

Entering the 5th Reunion Year

A Guide for College Class Volunteers

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) is the official association of all alumni of Harvard University. The HAA maintains and enhances a highly engaged, vibrant community of alumni and friends worldwide.

The College Alumni Programs (CAP) team in the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) works in close partnership with Harvard and Radcliffe College class leaders to build and sustain class community, host quinquennial Reunions, engage in non-reunion programs, keep classmates informed through communications, and more. The Class Report Office, which edits the Red Books, is also part of the College Alumni Programs team.

The Harvard College Fund (HCF) fosters a philanthropic community in support of Harvard College's students and its mission of truth, excellence, and inclusivity. This broad base of donors and volunteers contributes gifts at all levels to the Harvard College Fund each year. Their flexible, current-use gifts are used immediately to ensure that the College is accessible to all, and that each student has the resources they need to succeed.

The HAA and HCF are two collaborative groups within Alumni Affairs and Development (AA&D). AA&D inspires and galvanizes alumni, friends, and members of the University community to support Harvard through philanthropy, governance, and active engagement.

Reunions Overview

Harvard reunions are held every five years (currently 5th-70th). Additionally, the Crimson Society, which is made up of all Harvard and Radcliffe College alumni who have already had their 50th Reunion, hold annual reunion events.

There are three major aspects of a Harvard reunion, which allow for different forms of engagement:

- *Come back:* Attend virtual and in-person programming
- *Give back:* Make your best gift to the Harvard College Fund as part of a class-wide fundraising campaign
- *Share your story:* Submit your Class Report entry

The Class Report, also known as the "Red Book" is an enduring Harvard tradition that began in the mid-1800s. Every five years, aligned with reunions, the Class Report is assembled from classmate submissions. This is an opportunity to share your story in your own voice with your Class and to reflect on your life over the last five years. Class Report submissions are usually in the fall. The books will be mailed to alumni before the in-person capstone programming. Everyone in the class will get a copy of the book for free regardless of if they submitted an entry or not.

Timeline

Your reunion year begins in July preceding your May/June in-person capstone programming. Your staff liaisons will be in touch with the appropriate class leaders (often class committee leadership) when it's time to begin planning for the year and recruiting the committee (made up of program and gift committees, supported by the HAA and HCF, respectively), so you will not need to begin planning until

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these conversations begin. Since this is your first reunion, your staff liaisons will train and educate you about the reunion year process, including forming a committee and planning events, and guide volunteers along the way.

Following the initial conversations with the staff liaisons and class committee leadership (often in July), the staff liaisons will then share more information about the reunion year experience with the rest of the class committee (often in August), followed by past activities chairs.

The staff liaisons will then share information broadly with your class (often in late summer or early fall) This information will 1) share what a Harvard reunion year looks like, given that this is your first reunion, and 2) share how to join the reunion committee, for those who are interested. As part of this, the staff liaisons will put out a call to the class (with additional targeted communications to the class committee and activities chairs) to join the reunion committee.

Reunion Committee, Class Committee, and Activities Chairs

The purpose of reunion committees is engagement with your class and Harvard during your quinquennial reunion year. Reunion committees will begin to form in late summer or early fall, but classmates are welcome to join the reunion committee at any time during the reunion year.

A reunion committee is not the same as your class committee. The class committee, as the permanent governance group for your class, was formed in your senior year and continues into alumni life. Class committee members are strongly encouraged, but not required, to participate in reunion committees. In a reunion year, the reunion committee will be the primary volunteer group that the HAA works with to execute your programming. Following your reunion year, the class committee will once again be the primary volunteer group for the class.

All in the class are encouraged and welcome to join the reunion committee (either the program committee or the gift committee or both) every five years, regardless of any past volunteer experience! Reunion committees (and your reunion year programming) are strongest when new voices from a variety of background participate. There are no limits to the number of committee members, and roles (beyond the roles of Chairs, Class Report Chair, and Reunion Treasurer, highlighted below) can be flexible.

Reunion committees evolve:

- Serving on your 5th Reunion Committee doesn't mean that you're required to volunteer every reunion after this.
- If you aren't able to volunteer this year, you are always welcome to volunteer at a future reunion.
- Reunion committees are specific to each reunion year. So, the 5th Reunion Committee will end after your 5th Reunion, and a new 10th Reunion Committee will form five years later (even if many of the volunteers are the same).

The Class Secretary and Treasurer will be asked to serve as the Class Report Chair and Reunion Treasurer, respectively. If they are unable to serve in those roles, a proxy should be identified.

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Leaders of the reunion program committee, known as program chairs, will be selected among those interested in being on the program committee. As part of the program committee recruitment process, the HAA staff liaison will ask via a form who is interested in being a chair and they will be asked to answer a few questions. The results will then be shared with the leadership of the class committee to make decisions. If there are no more than three candidates, they will likely all be automatically selected. If there are more than three candidates, the class committee leadership will review and choose no more than three to be chairs. The leadership of the class committee will have the right of first refusal for the program chair roles, so further recruitment might not be needed depending on their interest.

In addition to leading the work of the reunion program committee in partnership with and under the guidance of the staff liaison, the chairs will also be part of a larger Reunion Leaders group made up of the program chairs from the 5th-70th Reunions, and these leaders will be invited to regular virtual Reunion Leaders Roundtable meetings to learn about important topics and hear from other volunteers. Beyond these roundtable meetings, we hope this group will be a community of practice allowing for the chairs to learn from volunteers who have planned reunions before. Of course, your staff liaison will continue to be a great resource to determine best practices.

[Activities chairs](#) are College volunteers who support their Class Committee and Class with programming in non-reunion years, whether that be class-specific programming, or working in partnership with activities chairs from other Classes. Activities chairs will not be recruited in a reunion year, as any interested classmates should instead join the reunion committee. Your HAA staff liaison can help send messages to all those who served as activities chairs over the last four years to see if they are interested in joining the reunion committee and note that the activities chair role will not be active in the next year. Following your reunion year, this role will be active and recruited for again.

Outreach to Your Class

All class emails sent in your reunion year, whether they be about the reunion committee, class events, fundraising, or the Class Report, will be sent through Harvard's broadcast email system. The appropriate staff member will work with the appropriate volunteers on this process. If your class had been using a third-party broadcast email client in non-reunion years, or sending email through a classes.harvard.edu website, volunteers won't need to send emails through these platforms during the reunion year.

In the five years since your graduation, many of your classmates may have changed their contact information or address, but didn't update this in their HAA Alumni Directory profile at community.alumni.harvard.edu/person. It's important for your classmates to have both an active email AND mailing address on file so they receive emails about their reunion events and the Class Report, and can also receive a copy of the Class Report. There are some classmates for whom the HAA will have an email but not a physical mailing address. Even though HAA communications will primarily be sent by email, it is important that the HAA also has a physical mailing address to ensure they are able to invite alumni to regional programming and send them a Class Report. A list of classmates without an email address or mailing address (as well as those who had previously unsubscribed from email) will be shared with the reunion committee in hopes that members can reach out to their classmates and ask them to update their information in the HAA Alumni Directory.

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Your class list (those who will receive reunion communications) includes those whose preferred affiliation year is the year of your class year. Some alumni may have taken time off and as a result had their preferred year changed to a later year to match their graduation year. If they want to change their preferred year back to their original year, they can contact the HAA staff liaison who can help them get that changed. Alumni can only have one preferred year, and therefore they will only receive communications, including Red Book and reunion invitations, for one class. They are welcome to also attend reunion programming for a different class but will not receive direct invitations. Similarly, they will have the opportunity to purchase a Red Book from a surrounding class, but they will not receive one for free and are not able to make a submission for it.

General Recent Grad Programming

During your 5th Reunion year (and also the 10th) your class will still be invited to traditional recent graduate programming, including the Welcome to Your City events, the recent grad Harvard-Yale or Fall Fest tailgates, Real World for Recent Grads events, and events open to all alums, including Harvard Moves and Global Networking Night. Reunion committee members can work with their staff liaisons to determine how to best market these events to the class and try to increase engagement in the spirit of this being a reunion year.

Transitioning out of a Reunion Year

While you will see increased class engagement during your reunion year, it doesn't need to stop when the reunion year ends! Heading into your sixth year out from graduation, your class committee will once again be the primary volunteer leadership group for the class, and activities chairs will once again be recruited. Recent graduate programming will continue. Additionally, programming from your reunion year might inspire your class to create new traditions or continue holding certain types of events. Your staff liaison will continue to work with you to support your class engagement efforts and advise you on what might work best.

General Contact Information

General 5th Reunion Questions: 5thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

5th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_5thReport@harvard.edu