

Harvard Alumni Association College Reunion Resources Handbook for Volunteers 2025–2026



HARVARD
Alumni Association
COLLEGE ALUMNI PROGRAMS

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Reunion Year Overview For Class Volunteers

Welcome to your Reunion year! We are eager to work with, get to know, and support you and your class. Thank you for volunteering and partnering with our team to plan a memorable reunion year.

Your HAA staff liaison will be your partner in planning reunion year activities, including both traditional activities that take place in Cambridge in late spring, as well as sustained virtual and regional class engagement throughout the year. Your staff liaison can also advise you on approaches that have worked in recent years and facilitate introductions to Reunion Chairs from other classes who are happy to share their experiences. While the HAA helps you with your planning, we hope that you and your committee will be able to focus on what you do best—customizing program content to capture the spirit of your class and engaging your classmates and encouraging them to attend through strategic outreach. Most importantly, your role as a volunteer is to ensure that this is a fun and joyful time for all classmates, whether as event attendees or volunteers!

More information about reunions, including the dates for in-person programming in 2026, can be found on this Harvard Alumni Association website here: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/reunions/register>. More information for you and your classmates will be added here as it becomes available.

This document is part of a series of resource documents that capture some of the key information and milestones for you to reference as we develop your program together. Volunteers for the 5th and 10th Reunions should also review the documents for entering these reunions (that have a little more information specific to the recent graduate cohort as you plan your first reunions), which can be found here: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=230>.

Office Overview

The Reunions & Classes (R&C) 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 R&C team members carry class portfolios based on four alumni lifecycles:

- Undergraduates – 11 years out
- 12 years out – 25th Reunion
- 26 years out – 40th Reunion
- 41 years out – 55th Reunion
- 56 years out – 70th Reunion and Crimson Society

By working with classes within a common cohort, we are better able to support engagement across classes and between reunions, ramp up upcoming Reunion classes, and build stronger, sustained relationships between volunteers and staff members. More about the R&C team can be found here: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=3>.

Reunion Year Overview For Class Volunteers

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.

Alumni Affairs and Development (AA&D) inspires and galvanizes alumni, friends, and members of the University community to support Harvard through philanthropy, governance, and active engagement. AA&D programs and volunteer opportunities respect the rights, differences, and dignity of others. Those taking part in AA&D activities are expected to demonstrate honesty, integrity, and civility in those activities, and are accountable for their conduct there with University alumni, students, parents, volunteers, employees, and invitees. AA&D reserves the right to suspend services to and to exclude from participation in AA&D programs any person whose inappropriate behavior adversely affects the safety, well-being, and inclusion of community members.

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 celebrated their 50th Reunion, holds annual celebratory events.

We invite you and your class to think of your reunion as a year-long celebration rather than only an in-person celebration taking place over a single weekend. This approach is an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of community by emphasizing inclusion and welcoming those who might otherwise not be able to engage in the on-campus programming. This will also allow your class to feature more content-rich sessions throughout the year, ahead of your celebratory gathering on-campus in June.

There could be four different types of programming in your reunion year:

- Virtual class programming in the fall, winter, and spring, as desired, planned by your reunion committee in partnership with your HAA staff liaison.
- Regional in-person class programming in the fall, winter, and spring, as desired, planned by your reunion committee in partnership with your HAA staff liaison. These are referred to as “pre-reunion events” but should be thought of as your reunion programming.
- Virtual programming planned by the HAA for all reunion classes and the Crimson Society featuring Harvard faculty, administrators, and other special guests in the fall, winter, and spring. Your staff liaison will keep you informed as these programs are planned and will ensure that these broader programs are integrated into your reunion schedule.
- In-person reunion finale programming on-campus in Cambridge in June, now the week after Commencement, planned by your reunion committee in partnership with your HAA staff liaison.

The HAA will host Harvard Alumni Day (previously called the Annual Meeting of the Harvard Alumni Association) during the Reunions on Friday, June 5. This will feature the alumni parade and a featured speaker.

Reunion Year Overview For Class Volunteers

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.

What to Know about Class Reports:

- Submissions are usually collected in the summer or fall
- The books will be mailed to alumni before the in-person finale programming
- Everyone in the class will get a copy of the book for free regardless of whether or not they submitted an entry

Timeline

Your reunion year begins in July preceding your June in-person finale programming on the Harvard campus. Your staff liaison will be in touch with the appropriate class leaders when it’s time to begin planning for the year and recruiting the committee, so you will not need to begin planning until these conversations begin.

As part of the initial planning, your HAA staff liaison will host an intake conversation to learn more about the experiences of your class, including as students, in alumni life, and throughout your past reunions. Following the conclusion of your reunion, your staff liaison will hold a similar conversation with the Reunion Chairs in order to capture best practices that might be helpful for your next reunion five years later, as well as to share with the class behind you as they head into their reunion year.

Reunion Committees and Class Committees

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:

- **Class Committee:** Brings the Class together as a whole, connecting members of the Class to each other and Harvard College by modeling and facilitating communication, participation, and volunteerism among classmates
- **Reunion Program Committee:** Serves as the primary volunteer group that the HAA works with to execute your programming

Reunion committees evolve:

- Serving on your 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 Year Overview For Class Volunteers

- Reunion committees are specific to each reunion year. So, for example, the 15th Reunion Committee will end after the 15th Reunion, and a new 20th Reunion Committee will form five years later (even if many of the volunteers are the same).

More information about reunion committees can be found on the separate Reunion Committees Roles and Responsibilities document.

Reunion Leaders Roundtable Series

In addition to leading the work of the reunion committee in partnership with the HAA staff liaison, the chairs will also be part of a larger Reunion Leaders group made up of the chairs from the 5th-70th Reunions, and these leaders will be invited to 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 each other. Of course, your staff liaison will continue to be a great resource to determine best practices.

General Contact Information

Contact information for your staff liaison on the HAA College Alumni Program team can be found on this page: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=3>.

More information about the Class Reports, including deadlines and your staff Editor in the HAA College Alumni Programs Class Report Office, can be found on this page: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/college/class-reports>.

Contact information for Harvard College Fund Class Officers (for questions about donations or joining the class gift committee) can be found on this page: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/college/college-giving/hcf/about-harvard-college-fund#HCFClassOfficer>.

General Reunion Questions (not class-specific): CollegeReunions_HAA@harvard.edu

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

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

General 10th Reunion Questions: 10thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

10th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_10thReport@harvard.edu

General 15th Reunion Questions: 15thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

15th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_15thReport@harvard.edu

General 20th Reunion Questions: 20thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

20th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_20thReport@harvard.edu

General 25th Reunion Questions: 25thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

25th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_25thReport@harvard.edu

General 30th Reunion Questions: 30thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu

Reunion Year Overview For Class Volunteers

30th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_30thReport@harvard.edu

General 35th Reunion Questions: 35thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
35th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_35thReport@harvard.edu

General 40th Reunion Questions: 40thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
40th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_40thReport@harvard.edu

General 45th Reunion Questions: 45thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
45th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_45thReport@harvard.edu

General 50th Reunion Questions: 50thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
50th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_50thReport@harvard.edu

General 55th Reunion Questions: 55thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
55th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_55thReport@harvard.edu

General 60th Reunion Questions: 60thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
60th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_60thReport@harvard.edu

General 65th Reunion Questions: 65thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
65th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_65thReport@harvard.edu

General 70th Reunion Questions: 70thReunion_HAA@harvard.edu
70th Class Report General Inbox: CRO_70thReport@harvard.edu

Thank you for your service as a reunion volunteer leader and for all you are doing to support your classmates. We are excited to continue our partnership with you and your classmates as you move into your reunion year, and we are continually grateful for your energy, enthusiasm, and dedication.

Support of Reunions and Volunteers

Several teams at the Harvard Alumni Association and Alumni Affairs & Development (AA&D) support College Reunions and class volunteers.

AA&D is made up of four units:

- The Harvard Alumni Association (College and University-Wide engagement)
- Faculty of Arts & Sciences (FAS/College fundraising)
- University Development Office (University-Wide fundraising)
- AA&D Resources (internal support of the other three units)

There will be staff members on three teams that directly interact with class volunteers:

- Your HAA Reunions and Classes staff liaison (your primary contact and partner)
- Your HAA Class Report Office Editor
- Your Harvard College Fund Class Officer

Harvard Alumni Association

- **Reunions and Classes:** The Reunions and Classes team is part of the larger College Alumni Programs (CAP) team. The team focuses their work on the support of College volunteers. Your Reunions and Classes staff liaison will be your partner in planning all reunion year activities and can also advise you on best practices and facilitate introductions to other volunteers.
- **Class Report Office (CRO):** The Class Report Office is also a team within the larger College Alumni Programs team. A staff member (often with the title Editor) will work with your Class Report Chair and partner closely with your CAP staff liaison to ensure Class Report and programming efforts and communications are aligned.
- **Volunteer Leadership:** This team in the HAA organizes Harvard Alumni Day (including the parade and speaking program) and supports the volunteers for that event, including the Chief Marshal, as well as the volunteer Aids and Marshals.
- **Engagement Marketing:** This team in the HAA creates a strategic marketing plan for reunion communications and helps to coordinate the various reunion-related email messages that are sent to alumni. The team will also oversee a project to ensure alumni records are updated, including email addresses, mailing addresses, and email list subscriptions.
- **University-Wide Alumni Engagement & Events:** This team in the HAA works most closely with faculty for events and will organize the virtual programming for all reunion classes and the Crimson Society featuring faculty and administrators throughout the year.

Support of Reunions and Volunteers

Faculty of Arts & Sciences

- **Harvard College Fund (HCF):** A Harvard College Fund staff member (often referred to as a Class Officer) will manage the reunion-year fundraising efforts for your class as well as the volunteers on the reunion gift committee. Your CAP staff liaison will work closely with your HCF Class Officer to ensure that programming and fundraising efforts and communications are aligned, as well as the work of the program and gift committees (recognizing that many classmates are volunteers for both efforts).

AA&D Resources

This unit includes teams that:

- Manage event-related logistics, including securing spaces, working with catering and bar partners, obtaining audiovisual services, booking hotels, overseeing transportation, securing entertainment (DJs, bands, photo booths), managing staffing for events, and more.
- Oversee all financial aspects of reunions and create the budget templates (and will work with your CAP staff liaison and reunion treasurer to create the budget).
- Assist with digital and print communications pieces and help design and edit class-specific pieces like the memorial service programs and print mailings.
- Create and send the emails that are sent to alumni, including the class-specific emails drafted by volunteers.
- Create and launch the online registration form for on-campus reunion programming.

Note that there are additional teams within AA&D, and the responsibilities of the teams noted above. include additional priorities.

Reunion Program Committees

Roles and Responsibilities

Recruiting Program Committee Members

All in the class are encouraged and welcome to join the reunion committee every five years! Reunion committees (and your reunion year programming) are strongest when new voices from a variety of backgrounds 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.

A class-wide interest form sent early in the reunion year is a great way to identify new volunteers. Class leaders can also reach out to a specific group (i.e., House, dorm, sport, student activity) and build from there, invite classmates you personally know, and encourage the initial group to invite more members.

Your HAA College Alumni Programs staff liaison will work with class leaders to recruit your reunion program committee by:

- Reaching out to your Class Committee and past reunion program committee volunteers.
- Creating a questionnaire to send to your class inviting them to join the committee

Leaders of the reunion program committee, known as Chairs, will be selected among those interested in being on the committee, if leaders (often past reunion program committee leaders) have not already been identified. Much like how reunion committees are distinct from one another every five years, the Chairs for one reunion need not be the Chairs for the next reunion, although they certainly may indicate interest again. Some may decide to step aside and serve as a committee member in order to give another classmate the opportunity for the leadership role. The HAA staff liaison will work with the volunteers to determine the best way forward.

Expectations and Responsibilities for all Reunion Program Committee Members

- Have fun! This is a joyful and exciting time to reconnect with classmates.
- Review all onboarding and resource documents and be knowledgeable of best practices and other support provided by the HAA.
- Attend committee meetings and/or review notes and next steps.
- Read communications from the chairs and your HAA staff liaison and be responsive.
- Serve as a class (and Harvard) ambassador throughout the year.
- Contribute to reunion planning efforts, highlighting a variety of voices and experiences.
- Contribute to outreach efforts, with a commitment to invite classmates via personal outreach.
- Attend reunion events and serve as a greeter or facilitator during select reunion events.
- Maintain a positive and productive relationship with your HAA staff liaison and fellow committee members with respect for planning protocols and guidelines.
- Commit to joint problem solving with your HAA staff liaison and fellow committee members.
- Share feedback and experiences with your HAA staff liaison and committee members to better support your experience, as well as the experience of future classes and your future reunions.

Beyond the Chairs, Reunion Treasurer, and Class Report Chair, there are no set roles for reunion committees, although classes have recommended certain roles based on past experiences. The Chairs and HAA staff liaison can partner to determine what might work best for your reunion program

Reunion Program Committees

Roles and Responsibilities

committee, keeping in mind the interests, experiences, and skillset of the volunteers. Volunteers can be part of more than one subcommittee/take on more than one role depending on their interests.

Expectations and Responsibilities for Reunion Program Committee Chairs

Reunion chairs are the lead reunion ambassadors to their classmates. They organize, motivate, and manage the reunion program committee. Reunion chairs work closely in partnership with their HAA staff liaison to develop programming, create an outreach plan, and encourage overall participation.

Key responsibilities include:

- Lead by example with a joyful and collaborative approach to create a fun environment.
- Work in close partnership with the HAA staff to ensure a positive planning experience for the committee, which includes proactive dialogue and a shared commitment to troubleshooting.
- Spread the come-one, come-all message by generating enthusiasm for the reunion year by word-of-mouth, personal interactions with classmates, and general communication.
- Actively recruit, motivate, support, and oversee committee members.
- Build a committee that represents diverse Harvard experiences, affinity groups, and interests.
- Collaborate with HAA staff to plan and implement major class events and ensure planning is fiscally responsible, on time, and on budget.
- Ensure reunion communications reflect the tone, language, and culture of the class.
- Serve as a liaison (as requested) with the Class Report Chair and reunion gift committee to provide updates on events, the Class Report, and general class outreach.
- Draft a programming report to be included in the front matter of the Class Report.
- Address challenges that might surface during the planning process.
- Schedule committee meetings and invite members in partnership with the HAA staff liaison.
- Run committee meetings and manage next steps in partnership with the HAA staff liaison.
- Approve all outgoing communications and work with committee members and the HAA staff liaison to ensure content is accurate and sent in a timely manner.

The chairs will also be part of a larger Reunion Leaders group made up of the chairs from the 5th-70th Reunions, and these leaders will be invited to virtual Reunion Leaders Roundtable meetings to learn about important topics and hear from other volunteers. We hope this group will be a community of practice allowing for the chairs to learn from other volunteers who have planned reunions before. Of course, your staff liaison will continue to be a great resource to determine best practices.

More information for Chairs can be found on the Leadership and Motivation Best Practices document.

Role of Class Treasurer in a Reunion Year: Reunion Treasurer

The Class Treasurer will be asked to serve as the Reunion Treasurer. If they are unable to serve in this role, a proxy should be identified.

The Class Treasurer manages the class treasury and will be consulted about decisions impacting the reunion budget. The HAA will need to have written approval of the reunion budget and pricing from the

Reunion Program Committees

Roles and Responsibilities

treasurer(s) before the reunion registration form for in-person campus programming launches. If any additional elements are added to the budget following the budget-approval period, the treasurer(s) will need to provide written consent. Following the reunion year, the treasurer(s) will either be given a check if the class accrues a surplus or will be asked to reimburse the HAA from the class treasury if the class incurs a deficit. In cases where the class appoints a different volunteer to serve as reunion treasurer, approval will still be needed by the Class Treasurer for any pieces that might impact the class treasury.

More information can be found on the [Budgeting Process and Best Practices](#) document.

Role of Class Secretary in a Reunion Year: Class Report Chair

The Class Secretary will be asked to serve as the Class Report Chair. If they are unable to serve in this role, a proxy should be identified.

They will work with a staff member in the Class Report Office (CRO), as well as the HAA staff liaison, to raise awareness of the submission deadlines and encourage participation by the class through an outreach campaign in partnership with staff and volunteers. The Chair does not edit or assemble the entries or manage the printing or delivery of the book (the CRO staff member will do this).

The Chair will write a foreword to be included at the front of the book and will work with the Program Chairs and HAA staff liaison to obtain a programming report and reunion committee list to be included at the front of the book as well (in addition to getting a gift committee report and committee list working with the Harvard College Fund volunteer leaders and staff).

Even if not serving as a member of the committee beyond this role, the HAA will include the Secretary on all committee correspondence to ensure they remain informed of all reunion year updates.

Communications/Website/Social Media Subcommittee

While all committee members should include outreach as part of their efforts, these volunteers are responsible for the development of an outreach campaign to encourage classmates to attend programming and submit a Class Report entry. In partnership with staff, they are responsible for the development and execution of a strategy that integrates the use of websites, emails, and social media.

Key responsibilities include:

- Determine a regional, affinity, or House-based outreach effort, and identify leads for those specific groups or regions to reach every classmate through a personal text, call, or email.
- Collaborate with the chairs on class outreach strategies and provide regular updates.
- Assist with the writing of class communications and social media posts.
- Depending on the class's online presence, the committee may identify volunteers to oversee updating of a class website and social media accounts.

More information can be found on the [Outreach and Engagement Best Practices](#) and [HAA Broadcast Email Service](#) documents.

Reunion Program Committees

Roles and Responsibilities

Programming Subcommittee(s)

These volunteers are charged with developing the programming.

Key responsibilities include:

- Create customized programming based on class interests and age group, to include class survey, Glimpses, TED-style talks, panels, social gatherings, and presentations.
- Ensure panels align with overall reunion planning and recruit panelists with distinct stories.
- Utilize the Class Report to identify themes emphasized by classmates.
- Guide panelists in shaping ideas, panel direction, and event format.

Volunteers can decide to focus their efforts on specific events, or broadly on different categories of events and initiatives, including, as examples, **(1) class survey**, **(2) virtual programming**, **(3) regional in-person programming**, and **(4) the campus-based programming**. Committees can decide if this work should be managed in four separate subcommittees by topic, or all together as a group.

More information can be found on the separate Virtual Events Overview and Best Practices, Pre-Reunion Events Overview and Best Practices, Class Surveys, and In-Person Events Overview and Best Practices documents.

Memorial Service Subcommittee

These volunteers will organize the Memorial Service program, which may include the integration of music, readings, and participation from both the class and clergy. Typically, 5th—20th reunion classes hold their service in a smaller space on campus. Beginning with the 25th Reunion, the service is held in Memorial Church, and the program will involve more logistical pieces. The planner(s) will work directly with the HAA staff liaison on all details related to the service, and not with the church staff.

More information can be found on the separate Memorial Services Best Practices document.

Merchandise and Favors Subcommittee

Some reunion committees might choose to offer a merchandise item (“favor”) to classmates who attend the on-campus programming. Committees also have the alternative or additional option of offering an online on-demand merchandise stores to classmates throughout the year.

Management of merchandise and favors may only need to be managed by the Chairs and the Reunion Treasurer in partnership with the HAA staff liaison, but there might be the opportunity for other volunteers to play a role.

More information can be found on the separate Merchandise and Favors document.

Outreach and Engagement

Best Practices for Reunions

Communications Overview

Consider starting a word of mouth or class-wide networking campaign to reconnect:

- Encourage classmates to check and update their alumni profile and contact information at community.alumni.harvard.edu/person
 - It's especially important for reunion committee members to keep their information updated so classmates can easily reach them
 - Please prioritize contacting classmates who have not attended previous reunions or stayed in touch with the class.

Class-Wide Emails: Overview

- Many of the class emails sent in your reunion year, whether they be about the reunion committee, class events, or the Class Report, will (or can) be sent through Harvard's broadcast email system. Your HAA staff liaison will work with you as 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, you can continue to use these platforms for emails in lieu of Harvard's email system for some messages, and you can work with your staff liaison to determine an approach that will work best.
- We suggest communicating with your classmates monthly, though the frequency of your class-wide communication will naturally increase as important events and deadlines approach.
- We have found that email is an effective outreach strategy, however we recognize that alumni are inundated with email, so we aim to be strategic in the use of email throughout the year.

Class-Wide Emails: Guidelines

- The separate HAA Broadcast Email Service document (which can be found here: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=210>) has more information the email template and the information needed in order to send the email
- If you would like to send emails to your class, we ask that you provide us with the final text **4 business days** before you would like the email to be sent at the latest (more advance notice is fine too!) as the process of creating and sending a broadcast email includes more steps than sending an email through a personal email client like Gmail
- After you share your final approved text with your HAA staff liaison at least 4 business days prior to your preferred send date, they will then share this with colleagues who will build, test, and proofread the email, ensure the text and format are accessible, and check the broader Harvard email calendar to confirm the best send time to avoid conflicting with other emails that your classmates might receive

Outreach and Engagement

Best Practices for Reunions

around the same time. Given the steps involved, the HAA is unfortunately not able to send emails with fewer than four days' notice. If more time is needed to finalize the text, the send date can be adjusted.

Class-Wide Emails: Other Communications

In addition to the emails about your class programming sent out in collaboration with your HAA staff liaison, as well as the Class Report emails sent out by the Class Report Office and your Class Report Chair, the HAA's Engagement Marketing Team (in partnership with the College Alumni Programs office) will send out multiple communications including:

- Virtual events taking place throughout the year for all reunion classes featuring Harvard administrators and faculty.
- Marketing emails for your on-campus programming, including registration launch, targeted reminders, reminders ahead of deadlines (pricing changes from early bird to standard to on-site, housing, childcare, refunds) and other key messages. These messages will generally look the same across all reunion classes, with the exception of the specific year, dates, and links for your class. Once a classmate has registered, they will no longer receive registration reminder emails, but will still receive general update emails, including a series of emails with important information in the days before the reunion.
- Reminders to classmates about needing their HarvardKey (their username and password). Harvard staff are available to support with HarvardKey assistance by phone or email. Please note that following a password reset, it may take up to 24 hours until one is able to log back in with their new password.
- Invites to all widows and widowers of classmates to attend the reunion
- A call for authors from the reunion classes to share their books to be featured at the Harvard COOP
- Information about Harvard Alumni Day
- Information about off-campus hotels
- Information about accessibility accommodations and resources.

Class volunteers will not be part of the drafting and review process for these emails, but your staff liaison will ensure class leaders have the needed information and that class-specific emails are scheduled with these other emails in mind.

Peer-to-Peer Outreach and Lost Classmates

Class-wide emails are a supplement to the peer-to-peer outreach that remains the most effective way to engage with your classmates. Classes who have implemented successful outreach programs quite often see a direct correlation in reunion participation. This personal touch is often the reason classmates decide to participate.

Updating your Alumni profile:

In the five years since your last reunion, 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.

Outreach and Engagement

Best Practices for Reunions

“Lost” Alumni:

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. Similarly, there might also be classmate for whom the HAA has no active email address. A list of these “Lost” classmates 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.

Opting out of Harvard Communications:

We understand that classmates might not want to receive all types of communications from Harvard, but if they want to participate in class events like reunions and receive the Class Report, it’s important that they ensure their HAA Alumni Directory profile has their accurate email and mailing address, and that they are subscribed to emails. If classmates would like to opt-out of any other types of communications, they can do that through the Email Preferences menu in the Directory. There are now many options for different types of emails, allowing alumni to specify as desired. There may be cases where classmates have unsubscribed from HAA messages in the past, not knowing that this would prevent them from receiving emails about reunion and the Class Report. Your staff liaison will be able to assist any classmates who think they are missing out on communications or who need assistance with updating their email preferences.

Classmate Outreach Efforts from the HAA

As a change since your last reunion, the College Alumni Programs team will work with the HAA Engagement Marketing team over the summer to strategically begin outreach across all reunion classes to ensure that we have email addresses and mailing addresses on file, as well as ensuring that classmates are subscribed to email. Through a “**resubscribe campaign**,” we will reach out to unsubscribed classmates through an email account separate from our broadcast email platform, to let them know how they can resubscribe for reunion and Class Report communications, if they want to. This overall process will ensure that the class list is as updated as possible before the work of the reunion committee kicks off. Of course, there might still be gaps, and we look to partner with members of the committee to help with that additional outreach.

Websites

The HAA managed Harvard- Radcliffe Reunions website:

The HAA will build and update a reunion-specific website at <https://alumni.harvard.edu/reunions/register> that will include general updates and information about your reunion as well as a registration form for the June in-person events once launched. This website will also include information about the virtual events taking place throughout the year for all reunion classes featuring Harvard administrators and faculty, as well as information relevant to all classes for the June in-person events (housing, parking, headquarters, etc.).

This website should supplement rather than replace your own class website. For classes with a distinct class website, we recommend including a link to the HAA Reunions website somewhere that is easy to find on your own website. For classes without a separate website (and/or volunteer to manage the separate website) the HAA website provides a central place to find reunion information.

Outreach and Engagement

Best Practices for Reunions

Class managed websites:

For those classes who use a classes.harvard.edu website instead of a third-party website, the training resources can be found on the College Alumni Programs Officers Lounge volunteer resources website (which can be found here: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=206>), if the assigned volunteers need a refresher on how to update the content of pages. These class websites are intended to provide simplistic management functions for volunteers like webmasters and secretaries. Some classes may wish to use a different website platform that offers additional functionality, and we encourage classes to use whatever platform best works for them!

*Please note that if you add any photos of the Harvard campus (or any photos in general) to your class website (or other digital platforms) they should be photos taken by you or fellow classmates/volunteers, or provided by HAA staff, and not images you find on the internet. Copyright-related companies now use software to scan the internet to find any of their photos. You could risk being found liable for copyright infringement if any image you use is copyright-protected and could be subject to significant fines that the class treasury would be responsible for covering.

Social Media

The HAA encourages classes to use whatever social media platforms volunteers and classmates are comfortable using. Social media can be an effective tool to allow classmates to connect and converse but note that the HAA does not require classes to create or maintain social media accounts. Any social media accounts will need to be managed by volunteers from the class; your HAA staff liaison will not be able to post on your behalf, join your groups, or serve as a mediator.

The HAA's virtual engagement toolkit for volunteers (which can be found here: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/virtual-engagement-toolkit>) has information on class social media accounts, as well as social media best practices and guidance like how to recruit volunteer administrators, how to develop a social media engagement strategy, how to establish group guidelines, how to build a system to approve or decline posts, how to manage inappropriate comments and other feedback, how to promote your accounts, and how to keep your audience engaged (which can be found here: <https://alumni.harvard.edu/virtual-engagement-toolkit/social-media-for-volunteers/best-practices>).

Your staff liaison won't manage your accounts but will be happy to discuss your engagement strategy.

Postcards and Mailings

- In order to share information with classmates unreachable by email, a postcard or paper mailing is a good option. Your HAA liaison can price out options to help you decide if you should send a mailing to the full class, or to just those without email addresses.
- The HAA will also produce and send save-the-date postcards to all alumni in a reunion at the beginning of the fall
- For the 55th Reunion and above, a paper mailing will be sent from the HAA to all classmates with a mailing address on file to accompany your registration launch, directing them to call our office or register online. This will allow classmates who might not use their email, or who prefer to register for events via the phone the opportunity to register in advance. Physical mailing costs are built into your reunion budget as part of the flat registration fee.

Outreach and Engagement

Best Practices for Reunions

Custom Class Logos

If you do not already have one and wish to create a class logo, or a reunion year-specific class logo (this is entirely optional!) to use on your class website, social media accounts, or other locations, please discuss with your HAA staff liaison before you begin designing. If your logo has certain Harvard-related elements, it will need to be approved by the Harvard Trademark office before being used, so your staff liaison can help talk through what design might be best before you begin working on it. Once your logo is finalized, please share it with your staff liaison who will share it with Harvard Trademark for review. This process takes roughly four weeks on average. Once your staff liaison confirms it is all set, you will be able to use it on your digital accounts and other locations.

Text Messaging Program

One of our most popular services during Reunions is our text messaging program. Your HAA liaison will work with HAA Engagement Marketing colleagues to turn your final in-person schedule of events into short texts. Registrants who opt-in will receive text alerts and reminders with timing and locations before events. Text messages will also provide real-time updates in case of inclement weather or other unexpected program changes. Volunteers will not have to play a role in the creation or deployment of the texts. Some reunion classes might also have the opportunity to receive text reminders about registration and key deadlines.

HAA Broadcast Email Service

The College Alumni Programs Office (CAP) of the Harvard Alumni Association offers alumni broadcast email services to classes and student organizations. This document outlines the information CAP needs in order to create and send your email and the guidelines that govern the process.

Key Takeaways

- Expect at least a **4-business day turnaround time for reunion emails and two weeks for non-reunion emails** from when you request an email send to when it's sent out.
- Ensure your email serves a distinct purpose for your audience with no more than **one to two clear calls to action**.
- Email content should always be **concise, scannable, accessible, and properly edited**.

Benefits of HAA Email Marketing

Unlike personal email services (which limit the number of recipients you can email at once and put your email at greater risk to be classified as spam), the HAA can send a message to hundreds of alumni at once. Your email will be delivered in a way that prevents the recipients from seeing who else has received the same email, keeping email information private and avoiding 'reply-all' mistakes.

Getting Started and Value Proposition

Your first step should be to ask and answer the following questions:

- What is the email purpose and value proposition?
- What do you want readers to know and what action should they take?
- Who is your audience?
- What is your timeline?
- How many emails are you sending?

By determining a value proposition prior to generating your content, you will be well positioned to keep the email clear, concise, and appealing. You may also identify that an email isn't the right path forward depending on your goals. Save email communications for when they are to be the most impactful.

Audience

By identifying your audience in advance, you can determine ways to personalize email content to optimize engagement. Knowing your audience and catering to their needs will increase open rates and engagement. If it is unclear why a recipient is receiving an email, then you risk losing your ability to engage them in the future.

When people do not engage with emails or receive too many that are not of interest, it can cause a spam tag or unsubscribe to occur. When this happens, it not only opts the individual out from seeing our communications, but it also leaves a possible inability to reach that person's inbox in the future. Being strategic about what hits inboxes when will help keep our audience engaged in the long term.

HAA Broadcast Email Service

Timeline

The process of creating, testing, and proofreading your email takes time. Please make sure that content of your email is finalized before sending it to CAP. If you are in a non-reunion year, we ask that you reach out to us at least two weeks before you would like your email sent. If you are in a reunion year, we need four business days from the time we receive your finalized content to the time we can send to your classmates. Once the required information is received, CAP will build your email.

Content and Required Information

Content should be personal, meaningful, and accessible. It should be easy to engage with and scannable. Most importantly, you want to limit your number of calls to action to one or two. **The HAA has found that best performing emails are short, concise, and have one clear call to action.** Another consideration when it comes to content is the subject line, pre-header, and sender profile. The combination of these is what will entice recipients to open your email. Some quick pro-tips:

Sender profile

- Only use one name
- The more identifiable, the better
- Vary your senders

Subject line

- Keep it concise
- Works with the email content
- Deliver on its promise
- No longer than 25 to 30 characters

Pre-header

- Should complement your subject line
- Use it to tease additional information
- Keep under 100 characters

We'll need this information from you. See the sample emails on the following pages for reference.

- **Recipients:** The population you'd like to receive the email
- **Sender Profile:** The sender(s) of the email (e.g. Harvard College Class of '76, Sharon Smith AB '98).
- **Reply-to Email Address:** A personal email address or a class or group email address.
- **Subject Line:** The subject line. Should be 50 characters or fewer.
- **Pre-header:** This short line appears at the very top of the email and in the preview section on a mobile device; if the subject line is the email's title, think of the pre-header as the subtitle.
- **Header:** This optional line appears at the top of the email body before the salutation or image.
- **Salutation and To:** how you wish to address your recipients (e.g. Dear Tom, Hello Classmates)
- **Text:** The body of the email.

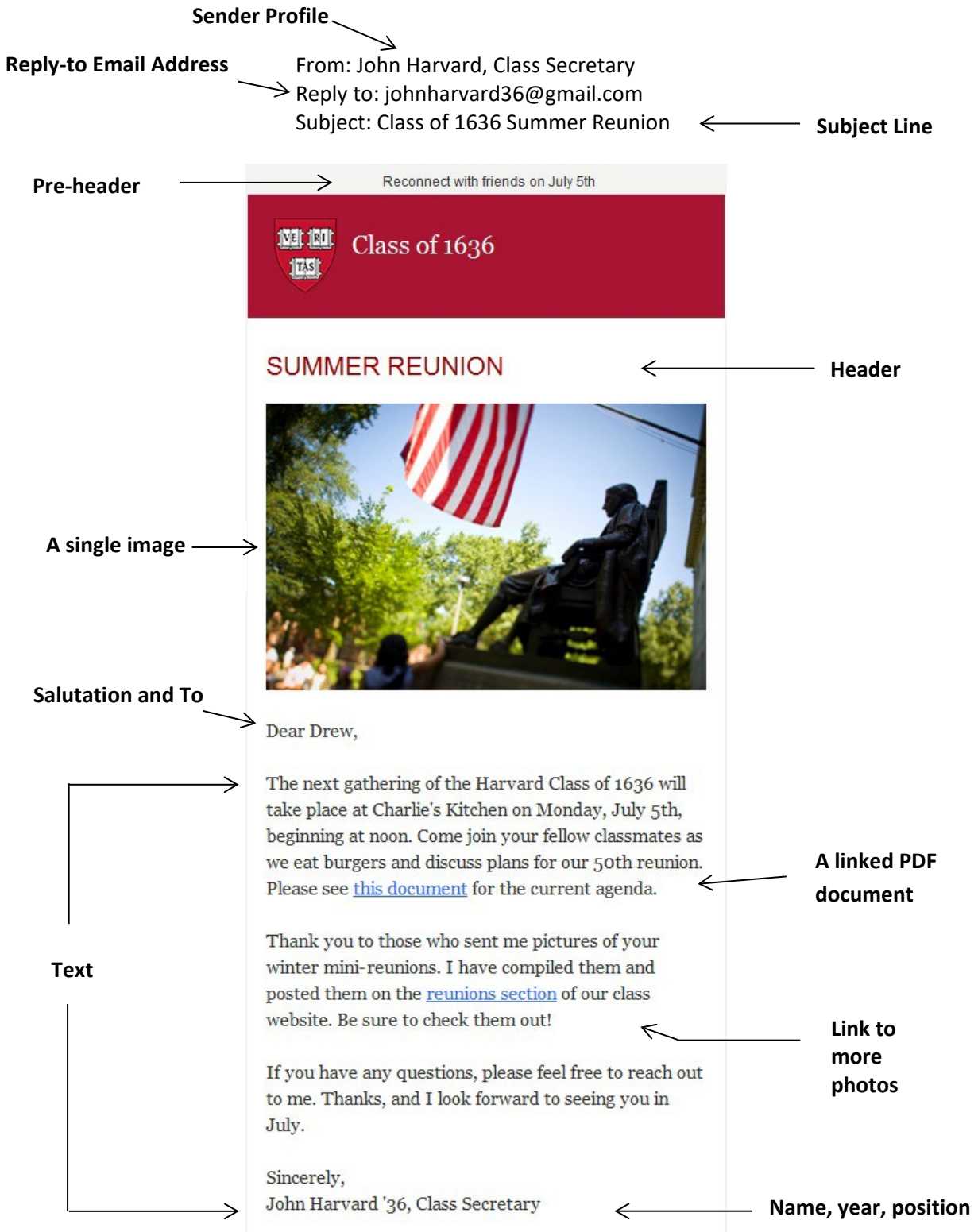
The HAA reserves the right to reject email content in accordance with University policies and best practices.

Number of Emails

Depending on your overall goals, you may be thinking about sending more than one email. Thinking through the number of sends and their cadence in advance will help you stay organized and communicate efficiently. Below is an example the number of sends the HAA typically suggests for individual class-based events.

1. General invite
2. Reminder
3. Confirmation

HAA Broadcast Email Service



HAA Broadcast Email Service

Reunion Email Example

From: 2001 20th Reunion Committee
Reply to: 20threunion_haa@harvard.edu
Subject: Share a greeting for our 20th Reunion!

[View this email in your browser.](#)



Hi Anthony,

← Reunion year banner

We are making a class video montage for the Harvard '01 virtual 20th Reunion June 4–6 and need your help. Please add your own short video below (it's quick and easy) through the platform VidHug and you'll be part of this memorable effort.

SHARE YOUR VIDEO

← A "call to action" button with a link

Options include: a shout out to your blocking group or sports team, an introduction of your family, or just a quick hello to let us all know what you're up to. Of course, this can also be a time to spotlight your talent like a video of you reading from your latest novel or children's story, a shot of you preparing for your next triathlon, or a video of you in action at work. The sky's the limit!

So we can include more classmates, please try to keep the video under two minutes if you can! **The deadline is June 2, 2021.**

← Using bold to note a deadline

I look forward to seeing your videos and to celebrating with all of you online soon.

Cheers,

Kevin El-Hayek '01

General Rules of Thumb

To close out, email communications are strategic platforms for communicating information to large groups of people. However, there are a lot of factors that can contribute to the success of an email campaign. Here are some simple rules to always keep top of mind. Emails should:

- ✓ Be recipient-focused
- ✓ Be relevant
- ✓ Include one or two calls to action
- ✓ Be accessible and easily scannable
- ✓ Be easy to engage with
- ✓ Deliver what you promise
- ✓ Be planned ahead for contact frequency
- ✓ Be a shared resource and an asset to be preserved

External Email Client Best Practices

The College Alumni Programs Office of the Harvard Alumni Association encourages Class Secretaries to use an email client that works best for them in order to regularly communicate with their classmates. If using a third-party broadcast email client (such as Mailchimp) instead of sending class-wide emails out through the HAA's broadcast email system or a classes.harvard.edu website, please consider these best practices:

- Request a new class list from your HAA staff liaison annually. This will be shared by a secure download link over email. Please save this locally on your computer (i.e. not in a Google Sheet, cloud storage, or shared with others).
- If you hear from anyone who wants to be added to your class list or from those who want to be taken off because they affiliate with a different class, please let your HAA staff liaison know, and they can make the edits on their end too. Similarly, if your HAA liaison hears from anyone about these points, they'll let you know so you can make the updates on your end. If these changes result in an alum needing to be removed or added to a different class list, the HAA staff liaison will follow up with the appropriate Class Secretary.
- If anyone reaches out to you with any updates to their contact preferences, please ask them to also update their preferences in their profile at community.alumni.harvard.edu or by emailing hac_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu (since you updating their preferences in your email system won't result in a change on Harvard's end unless they take this action).
- Create a test list that includes the rest of the leadership of the Class Committee, and any relevant staff members. Share with this group what your preferred plan is for them to give feedback on the tests (whether you will send them a reminder note after every test asking for feedback, or if they should just plan to send you feedback whenever they receive a test message).
- Once the test has been reviewed and finalized by the necessary people, share a preview of it with your wider Class Committee just for their awareness before it goes out to the class (so they can be ready for any questions they might receive from classmates).
- Ensure any relevant HAA or HCF staff members are included on your class list so they can also receive your emails and see what your class is up to!
- If email replies are going to a Class Committee email account you created instead of your own personal email account, be sure to check it frequently, especially after an email is sent or as you approach any key dates or deadlines mentioned in your message.
- Reminder emails are often very helpful! Plan to market each of your events/action items at least twice. Consider if a final additional reminder is needed depending on the prior cadence of email sends, the current response, and the date of the event/deadline for the task.
- Personal email accounts should never be used to email your entire class (only broadcast email clients should be used). If you will use your personal email (or a Class Committee email account

External Email Client Best Practices

you created) to message smaller groups of classmates, please be sure to put them on the BCC line so their names and emails aren't revealed to each other. An exception would be if this is about something they have specifically opted into and have given permission for their information to be shared within that group.

- If your email client provides analytics about the email send (open rates, clicks, etc.) it might be helpful to review the data regularly to see how your emails perform. Based on that, you might find a send date and time that works best for your class, or a preferred type of subject line.
- Based on the preferences of your classmates, or any analytics on your email sends, you can decide if multi-topic digest-style emails might work best, or if you should send (possibly with more frequency) emails with a single call-to-action.

Pre-Reunion Events

Overview and Best Practices

Pre-Reunion Events Roadmap

In addition to the reunion programming on the Harvard campus in the spring (as well as the virtual programs for all reunion classes planned by the Harvard Alumni Association), reunion committees may also choose to organize pre-reunion events that can either be held virtually or in-person regionally. The key to a successful pre-reunion event is someone (or a small group) willing to take the lead on planning the event. There are many great ideas for both virtual and in-person events, but both models require willing stewards.

Questions to Consider Before Planning

The biggest question is format: Will this be in-person or virtual?

In-person

- Who will host/plan the event?
- Where and when will it take place?
- What costs need to be taken into account? (*Please note, there is no budget for in-person pre-reunion events unless specifically discussed with the committee)
- What will the invite pool be? Is it just classmates or are partners/families invited?
- How will the event details be communicated to these classmates?

Virtual

- Who will host/plan the event?
- When will it take place?
- What kind of event is this? Will it be a panel/talk/social?
- What costs (if any) need to be taken into account? (*Please note, there is no budget for virtual pre-reunion events unless specifically discussed with the committee)
- What details need to be communicated to the class?

Things To Keep in Mind

Some classes choose to plan their entire schedule of pre-reunion events at the beginning of the year, while others plan as an idea arises. Either approach can work as long as there are volunteers within the class who will own the events.

Programming ideas for in-person events may include:

- Happy hours
- Harvard games or watch parties
- Community service projects
- Speaker events
- Book clubs
- Forming a team for a local sport league
- Community or professional theater performances or games
- Outdoor excursions such as hiking, picnicking, or visiting a nearby historic town

Pre-Reunion Events

Overview and Best Practices

Be mindful of financial inclusivity. In-person regional events should be no-cost/low-cost, although some events might require classmates to pay a small amount (i.e., buying their own food or drink at a restaurant or bar gathering or buying a ticket to an event). Be sure to market that an event requires such payment when sending class communications. It is not an expectation that the volunteer has to spend any money to hold an event; you are really just the organizer to convene everyone.

As noted above, neither the Harvard Alumni Association nor the Harvard College Fund provide a budget for virtual or in-person, class-specific pre-reunion events. If you anticipate needing to pay for a service as part of a pre-reunion event, this needs to be discussed with the Reunion Committee Chairs and your College Alumni Programs staff liaison as the budget is being built. Please note the College Alumni Programs team is not resourced to take payments for pre-reunion events.

How the CAP Team Can Help

The College Alumni Programs team – and your Reunions & Classes staff liaison specifically – can help with the following:

- Sharing lists of classmates in a particular region for in-person events. This can help inform where it might make sense to hold an in-person event, alongside the interest of the volunteer organizers.
- Sending monthly class-wide emails highlighting upcoming pre-reunion events.
- With the permission of the Reunion Program Chairs and the Class Secretary, can share email lists for regional classmates with event hosts so they can send out additional, targeted email invites to local classmates, in addition to the class-wide communications sharing all events regardless of location. Event hosts will first need to sign a volunteer confidentiality agreement form, if they have not already, before receiving a list of email addresses.
- Providing limited Zoom support if needed, but ideally planners will leverage the Zoom licenses the HAA has available for classes in a reunion year, or volunteers will use a personal Zoom account (or a platform of their choosing).

Please note that the College Alumni Programs team is not resourced to help with the following pieces:

- Coordinating logistics or content for any pre-reunion events (virtual or in-person).
- Managing event RSVPs and registration forms. Volunteers are encouraged to use a system that works best for them to quickly have access to the information they need. Past processes by volunteers have included using a Google Form or equivalent for sign-ups or asking registrants to email them.

For more information about virtual event best practices, see the Virtual Events Overview and Best Practices document.

Reunion Virtual Events

Overview and Best Practices

Virtual Events Overview

A year-long approach to class engagement allows for a reunion experience to be inclusive, flexible, and adaptive. Virtual events give you the ability to gather your classmates for discussions in response to current events, and at no financial cost to your class or individual classmates.

The appetite for virtual programming during your reunion year will vary by class. The HAA does not require reunion classes to organize class-specific virtual reunion programming, but it is available as an option as desired by the class and volunteers. Faculty and administrator programming for all reunion classes organized by the HAA will still be available as a virtual program option for your classmates.

Without the constraints of time and space limitations imposed by in-person gatherings, reunion leaders are encouraged to design a schedule of virtual programs and activities that would be most attractive and engaging for classmates. No matter when you hold your programming, you have the opportunity to make it more accessible and inclusive.

- Be deliberate about how you schedule programming to limit drop-off and screen fatigue. Have fun with your formats, topics, and formality. Prioritize interactivity.
- In addition to real-time events, consider asynchronous activities in which classmates can participate on their own schedule. Examples of such activities include posting on social media accounts or Facebook groups, sharing food or drink recipes, short reflective writing activities, athletic challenges, watching videos online, or participating in wellness activities.
- You might also organize class gatherings or discussions following the virtual programs that the HAA is planning for all reunion classes (either immediately after each session, or sometime shortly after). This can be a great way to engage your classmates around these topics, with the benefit being that you don't have to plan a lot of content for this event.

Please refer to the [HAA's virtual engagement toolkit for volunteers](#) for more details in addition to the information listed below.

Virtual Reunion Events Best Practices

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Harvard University is committed to fostering a campus culture where everyone can thrive, a key to which is ensuring that we each experience a profound sense of inclusion and belonging. Your leadership and featured speakers should be reflective of your class community, and language used in the class surveys, emails, and other materials should be reviewed for inclusivity.
- **Time zones:** Your HAA staff liaison can provide you with a class overview to determine where your classmates are located throughout the world. As you develop programming, mix up the day and timing of offerings to allow for more participation across time zones.

Reunion Virtual Events

Overview and Best Practices

- **Sharing Zoom/platform links:** For real-time events, share the Zoom (or alternative platform) event link with participants and invitees at least two days in advance to prevent last-minute confusion and requests for help (or if it will be sent closer to the event, be sure to note that in a communication).
- **Recording and Sharing Video:** Record content-rich sessions to share with classmates unable to attend the event (note: you must receive advance permission to record from featured speakers and/or participants). Reunion Committee members will be responsible for determining where to host the videos (and uploading the videos to the platform).
- **No Shows and Attrition:** The HAA has observed a higher rate of no-shows and attendance attrition for virtual programs vs. in-person programs. If your event's numbers drop, please know that this is to be expected and prepare your featured classmates or speakers accordingly. Expect your final event registration numbers to drop by 40 to 50 percent as a general rule.
- **Alcohol:** If you host social programming and include recipes for drinks, consider nonalcoholic options. This is particularly appreciated by those in different time zones, as well as those who don't drink.

Virtual Event Platforms

The HAA College Alumni Programs team recommends using Zoom for your virtual programs. Zoom is accessible and inclusive for your classmates in the following ways:

- **Captioning and transcribing:** Zoom offers automated captions that are largely accurate.
- **Recordings:** Capturing and sharing Zoom recordings is a straightforward process that allows content to be shared quickly and easily with class members who cannot attend in real time.
- Please visit the [Zoom Resources page](#) of the College Alumni Programs Officers Lounge volunteer resources website for additional assistance. Your HAA staff liaison also has extensive experience using Zoom and can assist with your events or help train volunteers on the features of Zoom.

Faculty Outreach

The HAA organizes faculty and administrator programming for reunion classes throughout the reunion year, so we encourage reunion committees to create classmate-focused content for their class-specific virtual events. However, if your class would like to invite Harvard faculty to be part of a speaking event or a panel, please be in touch with your HAA staff liaison as soon as possible to determine the best way to move forward with an ask. They will then connect with a team in the HAA that manages event invitations to faculty who can advise on the best way to make the ask or offer additional/alternative names depending on the event.

Reunion Virtual Events

Overview and Best Practices

Norms for Virtual Events

Some classes find it helpful to set a positive tone for classmate discussion. Below are some draft norms for your edit or inclusion as you deem useful. At the start of your session, you may want to review norms, post on screens (if applicable), or ask participants to share any additions.

- Listen actively – seek to understand not respond; respect others when they are talking.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability – our community depends on the inclusion of every individual voice. And give space for others to speak.
- Embrace discomfort – be open to vulnerability and willing to challenge yourself to participate beyond your comfort level. When needed, step out of the room (or mute video) and rejoin when you are ready.
- Expect and accept non-closure – these are deep, challenging, and highly nuanced issues and this is an ongoing dialog. We can decide on meaningful actions, but we may not resolve everything (or maybe anything).
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you"). Share your own story as you are willing.
- Be open, curious, and respectful – invite and consider new ideas and perspectives.
- Focus on ideas – do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions.
- Assume positive intent – but honor the learning opportunity and own the impact of the words we use.
- Keep confidence – take actions, lessons learned, and continuing conversations forward without compromising the confidentiality of participants' identities, experiences, or viewpoints.

Social Mixers

- Gather classmates together informally and assign breakout rooms to chat.
- This format most closely mimics the experience of walking through a tent at reunions.
- Breakout rooms can be randomly assigned in groups for time limited cycles or set up as self-selecting to allow class participants to choose their smaller group discussions and move between different breakout groups. Offer discussion topics in the chat to get the conversation started.
- Option to host game night/trivia nights in this format.

House Events

- Gather classmates together informally to celebrate House-based traditions, such as Lowell House Tea, stein nights, or a new take on your House formals.
- If the event is for one single House, all participants can be in one large "room." Depending on the size of the group, you might decide to go to breakouts at some point.
- If hosting a multi-House event, consider having everyone together for the start and then have breakouts by House.
- If holding a multi-House event (perhaps by House neighborhood), consider how attendees can represent House affiliation/spirit by wearing House attire, using custom Zoom backgrounds, and changing Zoom display names to include House.

Reunion Virtual Events

Overview and Best Practices

Affinity Group Meet-Ups

- Gather classmates together informally to celebrate affinity groups. This might include career and professional interests, ethnicity and identity groups, hobbies, student organizations, or other groups that might be of interest to your class.
- If the event is for one single group, all participants can be in one large “room.” Depending on the size of the group, you might decide to go to breakouts at some point.
- If hosting a multi-group event, consider having everyone together for the start and then have breakouts by group.

Alumni Panels/Speakers/Glimpses/TED-style Talks

- This format most closely mimics the experience of a traditional session at reunions. Glimpses are short, personal talks by classmates about their lives (3-5 minutes each).
- The virtual setting allows for more classmates to participate as speakers.

Roundtable Discussions

- This format most closely mimics the experience of a “dining hall” conversation at reunions and creates the opportunity for reflection and discussion of topical issues.
- This is a great format to host alumni discussion around timely topics, encourage reflection, or illuminate new connections (such as caring for aging parents, career changes, etc.).
- If hosting one topic, keep all participants in one large “room” depending on the number of attendees.
- If hosting a multi-topic event, assign breakout rooms.

Virtual Book Clubs

- Many classes have published writers. Consider establishing a virtual book club series or standalone event to discuss their works.
- If possible, invite the classmate (writer) to join the book club and/or speak to the group as a capstone discussion upon completion of the book/work.

Reunion Class Surveys

Overview and Best Practices

Class Surveys Overview

Many classes conduct a class survey in their reunion year and share the results during a virtual event or during in-person programming in June. The survey can be a good way to get the pulse of the class. If you plan to present your survey results at an event, we recommend keeping it light and fun.

Much like with publicizing class events, you'll want to ensure that you have plenty of time to build your survey, market it to the class, obtain the results, analyze the results, create the presentation, and plan the event to present it to the class. With this in mind, be sure to let your HAA staff liaison know if you would like to do a class survey as early as possible. Since class surveys can take some time for your classmates to fill out, and since you want high participation, it's important to be mindful of when the class survey is marketed vis-a-vis other major communications (such as the Class Report deadline and the registration for June in-person programming). In addition to email marketing, social media marketing and peer-to-peer outreach will be helpful here.

More information about this work can be found on the separate Outreach and Engagement Best Practices and HAA Broadcast Email Service documents.

Class Surveys Best Practices

- To maximize class control of survey questions and compiling results, class leaders are encouraged to host their survey on an independent platform with which they are comfortable. Classes have successfully used Google Forms and SurveyMonkey to host their surveys.
- Every class is different and no one knows the tone of a class better than its own leaders. Whether your class is looking to hear about the interesting, timely, poignant, heart-warming, or funny interpretation of the results, it's up to you to find and highlight those moments from within the data.
- Please keep in mind that the class survey and presentation should be inclusive and representative of your class. The HAA can help you in identifying resources or suggesting inclusive language for your survey.
- It is common for a class to delegate the management of a survey to at least two classmates: A person (or groups) who crafts the survey, collects, and analyzes the data, and a second person (or group) who reviews the data, finds the points of interest, and presents to the class. Ultimately, committees can decide what works best for them.

Your HAA staff liaison can help by providing you with samples of previous class surveys and sending class communications.

Disclaimer Language

Please include the following language as the header to any class demographic surveys:

"This survey has been developed by members of your class for your class's use alone. The views and questions expressed in this survey are that of your classmates and do not represent those of Harvard University. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous."

Reunion Class Surveys Overview and Best Practices

Approach for Presentation of Results

A class survey results presentation can work well in both a virtual setting and an in-person one, giving classes flexibility depending on the plans for other events and what might work best for each specific class.

For a virtual presentation, a Zoom webinar or a meeting are both appropriate formats. Alternatively, classes may opt to use the presentation of the survey results as one of the events for their May/June in-person programming.

Presentation of the results through an event is optional, and classes are also welcome to share summary information by email or on their class website.

More information about this work can be found on the separate Virtual Events Overview and Best Practices and In-Person Events Overview and Best Practices documents.

Reunion Merchandise and Favors Overview

Merchandise and Favors Overview

Some reunion committees might choose to offer a favor (a merchandise item) to classmates who attend the in-person campus programming. Please note this is completely optional. Committees also have the alternative or additional option of working with the HAA staff liaison and campus partners to offer online on-demand merchandise stores to classmates throughout the year. Management of merchandise and favors may only need to be managed by the Chairs and the Reunion Treasurer in partnership with the HAA staff liaison, but there might be the opportunity for other volunteers to play a role depending on interest from committee members. Having at least two volunteers involved in this process can help to move things forward as key deadlines approach.

Reunion Favors

Reunion favors are a great way to provide your class with a memento of the reunion year. For reunion committees that choose to offer a favor to their class, they have usually offered these to registrants of the in-person campus programming and offered these to the alumni only (not their guests). The cost for the items is built into the flat registration fee that all in-person registrants will pay, so the classmates are indirectly paying for the item when they register.

You can select an item as a reunion favor through either the Harvard COOP or Harvard Student Agencies (HSA). Your HAA staff liaison can connect you with contacts at both vendors so you can explore options with them and ultimately make a product selection from one vendor. Please be sure to copy your staff liaison on all communications with the vendors so they can be in the loop and assist as needed.

Recent classes have also foregone the favor in order to lower overall registration costs, or selected a COOP Gift Card which enables classmates to select their own class merchandise. We strongly advise against choosing size-based apparel (like a jacket, t-shirt, sweatshirt, or vest) as a reunion favor. One-size-fits-all items are best for favors (i.e., hats, mugs, glasses, water bottles, etc.). Your HAA staff liaison can help you determine what might work best given your interests.

You can customize your reunion favor with a class logo. See the Logo Approval section below for more information.

Merchandise Stores

To create a sense of engagement and excitement around your reunion year, consider offering an online store featuring class-branded merchandise through Harvard Student Agencies (HSA). Your HAA staff liaison can connect you to an HSA representative directly if you are thinking of pursuing this.

- They can share suggested items based on past stores. Plan for no more than 15 items in your store (stores with just a few items are also fine!).
- They can share what the pricing might be on possible items.
- Some items might require a minimum number of orders for the item to be produced, while some may be able to be produced individually on-demand. The vendors can share which items fall into each category. Aim to avoid items with high minimums.

Reunion Merchandise and Favors Overview

- Be sure to offer items in a range of price points.
- They can create a website where your classmates (and loved ones) can shop and pay for the items (with credit card payment) so you do not need to manage this aspect.
- They will also manage delivery of the items following the orders being placed. Items will be mailed directly to classmates at their home/preferred addresses.
- The process of selecting items, identifying pricing, making design mockups, getting Trademark approval, and launching the website store takes time, so please be in touch with your HAA staff liaison as soon as you are thinking about pursuing a merchandise store.

Note that when reunion classes have offered these stores in the past, it was up to the individual classmates placing orders to pay for their own items (i.e., they were not subsidized or paid for with class treasury funds). This is a recommended approach, but with this in mind, we ask you to be mindful of the pricing of your items vis-a-vis other expected expenses for your classmates in your reunion year, like the registration for your campus programming. It's also recommended to space out the launch of your merchandise store from the launch of your campus programming registration for this reason.

Some reunion committees will choose to use class treasury funds (with the approval of the Chairs and the Class/Reunion Treasurer) to order extra items to be used for raffles/giveaways at virtual and in-person events. Your HAA staff liaison can help you determine the best way to move forward with this if you decide you want to do this. One-size-fits-all items are best for giveaways (i.e., hats, mugs, glasses, water bottles, etc.).

You can customize your store products with a class logo. See the Logo Approval section below for more information.

Logo Approval

You can choose to customize your reunion favor and/or merchandise store products from the COOP and/or HSA with a custom class logo and text. Note that you should have just one logo for the favor and store products (these could be the same, or you could have one for the favor and something different for the store products; HSA is unable to accommodate multiple logos for store products).

If your logo will include one or more of the Harvard College, Radcliffe College, or class-specific shield logos, the shield(s) must also be accompanied by text that either says "Harvard College Class of XXXX," "Harvard-Radcliffe Class of XXXX," or "Harvard and Radcliffe Classes of XXXX" in order to pass review by the Harvard Trademark Office. You may choose to include additional text that states the reunion year (i.e., "50th Reunion").

The logo approval process by the Trademark office can take up to six weeks, accounting for any edits that might be needed, so it is best to start planning this early! Once you finalize your logo design, know what product you'll offer for a favor (and with which vendor), and know what items you'll offer in your merchandise store, your HAA staff liaison can then send all of that information to the Trademark office

Reunion Merchandise and Favors Overview

for review. Their review will be of the logo itself and of its application on your selected products from the COOP and/or HSA.

Timeline for Logos, Favors, and Stores

- By the end of November, your logo(s) should be submitted to your staff liaison to share with Trademark. Allowing for up to six weeks and the University's holiday break, this ensures that the logo is approved by the end of January.
- By the middle of December, your list of store items should be shared with HSA. This will then allow for a month of refining and confirming options. You should also select your reunion favor product on this same timeline.
- HSA will then build the stores in February, with the goal of launching them all on or around March 1.
- Your reunion favor order can be placed by your staff liaison in early February.

Gifts

While not required, some reunion committees or leaders may choose to use class treasury funds (with the approval of the Chairs and the Class/Reunion Treasurer) to offer gifts to key speakers (whether they be classmates or faculty) as a thank you. If you are thinking of doing this, your HAA staff liaison can help you determine what might work best and assist with the purchase, so no one needs to be reimbursed (unless volunteers are planning to do this with their own personal funds). Due to Harvard expense policies, gifts to individuals cannot be more than \$99. If you have a merchandise store and/or favors and have extra items, you may choose to use these as the gifts rather than buying additional items.

More information about this work can be found on the separate Budgeting Process and Best Practices document.

Reunion Memorial Services Overview and Best Practices

Memorial Services Overview

The Memorial Service, honoring deceased classmates, is one of the most treasured events of the reunion experience, and many classes maintain their own traditions regarding program elements. The HAA looks forward to honoring those traditions.

Typically, 5th—20th Reunion classes hold their service in a smaller space on campus. For the 5th and 10th Reunions, the committees can decide if they want to honor all classmates who have passed since they started their time together as students, or only those who have passed away in the past five years. For the 15th and 20th, it is common to honor those who have passed in the past five years since the last reunion. Beginning with the 25th Reunion, the service is held in Memorial Church.

The planner(s) will work directly with the HAA staff liaison on all details related to the service and not with the Church staff. The HAA staff liaison will share all details with their Events colleague, who will coordinate with Church staff on all programming for the service. Once all the details of the service are finalized, the HAA staff liaison will put the planners in contact with clergy, organists, etc. as needed. Your HAA staff liaison will also coordinate any rehearsal requests with the church staff – please do not reach out to the church staff independently.

Your HAA staff liaison will share the time and location of your Memorial Service. The Church requires specific timing between services, so timeslots will be assigned. Your staff liaison will work with you and discuss your class's traditions and goals to determine the best approach depending on your reunion year, your assigned location for the service, and the number of classmates who have passed away. While there are recommended best practices, these programs will ultimately be tailored to the experiences and personalities of your class and of those who have passed away.

While it can be difficult to gather to speak about classmates who have passed away, volunteers and alumni have shared how important these services are to their reunion experience and their class community and appreciate the chance to celebrate the lives of their classmates.

For a more inclusive service, we highly encourage the organizers to find ways to incorporate multiple religious faiths. Classes will select clergy and all musical contributors.

Memorial Service Planning

The volunteers focused on the memorial service will be dedicated to the organization of the Memorial Service program, which may include the integration of music, readings, and participation from both the class and clergy.

Your HAA staff liaison can share a list of classmates who have passed away since your last reunion. It is helpful for class leaders to review this list to ensure it is accurate, as sometimes Harvard is not notified of the death of a classmate. This list can be reviewed up until the service to ensure all are honored.

Reunion Memorial Services

Overview and Best Practices

The lead volunteers will:

- Select classmates to participate in the Memorial Service as service coordinators, ushers, readers, clergy, and musicians (many of these roles are for the 25th and above).
- Select readings and music for program and service
- Create the final copy for the printed memorial program based on the template provided by your HAA staff liaison
- Submit the final copy of the memorial program to the HAA (usually by the start of April) where the content will be proofread, fact-checked (spelling of alumni names, etc.), and placed in layout and design
- Review and approve the final copy of the program before it goes to press

Generally, only the classes beginning with the 25th Reunion will have a formal printed program, so volunteers from the 5th—20th can decide if they want to create an alternative or forgo it (a simple digital-only run of show program or no program at all is completely fine).

Honoring Deceased Classmates

Listing and reading the names of deceased members of the class is central to the memorial program and service starting with the 25th Reunion. Reunions classes through the 20th Reunion can determine the best way to honor their classmates. For the 25th and beyond, the HAA updates a printed program with a current list of deceased classmates, obtained from the Class Report Office and updated just before the print deadline for the program, with asterisks next to the names of those who have been reported deceased in the last five years. The print deadline will likely be at least three weeks prior to the service. If a classmate passes within this time period, they cannot be added to the printed program, but can still be honored during the service verbally.

The class volunteers determine the format for the reading of the names during the service—some classes read the list aloud in its entirety and others read only the names of those who have died in the last five years. At the close of the reading, a solemn silence is observed during which The Memorial Church bell is tolled “in memory of voices that are hushed,” as the inscription on the bell reads.

When Reunions were held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, many classes chose to use a platform called Kudoboard to create a digital memorial board to honor the classmates who have passed away. There is a fee to create a memorial board, but classmates can be invited to post text and images of memories of classmates, and the board can also be downloaded. This is just an option to consider in addition to your in-person memorial service as another way to gather stories and memories from your classmates. If your class would like to pursue this, your HAA staff liaison can advise on next steps.

Leadership and Motivation

Best Practices for Reunion Leaders

Volunteerism at Harvard

One of the most valuable ways in which alumni can be involved with Harvard is through volunteering. Our volunteers are what help shape and sustain our institution. They take great pride and satisfaction in giving back—and we welcome all alumni to join our volunteer community. Volunteering with your reunion program committee can be one of the most memorable and meaningful experiences. Attending your own reunion and encouraging others to do so is also a vital way to ensure that your class stays connected over the years.

As volunteer leaders, you can work with your HAA staff liaison to support the work and enthusiasm of volunteers to set goals, expectations, and norms for how you will all work together and ultimately ensure that everyone is having fun with the work they are doing!

Resources for Reunion Volunteers

Chairs and other reunion committee leaders should be knowledgeable about all informational resources available to reunion volunteers. Many of these can be found on the Reunion Volunteer Resources page of the College Alumni Programs Officers Lounge website (which can be found here: <https://officerslounge.classes.harvard.edu/article.html?aid=233>).

These have been put together based on the experiences of past classes and volunteers, so it's important that volunteers continue to use them to identify what might be missing or what might need to be updated.

A thorough understanding of this information will help you best support your reunion committee, while also ensuring that they are fulfilling their responsibilities and taking advantage of the resources available to them. It's best to always direct volunteers to the copy of the document on the Officers Lounge website instead of sharing the document directly, as it may be updated on the website.

Meeting Norms and Best Practices

Meetings provide a time for us to come together, share updates, and brainstorm ideas. Reunion Committee Chairs, subcommittee leaders, and other ad-hoc leaders should work in partnership to determine when meetings should be held, who should be invited, what should be on the agenda, and what attendees should plan to do before and/or after the meeting. While many of these meetings may include your HAA staff liaison (or another HAA staff member) volunteer leaders should work with their staff liaison to determine what works best. For example, it might make sense for members of a subcommittee to meet on their own if they don't have questions for or need input from the Chairs or staff liaison.

Managing Reunion Committee Members

As mentioned above, a primary leadership role for chairs and other leaders to play includes ensuring that reunion committee members are fulfilling the responsibilities of their role and taking advantage of the resources available to them. There may come a time when you need to approach a member about

Leadership and Motivation

Best Practices for Reunion Leaders

their ability to continue to effectively serve in the role (or they might come to you with similar concerns). This might then lead to a conversation about how you may be able to move forward with them still in the role (such as with help or with pivoting the goals/scope of the work), or if there might need to be a discussion about them stepping down and determining a replacement. Your HAA staff liaison can be a great resource for these conversations.

Psychological Safety and Productive Dialogue

Psychological safety is the belief that someone can freely and comfortably speak their mind. This allows for stronger volunteer communities as well as more productive volunteers who enjoy their work. This can also lead to a culture of more creativity, speaking up, and trying new things. While not every idea may be able to be pursued, there might be ways to get at the heart of what a volunteer is suggesting and empower them to see it through as part of another initiative. Classes are diverse communities, and someone's experience may have not been an experience you were aware of (a "blind spot") and it's important to make sure these experiences are honored not only within the committee, but also within the culture of the class and the reunion programming.

With this in mind, there might be comments or ideas that are not appropriate (or need to be pivoted in another direction while honoring the original intention). It's important to ensure your other volunteers know you hope this group serves as a positive and inclusive place for you to continue to build class community, and that it's important to maintain a fun and psychologically safe space for all members.

Motivating Committee Members

With reunion year programming running across a year, it's important to work with your HAA staff liaison to determine the best way to motivate your committee members depending on their interests in the work (since, again, we all want this to be fun!).

Foster a community where volunteers can be honest about their bandwidth and interests to ensure all volunteers are on the right projects, and you can reassess your goals and scope as needed. Volunteer leaders should also be mindful of the volunteers (whether new or veterans) that are going above and beyond, as they might be potential future leaders of the class (or have interests in other HAA volunteer roles).

As you identify the strengths and interests of committee members, feel free to encourage them to play a role in an event, program, or task where they will be able to make the biggest impact. Look for volunteers that have particular skill sets that match up with your needs. Very importantly, be sure to show appreciation for your fellow volunteers on a regular basis - you are all volunteering your time after all! Regular check-ins, reminders, and honest conversations can help committee members stay motivated and ensure you all meet your goals of creating great programming for your class.

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

Budgeting Overview

The Reunion Committee Chairs and Reunion Treasurer will work with their HAA staff liaison to create a reunion program that is as inclusive and accessible as possible with regard to the cost of events.

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) will host free virtual events for all reunion classes throughout the year. Generally, class-based virtual events are free, but if there are events that incur costs, the Reunion Committee Chairs and Treasurer can choose to use class funds to cover these expenses.

If your class organizes regional in-person gatherings throughout the year, a common approach is for these to be “pay-as-you-go” for the attendees, meaning that there is no fee to set up or attend the event, but if food or drink is available, and they choose to buy it, that would be the responsibility of that individual. There is no budget from the HAA to underwrite or sponsor regional events.

Planning the Reunion Budget

The HAA and Alumni Affairs & Development have developed a budget tool designed to enhance financial transparency for volunteers and reduce risk to the class. All budgets are now finalized and approved by the AA&D Finance team to ensure accuracy. These budgets are prepared at cost and include a small contingency. However, this contingency should not be relied upon for unforeseen expenses after the budget has been finalized.

Before launching the reunion registration form for in-person campus events, the HAA requires written approval of the reunion budget and pricing from the treasurer(s). If any additional items are added to the budget after the initial approval, the treasurer(s) must provide written consent. After the reunion year, if the class has a surplus, the treasurer(s) will receive a check. Conversely, if the class incurs a deficit, the treasurer(s) will need to reimburse the HAA from the class treasury.

Registration Fee Components

As part of the costs of the in-person programming, all alumni will be charged a registration fee. This fee will include up to three components, as outlined below, but will be listed as a singular fee on the registration form.

- **Flat Hospitality Charge:** This is a fixed amount per group to enhance the experience at headquarters. It covers costs such as coffee, water, and reunion supplies.
- **Variable Cost for Class Favor and Printing/Mailing:** This amount will vary based on the cost of your class favor and any printing or mailing expenses the class incurs.
- **Variable Cost for Financial Assistance:** This optional amount will depend on whether the class chooses to add a small charge to create a fund for classmates in need of financial assistance.

Please note that this fee is **non-refundable**, except in extreme circumstances. Making this non-refundable protects class treasuries from financial risk from variable costs based on attendance, especially regarding favors.

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

Who Pays for What?

Harvard subsidizes or underwrites many reunion expenses for all classes. The chart below details expenses subsidized by Harvard and expenses that are the class's responsibility.

University Subsidized Expenses	Class Covered Expenses
Space rentals (designated by HAA)	Space rentals chosen by Class (Harvard Art Museum, off-campus locations, etc.)
Equipment rentals (tents, tables, chairs, etc.)	Catering and alcohol
Facilities and custodial services	Entertainment (DJ, band, etc.)
Staffing and student labor	Flowers and décor
Housing subsidy	AV/Media services for panels/sessions
Children's Program subsidy	Favors
Class photo photographer	Memorial Services custom expenses (organist, minister, A/V, extra attendant for choir rehearsal)
Memorial Service standard expenses (space, first attendant, & admin fee)	Off-campus transportation and parking
Hotel shuttles for post-50 th reunion classes	Class-initiated mailings and custom printing
Campus shuttles and parking	Discretionary expenses (ex. tickets to events, POPS, museum visits, etc.)
Security and safety (EMS)	
Permits/licenses (liquor, entertainment, etc.)	

Making Purchases and Signing Contracts

The HAA staff liaison should be making all approved purchases for the reunion committee (i.e. members should not be making purchases with the intention of being reimbursed). To plan for purchases, the Reunion Committee Chairs and Reunion Treasurer should be in regular communication regarding planned expenses. These steps should be followed for any expenses:

- All contracts must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Harvard Alumni Affairs & Development Finance and Administration team to ensure University compliance. No contract should be signed by a volunteer or under a volunteer's name.
- Goods and services must be procured and approved by a member of the Harvard Alumni Affairs & Development organization to ensure University compliance.
- All expenses must also be approved by the reunion volunteer leaders and treasurer.
- Class members/leaders will not be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Pricing Options

There are two types of pricing options for in-person programming. These are in addition to the flat fee, as applicable.

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

- **Full Package:** For classmates who are planning to attend every in-person reunion event, the full package is a slightly better value than paying for each event individually.
- **A La Carte:** This option is for classmates who are only able to attend select in-person reunion events. Due to the nature of the programming, evening events are more expensive than daytime events.

In addition to the flat fee and programming expenses, classes with the option to live in campus housing will pay a housing fee per night (housing costs are per each person for adults, not per room). This is separate from your reunion budget and does not impact your class funds. That said, it is worth being mindful of these expenses when planning the budget for your class's programming.

Pricing Tiers

There are also typically three tiers of pricing. This encourages classmates to sign up early, which allows your committee and the HAA to better plan for the expected number of attendees and ensure spaces and meals can best accommodate your class. Pricing for each adult guest will be the same as the pricing for classmates.

- **Early Bird Pricing:** For planning purposes, it is most beneficial that your classmates register early. To encourage this, early registrants will receive the most affordable price. Early bird pricing is at cost and an early bird full package is at cost without contingency. Classmates will not pay a price for any event below its cost. Early bird pricing will end by a specific common date, regardless of registration launch date.
- **Standard:** Classmates who register after the early bird window but before the form closes will receive regular pricing, which is more expensive than early-bird pricing (roughly \$20 more per event or group of events on average over early bird pricing) but still a significant discount from walk-in pricing.
- **Onsite:** Inevitably, there will be walk-in attendees to reunion events. While this is a fact of reunions, we are making efforts to limit the number of walk-ins, as they make planning difficult for our catering partners, events teams, and impact staffing needs. Pricing will be roughly \$20 more per event or group of events on average over standard pricing.

Budget Creation Process

Once all the expected expense amounts are known, the reunion leaders will work with the HAA staff liaison and Alumni Affairs & Development Finance to create the budget and pricing before registration launches.

The first phase involves reviewing menus, finalizing program components, and finalizing a budget worksheet with any other quotes. Meals (catering and bar) make up most of the expenses for reunions, so obtaining contracts for all meals will be an essential first step. Your HAA staff liaison will work with the caterer to determine counts that might work best based on an average of past attendance for your class and for that reunion. Once all major contracts and budget items are known, your staff liaison will then work with AA&D Finance to build out the budget.

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

The second phase involves the budget being drafted and approved by Finance. This can take up to two weeks. The team reviews the program components, as detailed in the budget worksheet and historical fixed costs, to create the budget. The Finance team then reviews the budget before setting a pricing model and approving.

The third and final phase is budget approval by the committee. First the Chairs and Treasurer will review the proposed budget and pricing and raise any questions to Finance. Pending this, the Chairs and Treasurer will then approve the budget.

Once the budget is approved, your HAA staff liaison will then begin working with other colleagues in AA&D to build the registration form for your in-person programming. **Once the registration form build is in process (and especially once registration has been launched), it will not be possible to change pricing further.** With that in mind, the reunion committee should avoid making any additional major expenses not captured in the budget planning, unless these are expenses that the treasurer has approved the use of class treasury funds for.

Financial Assistance

Reunion Chairs and the Reunion Treasurer are required to decide how they want to offer financial assistance to classmates to lower the cost in attending the reunion. A pool of funds can be made available for this by charging all classmates a flat fee as part of the registration process and/or allotting a specific amount of class treasury funds, if available. Classes need to make some provision for financial assistance.

To ensure a frictionless and inclusive registration process for those seeking financial assistance, there will be a front-facing promo code for 50% or 100% off registration costs for alumni registrants only. Financial assistance typically does not apply to housing, childcare, or guests. Those needing additional, non-standard assistance can call the College Alumni Programs Office for help. Caregivers and aids can be registered at no cost to alumni by calling the College Alumni Programs Office. If your class has a cap on financial assistance, your staff liaison will monitor the use of financial assistance, and if needed, remove the option for alumni registrants. Additionally, financial assistance cannot be used to cover non-campus housing (hotels, independent arrangements, etc.) or their transportation to, from, and around Cambridge.

Reunion Subsidy Program

Reunion program and fundraising committees are deeply committed to strengthening and supporting their class communities and the financial priorities of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

The goal of establishing a reunion subsidy is to raise spendable funds to offset some or all costs for alumni to register for and attend their **in-person reunions**. Subsidies are intended to promote accessibility and participation for all classmates. Subsidies cannot be used to expand standard reunion programming.

The decision and responsibility of whether to raise a subsidy lies with the class's reunion program planning committee.

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

- Should a class decide to raise a subsidy for the sole or partial purpose of defraying overall reunion costs, all gifts should be received by Harvard by **December 15, 2025**.
- Should a class decide to raise a subsidy only to provide financial aid to classmates, all gifts should be received by Harvard by **January 15, 2026**.

Reunion subsidy contributions are considered gifts to the University and receive tax, class, and University credit. Because they receive tax credit, they are not refundable.

A class-appointed subsidy chair will work in close coordination with their class's Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) and Harvard College Fund (HCF) liaisons, in partnership with the Harvard Alumni Affairs & Development (AA&D) Finance team.

Reunion Subsidy Requirements

- ☐ The class must appoint a subsidy chair
- ☐ The class treasurer must agree to join and transfer funds to the HAA Partnered Treasury Program by December 15, 2025
- ☐ The class must agree to the accounting and reconciliation protocols outlined by Harvard's AA&D Finance team
- ☐ All gifts must be paid full by the appropriate deadline (December 15 or January 15) based on the subsidy's intended use

Reunion Subsidy Chair Responsibilities

The decision and responsibility to launch and execute a reunion subsidy campaign lies with the reunion program committee and should be a volunteer-led effort.

- A designated member of the class must serve as the primary volunteer solicitor (aka "subsidy chair") and owner of this effort, which includes the following responsibilities:
 - Join the reunion program committee and provide regular updates to the committee (or to the HAA staff liaison if they cannot participate in committee meetings)
 - Work with the class HAA and HCF liaisons to review the list of potential contributors and subsidy messaging
 - As gifts are made, share donor names, and intended amounts with the HAA and HCF liaisons
 - When soliciting classmates, make clear that this is a separate effort from the reunion gift campaign and that subsidy gifts should be considered in addition to an individual's reunion gift to Harvard
 - Ensure all gifts are made and pledges fulfilled by the appropriate deadline (December 15 or January 15)
- Many classes already have substantial funds in their class treasuries that could be used to mitigate reunion costs. This should be explored prior to the launch of a subsidy effort, to see if it is needed.
- Solicitation is targeted to class leadership (program and fundraising committees); it is not a class-wide or crowd-funding effort
- In select classes, there may be a small group of non-committee members who are solicited (the subsidy chair will work with their HAA and HCF officers to determine potential contributors beyond committee members)
- It is expected that any subsidy donors will make a commensurate gift to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences through the reunion gift campaign

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

- Except for very special circumstances, subsidy funds will only be allocated to classmates and only for their program costs. Subsidy funds are not intended to cover the cost of housing, childcare, guest attendance, or transportation to and from campus. Any decisions about exceptional allocations of funds will be made by the reunion manager, Program Committee co-chairs, and class treasurer.
- To minimize misallocation of subsidy funds:
 - Donors should be encouraged to make subsidy gifts as a standalone gift (i.e., not as part of a larger gift)
 - Donors should be encouraged not to make a subsidy gift through a DAF (donor-advised fund)
 - Donors should include the fund name/number in the online description/check memo, as well as their class year (Harvard Alumni Assoc Class Activities Fund (610-368081RG))

Subsidy Use

- The reunion subsidy will be used only to directly offset reunion expenses. Classes may offer one or both of the following:
 - Lower ticket prices for all—offset reunion program expenses thus reducing ticket costs for all classmates
 - Targeted assistance to classmates—funds are directed to only those classmates who request financial assistance to cover their ticket cost at 50% or 100%
 - Combination of the two

Timeline for 2026 Reunions

- **September/October 2025:** Class leaders determine participation in subsidy program and identify a subsidy chair
- **September/October 2025:** Subsidy chair meets with HAA and HCF liaisons to review role, guidelines, and timeline
- **September 2025 – December 2025:** Subsidy chair engages in peer outreach and provides monthly updates to HAA and HCF liaisons
- **December 15, 2025:** Deadline for the class treasury to move into the HAA Partnered Treasury Program (if not already participating)
- **December 15, 2025: Deadline for all gifts to be received for classes using the subsidy (partially or fully) to lower the overall cost for all attendees** (no pledges; cash in hand). Reunion registration cannot go live until the budget has been confirmed.
- **January 15, 2026: Deadline for all gifts to be received for classes using the subsidy for financial aid only** (no pledges, cash in hand).

Reunions Budget Decisions for Program Committee Chairs and Reunion Treasurer

- Financial assistance
 - Will you coordinate a class subsidy?
 - If there is no subsidy, how will you account for financial assistance?
 - From class treasury funds (and if so, how much)
 - From registration fee
 - From both registration fee and class treasury funds
- Favors
 - Will you offer a favor to registrants?

Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices

- How much will the favor cost per item?
 - What will the favor be?
 - Are favors per classmate only or per person (i.e. do guests get one too)?
- Catering
 - Are there meals when you'll offer beer and wine?
 - Are there meals when you'll offer a full bar?
 - Do you want a mimosa/Bloody Mary bar at brunch?
- Entertainment
 - Are you planning to have a DJ or band? If so, when?
 - Are you planning to have a photobooth or photographer? If so, when?
- Printing/Mailing
 - Do you plan to send a save-the-date postcard?
 - Do you anticipate other printing costs/printed projects?
- Programming
 - How many content sessions will you offer?
 - Will you need AV for these sessions? If so, which ones?
 - Will you need more elaborate AV for any sessions?
- Memorial service
 - If your service is in Memorial Church, will you need a rehearsal on a different day?
 - If your service is in Memorial Church, will you need the organist to play?
 - Will you need a member of the Memorial Church clergy to participate in your service?
 - Do you want a printed program?
 - If your service is not in Memorial Church, will you need AV support (beyond HAA-covered streaming/recording)?

Reunion In-Person Events

Overview and Best Practices

We invite you and your class to think of your reunion as a year-long celebration rather than an in-person celebration taking place over a few days. This approach is an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of community by emphasizing inclusion and welcoming those who might otherwise not be able to engage in a typical reunion. This will also allow your class to feature more content-rich sessions throughout the year, ahead of your celebratory gathering on-campus in June.

There could be four different types of programming throughout your reunion year:

- Virtual class programming
- Regional in-person class programming
- Reunions-wide virtual programming, featuring Harvard faculty, administrators, and other special guests (centrally planned by the HAA)
- In-person reunion programming on campus in Cambridge in June

Your in-person programming on the Harvard campus will be a celebratory conclusion to your reunion year, building on the months of virtual/regional events your reunion committee will plan and taking advantage of the type of programming that can only be done in person!

Planning the Schedule

Your HAA staff liaison will share an initial shell schedule with you at the beginning of the year. This will include placeholders for larger events like your meals and dances, as well as when your memorial service and class photo will be. The schedule will also indicate where open time blocks for programming are available, so that the committee can create custom programming if interested.

Committee members can consult Class Reports (Red Books) from previous reunions or work with the HAA to obtain a draft copy of the current Red Book, as they work to identify topic areas and recruit participants for programs. A class survey can also be used to help identify areas of focus and classmates to feature.

You do not need to create programming for every open hour on the schedule. Your classmates will appreciate the opportunity to have some unstructured downtime, whether that's with their family, meeting up with other classmates informally, taking a break (or nap!), or changing for the next event (and this is some of the most common feedback we've heard from alumni post-reunion).

Class Programming: Social, Intellectual, and Memorial Service

Social programming can take many forms during the reunion, such as lunches, evening events, networking sessions, affinity group mini-reunions, and more. We recommend building in time for informal socializing to allow classmates to do what they're most excited about: see each other!

Intellectual programming balances social activities with thoughtful content. Based on survey results from past reunions, we do not recommend more than two concurrent presentations at a time. Please plan to allow at least 15 minutes in between back-to-back sessions.

Reunion In-Person Events

Overview and Best Practices

- **Alumni Panels/Speakers:** These provide classmates with an opportunity to reconnect through events of direct interest. The committee should strive to include panelists representing the various demographics of the class. A symposia/class panel should last no longer than 90 minutes, allowing 15–30 minutes for questions. Panels should have no more than six people, including the moderator; panels with more than six people do not allow each panelist adequate time to speak and additional microphones lower the audio quality of the session. Class symposia are a unique opportunity to generate conversations among classmates, but it's important to avoid the trap of over-programming your reunion. When planning your days, make sure enough time remains for follow-up conversations between sessions!
- **Glimpses/Classmate TED-style Talks:** Glimpses is a unique reunion program during which a handful of classmates will give a glimpse into their life through a short presentation. These aren't lectures, but rather reflections on life and can be funny, poignant, difficult, and powerful. Many alumni consider this program to be a highlight of their reunion.

Please see the Memorial Services Best Practices document for information about how to plan for your memorial service and what to expect at the event.

Venues

Harvard's campus offers reunion classes many options for a variety of different types of events. Using approved on-campus spaces allows alumni to have a more personal and immersive Harvard experience, whether it be listening to a panel discussion in a lecture hall, sitting down to a meal in one of the Houses, or dancing at a concert in Harvard Yard. Please note that while classes may express preferences on space, we can't make any guarantees, and most spaces won't be confirmed until the spring.

Most classes hold all of their Reunion events on campus, but some may elect to host at least one event off campus. The HAA has existing relationships with several venues in the area, including the Harvard Club of Boston, Museum of Science, and a number of local hotels. While we do enjoy working with these venues, we highly recommend that classes aim to be on campus as much as possible. If a class chooses to host off-campus events, the associated costs will be passed along to the class and classmates. The charges incurred when working with an off-campus venue (rental fees, transportation, etc.) can significantly increase the cost of the reunion.

Once your committee has determined its program needs, spaces will be assigned based on anticipated attendance. While committees can express preference for spaces, the HAA will make all final decisions on space assignments. Your HAA staff liaison will share your programming plans with colleagues on the Alumni Affairs & Development (AA&D) Events team, who provide oversight of space allocation, logistical support, staffing, and vendor and caterer management related to all of the reunions. Venues will be assigned by the AA&D Events team, allowing reunion committees to focus their efforts on customizing program content to capture the spirit of your class and engaging your classmates and encouraging them to attend through strategic outreach.

Reunion In-Person Events

Overview and Best Practices

Catering

Catering outreach and planning is done in close partnership with HAA staff and reunion leaders. Committees will work with their HAA staff liaison to review menus based on provided templates and options. Please note that we will not be creating menus from scratch for any events.

Several spaces on campus require the use of Crimson Catering as the sole catering provider. These include Annenberg Dining Hall, the Residential Houses, Science Center Plaza Tent, Meyer Gate Tent, and the Knafel Center, among others.

The Faculty Club's catering service provides catering services at the Faculty Club, Loeb House, and the Smith Campus Center. Events at the Harvard Art Museums are catered by A Catered Affair. For other venues, the HAA works with a number of other local caterers, including Cuisine Chez Vous, Whole Foods, Blue Ribbon Barbecue, Baker's Best, Ipswich Clambake, Flour, and others. External caterers must be approved by the HAA, and all catering contracts must be signed by the AA&D finance team.

Faculty Outreach

The HAA organizes regular faculty and administrator virtual programming for reunion classes throughout the reunion year, so we encourage reunion committees to create classmate-focused content for the in-person events. If you would like to feature a Harvard faculty member, please let your HAA staff liaison know as soon as possible. They will then connect with a team that manages event invitations to faculty who can advise on the best way to make the ask or offer alternative names.

Other Event Logistics

- **Accessibility:** Making reunions accessible for all attendees is a priority for the HAA. We ensure all spaces where reunion events will be taking place are accessible, and for our senior reunions, we seek to choose spaces that are close to each other to reduce walking time and distance.
- **Audio/Visual:** The HAA and AA&D Events work closely with our on-campus partner, Education Support Services, as well as third-party companies such as Bergsten Music and Bay State Sound to provide high-quality AV support. Your HAA staff liaison will help your committee volunteers determine an event's AV needs and communicate those needs to the vendor.
- **Recording/Streaming:** The HAA will arrange and cover the costs for livestreaming and recording of the memorial service for all classes. Any further video editing or website hosting for the memorial service will be the responsibility of the class. If your class is looking to explore recording and/or streaming other events during your reunion, please contact your staff liaison.
- **Bar Service:** The HAA works with professional bartending services to provide a high-quality experience. Classes may select a beer and wine bar or full bar service for meals. Committees will not need to play a role in choosing the specific alcohol brands offered beyond choosing the bar package types noted above. All bar service at on-campus events will be open bar for a smooth attendee experience. Per Massachusetts state law, food must be offered alongside an open bar.

Reunion In-Person Events

Overview and Best Practices

- **Decorations:** Most classes prefer not to budget for decorations, and we do not recommend it. Should your class be interested in having a decorations budget, the HAA asks that all orders be streamlined through Peak, one lighting vendor, and one balloon vendor in order to minimize risks. Floral arrangements can be ordered through Crimson Catering.
- **Entertainment:** Options depend entirely on your class's preferences. Many reunion classes choose to have a DJ and dancing for at least one of their evening events. Other classes elect to have a class band perform or to host a class cabaret/talent show. For Yardfest, the combined program for the 5th and 10th opening party, the HAA team will work with reunion committees to identify the optimal performer. AA&D Events will book the DJ unless a class has a specific preference. They can also book photo booths for any events.
- **Security:** The HAA takes security very seriously and seeks to ensure the welfare of all reunion guests, staff, and other workers at all times. We share all reunion schedules with the Harvard University Police Department prior to the reunion. You can expect to see HUPD officers at large-scale events taking place during the week and at any event where alcohol is being served.
- **Transportation:** Harvard provides a free reunion shuttle service throughout campus. This shuttle makes several stops, including Reunion Headquarters, several of the Houses, and any Harvard parking garages where attendees have been instructed to park. Chartered buses will be provided for the 55th-70th Reunions between the hotel block and event locations.

Please see the Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices document for information on expense types that are covered by Harvard, and which are covered by the class, and how purchases will be made.

Housing

Hotels: Hotel reservations should be made by classmates directly with the hotel, and this will be separate from the process for registering for the in-person programming. The HAA will not be able to assist with hotel booking. Information about hotel blocks will be available on the Reunions website.

On-Campus Housing: Alumni celebrating their 5th-50th Reunions have the option to reserve dorm housing on-campus on a first-come first-served basis. While staying on campus offers the opportunity to relive your college days and enjoy a convenient location, the dorms are simple and will not come with the same amenities as a hotel room would, so please plan accordingly. You can register your guests for housing as well.

On-campus housing requests and payment (housing costs are per each person, not per room) will be part of the registration and payment process for the in-person programming. There will be a deadline to register for housing, and walk-in housing registration is not available. Those who request campus housing will learn their dorm/House and room assignment when they arrive at Reunion Headquarters; they will not be notified of their room assignment ahead of time. Alumni will not be able to make requests for adjacent/shared reunion housing with classmates or other reunion attendees (except those on the same registration form).

Reunion In-Person Events

Overview and Best Practices

We have the wonderful challenge of growing attendance each year, and with the growth in numbers also comes the growth in housing demand. In determining housing assignments, our priority is making sure our assignments match the accessibility, health (refrigeration for breast milk, insulin, etc.), and religious (non-electronic access on the sabbath, etc.) needs of reunion attendees. However, we will be housing reunion classes in clusters/Houses with one another. Information about on-campus housing will be available on the Reunions website.

Registration for In-Person Programming

The HAA will manage the creation and launch of the registration form for the in-person programming on-campus. Please note that the reunion budget and pricing must be finalized before we can begin building the online form, and it typically takes about three weeks to build and test the form.

- **Online Registration:** All reunion registrations can be completed online. The HAA works with an internal AA&D team to create a registration form for your reunion. For data security purposes and to ensure that only your classmates are registering for your reunion, online registration requires a HarvardKey login. Classmates will be reminded to sign up for their HarvardKey in the early fall, at the beginning of the Class Report submission process.
- **Paper Mailings:** Mailings will be sent out to alumni for the 55th Reunion and above concurrent with the launch of online registration. This will include the schedule, detailed information, and the URL to register online or the phone number to call the College Alumni Programs Office for assistance registering. Alumni will not need to fill out a paper form to register.
- **Phone Registration:** If your classmates require assistance registering, they may register over the phone by calling 617-496-7001 once registration is live.

Please see the Reunion Budgeting Process and Best Practices document for information about the pricing tiers and pricing options offered for in-person programming, as well as information about financial assistance and the reunion subsidy program.

Reunion Headquarters

Reunion Headquarters, located at the Cabot Science Library, will be the check-in site for most reunions. The 70th Reunion may have an alternate headquarters location which will be listed on their schedule.

Those who register in advance should go to headquarters before attending any events to receive a nametag (which will serve as their entry ticket), favor (if the committee chose to have one), and other information. Alumni may also return to headquarters during operating hours if they have any questions.

If alumni elected to stay in on-campus housing, they will receive their room assignment and key/swipe card to check into their room at the housing desk location in headquarters.

25th Reunion: Chief Marshal Overview and Selection Process

Chief Marshal Overview

The Chief Marshal, a member of the Harvard College class celebrating its 25th Reunion, serves as the honorary leader of all University alumni during Harvard Alumni Day. This person will greet classes as they process into Harvard Yard, designate “marshal’s aids” to help with duties as part of the Harvard Alumni Association’s Happy Committee, and preside over the Chief Marshal Luncheon.

Serving as Chief Marshal of alumni is a special honor and a longstanding Harvard tradition that dates back to 1899. The honor of selecting the Chief Marshal is delegated to members of the College class holding its 25th Reunion who are asked to select one of their classmates to serve in this role. The Chief Marshal role is separate from the Marshal roles on the Class Committee (although Class Committee Marshals certainly might be nominated to be Chief Marshal).

You can learn more about recent Chief Marshals on the [HAA website](#).

Chief Marshal Criteria

The Chief Marshal Nominating Committee invites nominations from the class. The criteria are as follows:

- Contribution to one’s community and the larger society
- Success in one’s career(s), vocation(s), and/or avocation(s)
- Service and support to the 25th Reunion Class and/or Harvard University

While it may be unlikely that any one classmate would be exceptional in all three areas, nominees should demonstrate distinction in at least two of the three.

Chief Marshal Nominations and Election

The Chief Marshal selection process begins in July, when the HAA College Alumni Programs team sends an email to the entire 25th reunion class seeking submissions for Chief Marshal recommendations along with thoughts as to why their nominee(s) would be an ideal candidate(s). This email also invites classmates to join the Chief Marshal Nominating Committee.

The Chief Marshal Nominating Committee meets twice during the fall to discuss all nominees and work toward putting together a final slate. These final nominees will be notified before the slate is announced and to confirm their availability to participate in Harvard Alumni Day if they are elected as Chief Marshal. In October, the Nominating Committee will propose the slate of 12 candidates from all the nominees to the HAA Board of Directors at their fall meeting.

The slate of 12 will be put to an online vote by the 25th Reunion class in January. Following the election, the winning candidate will be notified, and once they confirm, the other candidates on the slate will be told the results. Once all the candidates have been notified, the results will be announced to the class and to the HAA Board of Directors at their winter meeting.

HAA Crimson Society

Overview and Volunteers

HAA Crimson Society Overview

The HAA Crimson Society is the organization of all Harvard College and Radcliffe College alumni/ae starting the year after their 50th Reunion. As members of the Crimson Society, these classes will still have the traditional 55th, 60th, 65th, and 70th Reunions, while also providing annual opportunities for fellow alumni/ae to come together from all classes and celebrate the Harvard community. The HAA Crimson Society events will be held annually in addition to milestone reunions.

Membership in the HAA Crimson Society starts immediately following the 50th Reunion year (eligible alumni/ae are automatically part of this group and do not need to apply). Harvard and Radcliffe alumni/ae from classes more than 50 years out from graduation, and who are not celebrating a milestone reunion in a given year, will be invited to the HAA Crimson Society programming that will take place that year.

In effect, the HAA Crimson Society Programming each year can be thought of as similar to a reunion experience, much like the 5th-70th Reunions. Traditional class-based reunion programming like the class photo and memorial service will remain unique to the quinquennial class reunions.

The HAA Crimson Society was founded in the 2019-2020 academic year, with virtual programming being offered in spring 2020 and spring 2021. The in-person programming launched in spring 2022. Going forward, the Crimson Society will host a mix of both virtual and in-person programming throughout the year.

HAA Crimson Society Planning Committee

The HAA Crimson Society Planning Committee works in partnership with a staff liaison from the College Alumni Programs office to plan an annual program inviting all non-reunion alumni/ae back to campus for festivities and programs to foster alumni/ae connections in the years between Harvard's traditional milestone Reunions. Programming on the Harvard campus in the spring, to be held the day before and the day of Harvard Alumni Day will include opportunities to connect with other alumni, including the Tree Spread Luncheon and the Alumni Parade on Harvard Alumni Day.

In addition to the spring on-campus programming, virtual programming will be planned by the HAA for all reunion classes and the Crimson Society featuring Harvard faculty, administrators, and other special guests in the fall, winter, and spring. These programs will be held roughly once per month. The Crimson Society Planning Committee might also organize additional virtual programs or experiences specifically for the HAA Crimson Society members.

Representatives from across the classes will be asked to join the HAA Crimson Society Planning Committee to help with the planning process as well as reach out to their classmates in the in-between years to get them excited about returning to campus!

Answers to frequently asked questions can be found at <https://alumni.harvard.edu/reunions/faq#crimson-society>; other questions about the HAA Crimson Society can be directed to the College Alumni Programs office at hacrimsonsociety@harvard.edu.