



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Class Reunion Program

Class Organizer Handbook

Updated January 2020



Alumni Weekend

Alumni Weekend is an annual event sponsored by the University of Alberta Alumni Association and supported by faculties, including the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD). We encourage class members to organize a reunion in conjunction with Alumni Weekend in order to take advantage of the wide range of activities that are planned, and to celebrate with other U of A alumni. Classes celebrating a major anniversary (e.g., 25, 40, 50, etc.) are the focus of reunion organization, but all alumni are welcome and encouraged to take in the weekend's events.

As event details for Alumni Weekend are confirmed, they will be posted online.

One event we highly encourage class organizers to promote and encourage classmates to attend is the FoMD Alumni Brunch on the Sunday of Alumni Weekend. It is a great way to conclude your reunion with a delicious meal, inspiring program, and time to have a class photo taken by a professional photographer.

Each class organizer will receive two complimentary tickets to the brunch as a token of our appreciation for the work you've put into organizing your reunion!

Reunion Class Organizers

Class organizers play a very important role in making reunions a success. Without the enthusiasm of one person who is willing to say to classmates, "Let's get together!" most reunions would never happen. Your role as class organizer is to serve as a contact person for your class, liaise with the FoMD Alumni Office, encourage classmates to participate, and help make decisions about your private class events.

We appreciate your commitment to the university and your class. You don't have to do this alone. You are encouraged to contact other classmates and to form an organizing committee—this helps encourage attendance and builds enthusiasm for events.

Have another classmate (or several others) co-sign the letters being sent. Knowing that many people from your class are interested in participating can be very motivating for those who receive the letter. Have one class member serve as the class historian, collecting anecdotes, stories, and archival material from the group to be shared during the reunion (e.g. one-page bios from each classmate).

The FoMD Alumni Office will do all we can to ensure that organizing your class reunion is as easy as possible, and we handle many of the details related to planning your reunion.



What we do:

1. *Provide contact information*

You will want to request a class list that includes any contact information we have on file for your classmates. Note that the university's alumni database is not 100-per-cent up-to-date, but we do have at least one form of contact information (email, phone or address) for about 80 per cent of our alumni.

To access a list, please ensure you've read through this entire handbook and understand the responsibilities you hold in having this list. Email or mail a signed copy of the Class Organizer Confidentiality Agreement (in online resources) to us.

2. *Mail-out support*

Many of your classmates will only have a mailing address on file with us. We can help you reach these classmates by taking care of the cost and administration of mailing the letters on your behalf.

3. *Event planning support*

We are here to make reunion planning an enjoyable and seamless experience for you. We will guide you through the entire process, keeping you on track and making sure you aren't missing any details.

4. *Registration and ticketing*

We can set up a registration page where classmates can RSVP and pay in advance for private class events. Note that the money collected must be used to pay vendors directly. This takes pressure off you from worrying about tracking down classmates to pay their portion at the end of a fun evening.

5. *Contracts with vendors*

If we are collecting the money through our registration system, the FoMD Alumni Office will manage contracts, including paying deposits, for vendors such as venues, caterers, and entertainment. This is to ensure we can collect the money and pay vendors directly. Again, this takes the liability off you so you can relax and enjoy your reunion.



Timeline

Please adhere to the following timeline, which allows our staff to provide these services in an efficient manner to as many class reunion organizers as possible.

October – December

- Start crafting your reunion plan:
 - Book an in-person or phone meeting with staff at the FoMD Alumni Office, who are happy to discuss your reunion!
 - Use the Reunion Planning Worksheet (in online resources) to outline your reunion and jot down ideas
- Write a message to your classmates (email and mail) that includes the following:
 - Save the date
 - Introduce the class organizing committee and / or ask for classmates to volunteer to join the committee
 - Ask classmates to update their contact information with the university—especially their email addresses—to ensure they receive all updates
 - Optional – provide the link to an online survey to collect ideas and information from your classmates
- Enlist volunteers to help track classmate contact information
- If you have a classmate who has lived a particularly remarkable life since graduation, talk to us about nominating them for an Alumni Award. The deadline to submit a nomination is December 15.

January

- Attend the FoMD Class Organizer Social & Information Session, where you will meet other class organizers planning their reunion for the upcoming year as well as organizers from the previous year. Hear what other classes are doing to mark their special occasions and learn from the successes and mistakes of last year's organizers. This event is also our chance to celebrate and thank you for the efforts you put in to bring your class together, so dinner is on us!

February – March

- Review venue options for your private events. You may wish to set up a time to visit a few venues before making your choice. You can use this venue search tool: <https://exploreedmonton.com/industry/meetings/conference-services/offsite-venues>
- Keep the FoMD Alumni Office staff informed of your venue interests and choices. We can make recommendations, call venues for more information, help set up site visits, and finalize contracts with venues.



- Review options for: food and beverage, audiovisual requirements, room layout, décor, music, entertainment, photography, etc., and work with us to set up any necessary contracts with service providers. These decisions affect ticket price, which must be determined prior to the registration system being created.
- **March 31 is the deadline for class organizers to request a contract setup.**
- Decide if you would like to integrate a class gift project into your reunion plans. Your reunion provides an opportunity to coordinate a special gift to the University of Alberta, which is a very rewarding way to leave your legacy. You direct a gift specifically to a project of choice (such as a scholarship or special project) or simply to the area of greatest need. Tax receipts are provided on all donations.
- Send an update letter to your classmates with information on how the reunion plans are shaping up. In this letter, you may want to provide an update on classmates, mention individuals planning to attend the reunion, and request assistance with a phone campaign or other volunteer roles that are required.

April – May

- Work with us to determine a ticket price for each event. Once ticket prices have been determined, we will set up your registration page.
 - Please note: We will do our best to ensure that the ticket price accurately reflects the actual cost of the event per person, however, we must build in a slight buffer to ensure revenue covers the expenses. Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity to provide a small refund to all classmates and we cannot hold on to this money until your next reunion or donate it to a class gift fund. Leftover money under \$1,000 will be invested into providing ongoing alumni relations programs for FoMD alumni. Leftover money exceeding \$1,000 can be designated to a special student project (e.g. Class of 1974 donated \$1,500 to a medical student curling bonspiel in 2019).
- **April 30 is the deadline to request registration site setup.**
- In mid-May, the Alumni Weekend registration site will go live.
- By the end of May, send an email or letter to your classmates with the following:
 - Invitation
 - Registration link
 - Hotel information (details will be available online in May)
 - Budget information, to be transparent about how you arrived at the ticket price

June – August

- Track registrations and follow up with classmates who have not registered to see if they will attend.
- Outline program (formal program, music vs. quiet, seating plans, time food is served, bar hours, etc.). Find templates for speaking notes and a photo slideshow in the online resources.



September

- The deadline for your classmates to register for events will be two weeks before your reunions. This allows us enough time to do the final preparations for your event (confirming numbers with the caterers, finalizing seating charts, accommodating dietary or mobility restrictions, etc.).
 - Please note: Classmates who register and pay for tickets to private class events can request a refund up to a week before the date of your event. Typically, guest numbers need to be confirmed with venues and caterers the week of the event so the refund cutoff prevents revenue loss at your event. Special exceptions can be made in extenuating circumstances.
- Create an event brief for each event (use template in online resources).
- Send a confirmation email to your classmates that includes an overview of the event and parking information.
- Class organizers pick up their reunion packages (includes a folder of all contracts and nametags).
- Pick up any supplies you need for your events. Please note that there are two ways these transactions can be handled:
 - If the bill will be under \$500, a classmate can make the purchase and submit the receipt for reimbursement. Note that bill splitting is not allowed and we will be unable to reimburse two bills from the same store.
 - We arrange a time for a classmate and a staff member to meet at the store to make the purchase. The staff member will use their corporate purchase card so no reimbursements are necessary.
- All of the effort you put into planning comes to fruition and you pull off an amazing and memorable reunion!

October

- We follow up with all vendors to ensure bills are paid.
- Send a followup email to all classmates with photos from the reunion, a feedback form, plans for the next reunion, etc.

Keeping up with classmates

One of the primary responsibilities of class organizers is to communicate with and keep track of classmates. The FoMD Alumni Office requests that class organizers write all the update messages to their classmates, email messages from their own email, reply back to classmates, keep track of contact information updates, and keep track of who cannot attend the reunion



Emailing classmates

Using email is the best way to stay in touch with classmates. We ask that you encourage all classmates to update their email addresses directly with the university. You can refer them to this form to do so: <https://www.ualberta.ca/alumni/update-your-contact-info>

Please ensure that you use the BCC (blind carbon copy) function when emailing all classmates to guarantee their privacy.

Refer to the Mass Emailing resource for tips on how to efficiently send one email to all classmates within seconds!

Finding missing classmates

Although the U of A tries to maintain accurate information on all of our alumni, you will notice that we have “lost” some people on your class list or may have out-of-date information. You may wish to put some extra effort into trying to track down some of these missing classmates.

Other classmates may have kept in touch with some of the “missing” class members. In the first letter that goes out to your classmates, a list of these people can be included. Asking others about a classmate’s whereabouts can often prove quite effective.

You can also try to find “missing” classmates online through social media platforms (such as Facebook) or by using Google to find clues about their whereabouts (e.g. articles about them in local papers, employer information, etc.).

Spearheading a phone campaign - effective and enjoyable!

A very effective means of getting people to attend their reunion is to personally call them. This is when it is helpful to have an organizing committee so there are a few of you to share the task. These phone calls are a friendly reminder and often result in more people attending. Former class organizers tell us that this is one of the most enjoyable and effective methods of contacting classmates.

Using snail mail

The FoMD Alumni Office takes care of the administration and cost of sending hard-copy mail, but we ask that the letter is written by the class organizer. Letters will only be sent to classmates without an email on file. The class organizer is responsible for emailing the letter message to classmates with an email. The FoMD Alumni Office can do up to two letter mailouts per class.



Other options

Some classes have had success by creating a group using Facebook or Whatsapp. These platforms allow all classmates to comment and contribute, which builds excitement for an upcoming reunion.

FOIPP

FOIPP stands for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and is provincial legislation designed to protect personal information. The University of Alberta is bound by this legislation, which only permits us to release contact information to class organizers, and only for the purpose of reunions and other alumni activities. Class organizers only receive information about their classmates after signing a confidentiality agreement, which outlines their responsibilities.

When you are preparing for your class reunion, you are NOT allowed to share any personal information about a classmate with other people unless the person has given permission for you to share this information.

You cannot share phone numbers and/or addresses on a mailing list unless you have permission from that classmate. For example: You would like to prepare a list of phone numbers and addresses to distribute to your classmates. You are not allowed to do so unless you have each person's permission to include them on such a list. Please use the Classmate Tracking form (in online resources) to track permission granted by your classmates.

You must not give out any information about a classmate to another classmate unless they have given you permission to do so. For example: Sue calls and asks for Bob's phone number. You cannot give it out to her unless you have permission from Bob. An easy solution is to contact Bob and let him know Sue wants to contact him, if that's OK with Sue!

If you have your own website, you cannot post names of classmates and contact information unless they have specifically consented to having their information posted on the website.

Using information inappropriately has serious consequences. If you release personal information without permission, you are violating the confidentiality agreement that you have signed. The classmate now has the right to take legal action against you for the indiscretion.



FoMD Alumni Office

Please contact us to get started on planning your reunion! Past class organizers have found the support of our office to be very valuable.

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