



MEETING MINUTES
REUNION 2013 PLANNING COMMITTEE
Saturday, November 3, 2012
www.oswego.edu/reunion

Note: Reunion Planning Committee meeting minutes are also sent to Reunion Giving Committee volunteers, for your information. Please feel free to send us any of your comments and ideas – or join us for planning meetings.

Present:

Jennifer Boalt '78
Leslie Van Hee Bull '77
Erin Dinneen '71 *
Karen Eggleston '68
Diane Fernaays '77
Kelley Flood '84
Brenda Frank '83
Patty Heidelmark '78

Mary Keefe
Jack James '62
Mary Jarvis '78
Jackie Morgia '78
Myron Phillips '57
Bill Price '70
George "Jethro" Tully '77 *

Staff present:

Michael Sgro
Betsy Oberst
Lisa Potter
Michelle Tackett-Spinner '98
Joy Knopp '92
Laura Pavlus '09
LeAnne St. Gelais '07
Megan Andolina

***by phone.** If we missed anyone who was on the phone, please let us know.

OPENING REMARKS

Michael Sgro thanked everyone who has volunteered to serve as a Reunion Planning Volunteer and welcomed those present as well as volunteers who participated via conference call. We have a committee of 60 (and growing) volunteers involved in the planning. It is clear that the number of alumni returning for Reunion is directly related to the size and activity level of the Reunion class/group volunteers. Michael asked all volunteers to recommend other members of their classes/groups to take part in the planning and encourage them to join the committee. Please contact the alumni office with names of other classmates we can invite to join the committee, or if you prefer, call and ask classmates yourself and let us know if they agree.

The class and affinity group volunteers were asked to perform the following responsibilities:

- To communicate with and motivate classmates/members to ATTEND Reunion Weekend.
- To plan engaging events for classmates/members and their guests/families to enjoy.

Most importantly, Michael shared that the Alumni Association can only reach out to alumni based on the current data in the college database. A **HUGE** effort of the planning committee can be to encourage their friends and classmates to update their information (email, mailing address, business information) so that they don't miss correspondence about Reunion.

Michael introduced **Betsy Oberst**, Associate Vice President of Alumni & Stewardship, **Michelle Tackett-Spinner '98**, Associate Director for Stewardship, **Laura Pavlus '09**, Associate Director for Alumni & Parent Relations, **LeAnne St. Gelais '07**, Associate Director for Alumni & Parent Relations and **Lisa Potter**, Development Records Manager. **Melissa Manwaring '01** was not present at the meeting but is one of the office contacts.

Michael, Betsy, Michelle, Laura, Lisa, LeAnne and Melissa will each serve as staff liaisons with the various Reunion classes and affinity/mini-reunion groups. (See last page of minutes for details.)

Also in attendance from the Development Office were **Joy Knopp '92** and **Megan Andolina** who work with the Reunion Giving Committee volunteers from the Classes of 2003, 1988, 1997-1999, 1977-79, 1963 and 1953.

Note: Members of the various milestone anniversary classes and affinity/mini-reunion groups should work directly with the staff liaison assigned to that class/group so we can best meet the needs of each group! Staff liaisons will connect with each of the classes/groups.

The committee has members from the classes of 1940 to 2013 as well as 15 affinity/mini-reunion groups. We will welcome any additional members especially in the Classes of 1988 and 1963, as those are very significant milestone years.

AGENDA ITEM (I): REVIEW OF LAST YEAR'S REUNION PROGRAM

Discussion began with a review of last year's reunion program. Michael reported that the overall survey data showed that a majority of attendees were very satisfied with the overall experience. It was noted that a good deal of the alumni that filled out the Reunion survey came from over 150 miles away to attend. We discussed that we should really push/encourage the local alumni to participate.

Michael reported large success in the use of the mobile version of the Reunion Website during the weekend.

The Reunion 2012 "State Fair" theme was discussed and several committee members felt it was not the strongest theme. It was confusing for some as they thought it was an actual Oswego State Fair associated with the county.

Last year there were more than 800 officially registered participants. If you look at the 2012 evaluation you'll see that most of the events receiving high ratings were the events held for a specific class or mini-reunion group and our "major" Fri. night BBQ at Fallbrook. Affinity or mini-reunions have been planned in the past for Greek organizations, academic majors, athletic teams, student organizations, etc. Michael stressed that every group/class should definitely plan an event specifically for their class/group, i.e., a picnic, a social hour, a luncheon, etc.

Highlights of last year's Reunion included: Friday BBQ at Fallbrook, Saturday mini-reunion/class activities, the Golden Alumni Society Lunch and the Saturday Picnic on the Lake – which was for several classes and groups behind Lakeside. Groups/classes should strongly consider this venue/event for your group this year!

Also the "Greeks and Friends Social" on Saturday night was not as successful (as in past years) and the location will be changed to the Elks Club in downtown Oswego for Reunion 2013.

The best time to plan "class" or "mini-reunion group" luncheons/picnics/receptions is Friday night (after the Fallbrook BBQ) and Saturday during lunch/the afternoon.

Please note: we can NOT promote any individual class/group events opposite the two "major" all-alumni Reunion Weekend events – Fri night BBQ, Sat night dinner or the Conversation with the President, etc. These are "all-Reunion" events which the various class/group events should program around. These events are the opportunity to see **all** the other alumni attending Reunion Weekend from the other classes and groups – and they are great fun for all!

We spoke extensively about pricing and walk-in's. The Alumni Association subsidizes Reunion by thousands of dollars for mailings, buses, tents, food, entertainment, etc. Reunion has never been a revenue-producing program for the alumni association, but rather one which we consider a good "investment" to bring people back to campus to re-connect with the College and with other alumni! Some alumni do complain about the cost of events, however, so committee members need to be able to respond that it is **NOT** a money-making program. We do have to pass along food and housing costs to participants, however. Michael & Betsy explained that in recent years we have used a two price system for events - one for those paying before the RSVP date and a higher price after the RSVP date. This seems to encourage alumni to register earlier to get the "early bird" price.

AGENDA ITEM (II): STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

Michael encouraged the committee to review class attendance numbers and the survey results in the Reunion Weekend Handbook. Michael mentioned that the Class of 2008 and 1983 received a letter/email in regards to their cluster reunion in 2014. These groups technically will have a milestone anniversary at Reunion 2013 but will celebrate as a cluster in the next Reunion cycle.

We mentioned that we are looking to the GOLD leadership council to help us identify ways that will encourage their classmates/members to come back. We noticed in the attendance data that the younger alumni still do not have a high percentage of participation. We also noted that many alums may "attend" Reunion but do not officially register. We concluded that we will double our efforts to encourage all alumni to "officially" let us know they are participating.

We spoke about making sure that alumni knew that they are welcome to walk-in and attend Reunion last minute but balance that with catered events needing a firm head count. As such, we are placing a heavier emphasis on recruiting alumni to attend Reunion with an additional planning committee meeting set in April.

In efforts to widen our program opportunities, we spoke about spotlighting alumni artists or including a local art show on the schedule; partnering with the Career Services office and offering workshops for job/networking opportunities; possibility of looking at boat rentals; possible inclusion of Oswego community events.

We discussed to continue the very successful Golden Alumni Society luncheon as well as to include a 60th Anniversary Tea after the lunch.

Those present brainstormed possible themes for Reunion 2012. Suggestions are summarized below:

Green Theme – Sustainability is a hot topic for the campus as we are opening the new building in Fall of 2013. Some committee members saw a connection to the campus progress and sustainability efforts.

Oswego Story – Alumni contributing their stories as the backdrop of the weekend. Perhaps in a historical context.

Future Oswego – The words “3D glasses” were used and spotlighting where Oswego is headed in the future.

Other themes mentioned included: Cruise Ship, Casino, Carnival and Mardi gras.

We encouraged you to use your creativity in thinking of designs or strategies for letters, flyers, videos, phone calls, emails, Facebook, etc. to pique the interest of your classmates. The alumni staff will handle all copying, design and mailings from committee members to their classmates/members. We can send personalized “mass” emails to your entire class/group. (It is still important for committee members to send individual emails to those you know, etc.!) King Hall can be used for class calling sessions should you want to contact classmates by phone or organize a class calling session.

We offer the strategy outlined below as a vehicle to increase class (or mini-reunion) participation:

- a.) Make PERSONAL contacts (phone, written and/or in person) with as many members of your class as possible. Take advantage of the holiday season to send a personal note to former classmates. We will send each committee member some pre-metered holiday postcards to send to classmates. (We also sent you some pre-metered envelopes for you to use to send notes to classmates. Let us know if you need more.)
 - We suggest that committee members from the same class year/group divide names on their “ACTIVE” class print-out lists and use the “personal approach” with these classmates. This will ensure that every member of the class/group is contacted by a committee member at least once.
 - Last year we sent an email to all committee members and asked them to forward it on – create a “chain”. Use photos. Can be customized. Do these once or twice.
 - Targeting communications is a great strategy! We all want to connect; it doesn’t have to be with someone you know. Reunion activities dedicated to the spirit of a class or group helps us gather momentum and encourages people to participate.
 - For the earlier class years – please make it clear that we can make different accommodations for them, if needed – extensive walking, parking issues, etc.
 - For those who’d like to use the phones in King Alumni Hall to contact friends/classmates, you’re more than welcome to do so. Just call the office in advance to let us know when you want to use the phones. We’ll clear a desk and phone for your use.
- b.) Look for a “hook” to capture the attention of your classmates/members.
(Class/group parties work the best!)

- c.) Identify “key” class/group members in specific geographic regions, and/or who were in specific clubs (Greeks, Student Government, orientation, athletics, etc.) and contact these key individuals to request their assistance in communicating with fellow classmates in their area or organization. We tend to find that those who live a good distance away from Oswego – make great cheerleaders to get others locally back to campus for Reunion.
- d.) Put a press release/announcement in your local paper about Reunion dates, with your name and contact number (or that of the Alumni Office).
- e.) If you’re not an “official” cluster group this year, feel free to cluster per your own group of friends. Let the office know if you need different year print-out listings. This tends to happen with groups of alums who might have lived together on the same floor our house.
- f.) Encourage alumni to utilize OsweGoConnect, our password-protected online alumni community to reconnect with their friends and classmates and encourage them to come back for Reunion! The new version should be available at the early start of 2013.
- g.) **OTHER IDEAS**
- Michael mentioned we have tried to make the Reunion Web site more “interactive” and information-filled, i.e., putting on names of Reunion Class/Group Volunteers, tentative event ideas (as they develop), planning committee meeting minutes, a Reunion FAQ page, etc.
 - Reunion class year/group “lost” lists on Reunion Web site.
 - Put Who’s Planning to Attend on MAIN Reunion page
 - Use as many pictures and photos – and video!!- as possible – promote Reunion through photos!
 - Use the *Oswego* Alumni Magazine to promote Reunion! Use the magazine to solicit more email addresses!
 - The Reunion Facebook event is listed on the Oswego Alumni Facebook page and it is easy to share on your profile page.
 - Several committee members also recommended pushing Reunion on our Oswego Alumni LinkedIn group page.
 - Facebook is a great networking tool!!! Please use your personal Facebook pages to push Reunion Weekend!
 - We will again utilize Johnson and Riggs for on-campus reunion housing – Johnson and Riggs are air-conditioned residence halls right on the lake! (Housing is assigned on a first come-first served basis, based on registrations. We house alumni by class year, then by group.)
 - Posting photos online of reunions from previous years of this year’s reunion classes – there is a Reunion 2012 Photo gallery online.
 - Invite and promote attendance of favorite professors.
 - Asking other alumni in cards and letters to “contact a classmate” – putting responsibility on classmates to get their friends to return for Reunion.
 - When sending emails to classmates, asking them to forward them on to others they know!!
 - Send babysitting info for those with kids – stress ok to bring kids/families!
 - Get out info about kids’ events or kid-friendly events for alumni making decisions whether to come and/or bring their children.
 - Making sure earlier class years know we can accommodate their needs!
 - Link individual group/organization websites with the Alumni Association Reunion website.

- Some groups in previous years have wanted to do special shirts for their group. This needs to be coordinated by a volunteer from the group; due to the large # of groups, it would not be possible for the Alumni Office to coordinate the ordering and selling of each individual group's shirts. Please talk to your alumni staff liaison who can suggest local vendors for you to contact – or there may be someone from your group/organization with a connection to a shirt vendor.

AGENDA ITEM (III): SUGGESTED IDEAS FOR REUNION WEEKEND 2012 ACTIVITIES

We know that the best advertising is “word of mouth” strategies as well as making sure we have updated information for our alumni

1) START THINKING ABOUT A SPECIFIC ACTIVITY FOR EACH CLASS YEAR/MINI-REUNION?

Michael spoke about the success of those classes/ groups that have planned specific group events. Work with your staff liaison to create targeted activity during the weekend. Refer to Reunion 2012 schedule to see the variety of events that were created last year.

We need to know what you want to see offered for your class/group at Reunion 2012! Start thinking and communicate with other class volunteers on the planning committee AND others you know in your class to get their ideas!!

2) EVENT IDEAS:

- Friday night BBQ at Fallbrook – A staple event
- Spotlighting the Farmers Market on Thursday night for early arrivals.
- Having a Class of 1963 dinner on Thursday night.
- Golf outing – Encouraging alumni and groups to perhaps have one golf outing instead of separate events for each affinity group.
- Tours or open houses of newer campus facilities. Possibility of tours of the new science facility.
- “State of the College Address” by President Stanley
- A possible concert on Friday night as done several years ago.
- CLASS/GROUP EVENTS – groups/classes are beginning to identify events for their members!!
- Class of '88 reception at Shady Shore
- Class of '63 reception at Shady Shore
- Sunday Bon Voyage Brunch at Lakeside Dining Center
- Last year we also offered a continental breakfast on Sat in Lakeside
- Greeks and Friends Social on Sat. night – we have booked the Elks
- Dinner on Sat. night – possibly a “Dinner Dance” - We will need to discuss band options as our normal band is unavailable for Reunion.
- Presentations on the new sciences building project
- Picnic on the Lake on Saturday – many classes and groups use this as their “class lunch”
- “Official” 5K Fun Run/Walk – partnership with the local YMCA
- Old Oswegonians are online – Alumni Office will link to this to our web site.
- Academic Department/School Open House opportunities
- Possible activities/organization “fair” – with reps from various clubs and organizations on Saturday involving students.
- Possible “job conference” hosted by Career Services. Attempted last summer outside of the Reunion program and a possible match for the Reunion program.

- Michael will work with the College- Community Relations Committee (CCRC) to get local merchants to offer alumni discounts during Reunion Weekend. Post signs “Welcome Alumni” around town.
- Michael spoke about getting the Athletic Department involved in perhaps helping manage some informal outdoors activities or a basketball game in Laker Hall.
- **We spoke about the success of the honoring alumni veterans with pins on their name tags. We will continue this effort for Reunion 2013.**
- We spoke about the possibility of using spring regional alumni events as a place to effectively market Reunion (flyers, etc.)
- We spoke about using the idea of “Networking” to encourage younger graduates to attend Reunion.

Note: Begin thinking what events (and when) you want to offer your classmates/members – and talk with fellow volunteers from your class year - so we can begin to fine tune the schedule of events and begin to look at proposed dates and times at the December meeting.

AGENDA ITEM (IV): CLASS LETTERS

Our second Reunion mailing (**target mailing date – January/February**) will be a more “personal” letter to each class/group from the reunion committee members encouraging them to attend reunion. (See sample letters in your Reunion Handbook.) Letters will be copied and sent from the alumni office at a much lower cost than having something more “generic” printed and sent to everyone. If we aim to send out class letters sometime in late January, **we need committee members to work with their staff liaison to have letters drafted by early January.** A suggested class event and possibly a list of those who have said they might attend could be included with the letter. (This list can also be posted on the website.)

Some ideas for things to include in class letters:

- Things that happened during YOUR era at Oswego
- Put as many NAMES of class members in the letters (class leaders, etc.)
- Put names of those who have responded they might attend in letters (put this on website, too.)
- “Dust off your yearbooks”, etc. in letters
- Links to your social networks (if available)

Committee members should think about what content and stories they should include in their specific letters.

*A mailer was sent for Alpha Sigma Chi (ASA) as it is their 90th Anniversary next year. Woo hoo!

AGENDA ITEM (V): REUNION WEBSITE & SOCIAL NETWORKING

Michael expanded on what information is available via the web as well as our social networks. To date, all 15 Reunion groups have their own web page with planning committee members listed. A very detailed Reunion FAQ section has quick answers to the most commonly asked questions; a listing of future Reunion dates; and most importantly, the Reunion News Note, which is a great tool to encourage alumni to let us know they are interested in attending Reunion as well as collect updated information.

The planning committee was advised to take full advantage of the web resources to maximize exposure of the Reunion program. The conversation also included success stories around using Facebook to reach alumni to attend in the past.

We have an on-line alumni community – *OswegoConnect* - which offers us a password-protected alumni site with increased interactivity and personalized broadcast email capability .We are able to take reservations online for Reunion. There is a new version of *OswegoConnect* coming soon which will provide some more tools to assist us in engaging alumni including integrated social networks.

We also have “official” Oswego Alumni Facebook and LinkedIn group pages – we can promote Reunion on these as well. www.facebook.com/OswegoAlumni We also have 4 additional Facebook pages created for the Classes of 2003, 1988, 1997-99 and 1977-79 and members of the committee in those years are welcome to become administrators for those pages. Contact your staff liaison for assistance.

Other website items available:

- List of who has said they plan to attend (from Reunion News Notes)
- Class letters (when finalized)
- Reunion Class Volunteers – and their email addresses
- Tentative schedule of events (as things firm up more)
- A way for alumni to post (or email) ideas
- Meeting minutes
- Names of those “lost” from each class

AGENDA ITEM (VI): REUNION GIVING UPDATE

Joy Knopp '92 and Megan Andolina from the Development Office work with the Reunion Giving Committee volunteers from the Classes of 2003, 1997-99, 1977-79, 1988, 1963 and 1953, gave an update on Reunion Giving efforts. Special appeals go out to those milestone classes to encourage alumni from those classes to make a special gift in honor of their reunion.

Megan noted that we are in the early stages of the Reunion giving outreach and still securing committee volunteers.

- We are currently working with and fundraising for **10 classes** this year and we have a **combined goal to raise \$250,000!**
§ 10th, 15th Cluster, 25th, 35th Cluster, 50th and 60th anniversary years
- We currently have **7 volunteers we are working with**. We **always welcome more volunteers**.
- Solicitations that have gone out already
 - **Direct Mail:**
 - First Round sent between 10/1 and 10/15
 - **E-Solicitations:**
 - Sent 10/16 and 11/1
 - **TeleFund**
 - Scheduled to start calling Reunion Years on 11/5 (Monday), however, we are trying to be very sensitive to our alumni who have been affected by Hurricane Sandy so we are shifting our calling schedule accordingly.
 - **Volunteers**
 - § Reunion Giving Committee members will start to be reaching out to their classmates in mid-December

AGENDA ITEM (VII): OTHER

WHAT SHOULD COMMITTEE MEMBERS BE WORKING ON NOW?

- a.) Recruit more volunteers from your class or group to help network to get alumni back to campus.
- b.) Begin contacting your classmates/mini-reunion group to generate enthusiasm for attending Reunion.
- c.) Reviewing these minutes and **determining what your group or class might want to do at their reunion**. At our December meeting we will begin to draft a preliminary schedule of events and activity ideas. Help us fine tune this!

Please note: We also cannot begin to “assign” specific room locations and venues for individual events until we have a broader picture of ALL of the events we need to hold! So I ask you to be patient and understand that this is a natural planning process we deal with for every Reunion! The Alumni Office is responsible for booking ALL venues – both on and off campus.

AGENDA ITEM (VIII): DATE AND TIME FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

CAMPUS MEETING #2 **Saturday, December 1 at 10:00a.m.** (King Alumni Hall)
**Snow Date Saturday, December 8th at 10:00a.m.

CAMPUS MEETING #3 **Saturday, January 12 at 10:00a.m.** (King Alumni Hall)
**Snow Date Saturday, January 19 at 10:00a.m.

CAMPUS MEETING #4 **Saturday, February 9 at 10:00a.m.** (King Alumni Hall)
**Snow Date Saturday, February 16 at 10:00a.m.

CAMPUS MEETING #5 **Saturday, April 13 at 10:00a.m.** (King Alumni Hall)

****IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI AND PARENT RELATIONS (315-312-2258) BEFORE YOU LEAVE.**

We will determine on the Friday before the meeting if it will be postponed to the snow date. We will notify via e-mail those committee members who have notified us that they are attending the meeting. A message will be recorded on our voicemail at 315-312-2258 for those checking after hours or for Saturday morning before you leave.

If anyone will require on-campus housing in Sheldon Hall for a meeting, we must know **prior** to the meeting as we have to book and pay for rooms. (Since we have a limited # of rooms available, these rooms are reserved primarily for those who live too far away to drive on Saturday a.m.) Also, if you live too far away to participate in meetings in person, please use the call-in conference # to participate.

Call-in number is 1-888-537-7715
Participant passcode is 84396450#

Please note: the call-in option is intended primarily for those who live too far away to participate in person – we really welcome your attendance as it generates the most lively discussion, ideas, etc.!

Reunion 2013: Staff Contacts

70th Reunion – 1943

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

65th Reunion – 1948

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

60th Reunion – 1953

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

55th Reunion – 1958

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

50th Reunion – 1963

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

45th Reunion – 1968

Betsy Oberst & Lisa Potter

40th Reunion – 1973

LeAnne St. Gelais

35th Cluster Reunion – 1977, 1978, 1979

Betsy Oberst

25th Reunion – 1988

Michael Sgro

15th Cluster Reunion – 1997, 1998, 1999

Michelle Tackett Spinner

10th Reunion – 2003

Laura Pavlus

Football Alumni

Michael Sgro

Wrestling Alumni

Michael Sgro

Alpha Sigma Chi (ASA) 90th Anniversary

Michael Sgro

Alpha Delta Eta

Melissa Manwaring

Beta Tau Epsilon

Michelle Tackett Spinner

Delta Chi Omega/TKE

Melissa Manwaring

Delta Kappa Kappa

Laura Pavlus

Omega Delta Phi

LeAnne St. Gelais

Omicron Xi

Laura Pavlus

Pi Delta Chi

Laura Pavlus

Phi Lambda Phi

Laura Pavlus

Phi Sigma Phi

LeAnne St. Gelais

Psi Phi Gamma

Michael Sgro

Sigma Gamma

LeAnne St. Gelais

Theta Chi Rho

Michelle Tackett Spinner