the constitution to address a specific issue that is no longer relevant or appropriate. A perfect example of that could be term limits for the officers. The constitution could also contain outdated language covering the number and roles of the various officers, the way elections are administered and even how the class is to be organized as an entity.

The not-so-obvious reason to update is that it protects the officers, and the class, from outside actions that may look to do harm or seek damages.

That said, class constitutions should be looked at as a tool, not a burden or a constraint. If your constitution is out of date, form a committee with the charge to draft a new one — one that reflects the changing dynamics and needs of the class.

The Alumni Association has copies of all class constitutions, so if you can’t find yours, reach out to Maclean House. Also, the Alumni Association can send you copies of other classes’ constitutions, so you can see the revisions they’ve made and pull together the best ideas. Why reinvent the wheel when other Princetonians have already done the work for you? — RICHARD L. KLEIN ’82

CLASS GOVERNANCE

Updating Your Class Constitution

Take time for a 60-minute conference call for class officers. These monthly calls are an opportunity for officers to share information and learn what strategies have worked for other classes. Everyone’s schedule is tight, so the clock is ticking. Not literally, of course. But the calls don’t last any longer than that long-running television newsmagazine, and there aren’t any commercials.

The agenda is wide open. You can bring up whatever class-centric issue you want the group to talk about. Recent calls have covered the electronic age — specifically, how classes have used social media and how they have updated Princeton traditions like Reunions yearbooks to include videos and CD-ROMs. Other topics have included ways to reach out to classmates who never attend Reunions and engage them away from Princeton.

The call for class presidents and vice presidents takes place on the second Tuesday of each month, the call for class treasurers on the second Wednesday and the call for secretaries on the second Thursday. The Alumni Association will e-mail you beforehand with the number to call.

If you can’t call in, you can read all about it. A summary of each conference call is posted on the Class Volunteer Resources page of the Alumni Association’s Web site. Find the link labeled “Notes from Monthly Class Officer Calls.”
The mission of each class may be “to further the interests, welfare and education aims of Princeton University,” but none of that is possible for classes with the financial flu. In one sense, the job of the treasurer is easy: collect the dues and pay the bills. For many classes, however, the bills exceed the dues year after year. This imbalance perpetuates a downward spiral of fewer class mailings and less frequent class events, which leads to even lower class participation and revenue.

How can classes which find themselves in this predicament turn it around, and what can all of us learn from the healthy classes?

Participation Is King

We compiled and analyzed financial reporting records that the treasurers from every class filed with the university, as they are required to do every year. All the data confirm that the healthiest classes are the ones with the highest participation rates, not necessarily the highest dues rates.

Healthy classes are profitable and carry a reasonable cash balance to fund special events or cover temporary shortfalls during tough years. Some of the strongest classes have cash balances equal to several years of dues, while the weakest carry almost no reserve.

For every 1 percent increase in class participation, the average reserve balance increases about $2 per classmate. Dues participation rates are highest for the older classes, but those classes that have been creative with dues (multi-tier rates, multi-year plans, or honor rolls) typically have the highest participation rates.

Dues Alone Aren’t Enough

No class younger than the Class of 1980 would be financially viable on dues alone (with their current participation rates and typical expenses), and only about half the older classes could survive on dues. Those classes that have moved across the line to profitability always take advantage of the Dues Incentive Program (up to $800 for younger classes) and often rely on more electronic communication (reducing classwide postal mailings to two or less per year).

If you have questions about ways to increase class participation or decrease expenses without jeopardizing the class mission, one of your greatest resources is your fellow class treasurers. They hold conference calls every month to exchange ideas. (See Page 5.)

This is a shortened version of a presentation from the Leadership Assembly in October 2012. For the full presentation, log on to TigerNet and go to http://tigernet.princeton.edu/ocl/membersonly/PRU/filemanager/volunteers/volunteer-weekend2012/volunteerweekend2012.html.—ADAM LICHTENSTEIN ’95 *10 AND CHARLES PLOHN JR. ’66
Nearly 30 representatives of classes from 1954 to 1974 met in Princeton just before Alumni Day in February to discuss the merits and logistical complexities of offering class mini-reunions. These gatherings bring classmates together at different times of the year and in places where there is no P-rade. The group was joined by MARGUERITE VERA '79 h83, the Alumni Association’s associate director for class affairs, and LESLIE ROWLEY S95, the executive manager of Princeton Journeys. (Princeton Journeys is the arm of the Alumni Association that organizes travel programs that give alumni opportunities to take advantage of far-flung learning opportunities.)

One class recently had a request from the widow of a classmate – she wanted to attend Reunions. But the class leaders were not sure how to give her access to online registration through their Reunion Technologies Web site. They read the fine print and learned that their agreement with Reunion Technologies did not provide for automatic updates to include honorary classmates. They updated the agreement with help from the Class Affairs team and now offer registration access to widows and honorary classmates.

Wondering what’s in your class’ agreement and whether your class leaders should update it? If you need a copy, you can get one from the Alumni Association.

One other point about class associates: They are an automatic, though unofficial, part of each class. That is different from designating a spouse an honorary classmate. Every spouse is a class associate; not every spouse is an honorary classmate. If you want to designate a spouse as an honorary classmate, be sure that you follow whatever process is outlined in your class constitution and by-laws and that you consult with all your officers and class trustees.
CALENDAR FOR CLASS OFFICERS

REUNIONS 2013
• THURSDAY, MAY 30 TO SUNDAY, JUNE 2
Tell your classmates now that it’s not too late to register and attend.

THE ONE AND ONLY PRE-RADE
• SUNDAY, SEPT. 8
A recent tradition that gives brand-new tigers a taste of what’s ahead.

FALL SATURDAYS
• SATURDAY, OCT. 26
Princeton at Harvard

• SATURDAY, NOV. 16
Yale at Princeton
Two big games, two ideal times for class tailgates.

ALUMNI DAY 2014
• SATURDAY, FEB. 22
Lectures, lunch with your classmates, awards and the Service of Remembrance.