

# CLASS OFFICER GUIDE





Dear Gustie Class Officers,

We know that one of the hallmarks of the Gustavus experience is the strong sense of community and common purpose we all share. That “Gustie spirit” was woven into our time spent on the Hill and continues to impact our lives today. As a Class Officer, we hope that your ultimate goal is to keep that Gustie fire burning among your classmates. By celebrating accomplishments, both personal and professional, and providing opportunities to actively engage with one another and the mission of the College, our Class Officer program ensures that the Gustie spirit thrives among members of the Gustavus Alumni Association.

Meanwhile, the goal of the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement is to make serving as a Class Officer straightforward, enjoyable, and unique to the personality of your class. We know how precious your time is and how valuable your contributions are to the mission of the Alumni Association. As such, your success hinges on our ability to educate, equip, and empower you to do your best volunteer work.

With that in mind, we have developed this Class Officer Guide. Inside, you’ll find tips and advice for each of the Class Officer roles to support you and your fellow class volunteers. Please take some time to review this guide and remember that we are here every step of the way. We’re so grateful for your dedication to Gustavus and your class, serving as an ambassador for our message: “Once a Gustie, always a Gustie. Gusties for life.”

**Go Gusties!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Erickson".

Angela Erickson '01  
Director of Alumni and Parent Engagement

# GAC REP

## Expectations for every Class Officer

- 1 Giving
- 2 Appreciation
- 3 Communication
- 4 Recruitment
- 5 Events & Reunions
- 6 Participation

What do Class Officers do?	Activities
Giving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help class reach giving participation goals by encouraging classmates to give to Gustavus</li> <li>• Give to the Gustavus Fund to help reach 100% participation goal among volunteer leadership groups</li> </ul>
Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write thank-you notes or otherwise reach out to classmates who have donated money</li> <li>• Reach out to thank classmates who volunteer their time or attend events</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit two class letters per year</li> <li>• Share classmate and campus news on class Facebook group and other social media</li> </ul>
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage other Gusties you know to serve the Alumni Association and the College</li> <li>• Help recruit Class Officers, Chapter Officers, student mentors, admission ambassadors, and other volunteer leaders</li> </ul>
Events and Reunions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the lead on planning class-specific events for your reunion</li> <li>• Plan and attend other events in non-reunion years to help keep your class connected</li> </ul>
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage regularly with Class Officers</li> <li>• Attend annual Class Officer meetings, Reunions and/or Homecoming, plus other events as you are able</li> <li>• Participate in virtual programming to serve as an example to others</li> </ul>

# Overview of CLASS OFFICER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## President

- Recruit Class Officers and lead succession planning as needed
- Support and communicate with fellow Class Officers and reunion committee members
- Stay connected with the College and its major initiatives by consistently reading e-newsletters and the *Quarterly* and by visiting the College's website
- Connect with classmates each month to share College updates, catch up, and gather news for class letters
- Maintain consistent communication with the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement to report on the activities of your class

## Vice President/Events Chair

- Lead the coordination of reunion planning committee and communication with the College
- Lead the planning of class events in non-reunion years with the help of the College
- Assume responsibilities of president if he/she is unable to fulfill duties

## Communication Chair

- Develop, write, and submit letters of class news and College highlights
- Actively promote class/College news on social media to keep classmates connected
- Reach out to classmates to encourage news submissions and contact information updates to keep database current and maximize impact of class letters and other communications

## Gustavus Fund Chair

- Lead class participation outreach efforts and reunion giving planning with support from Gustavus staff
- Reach out to classmates by email, mail, or phone to thank them when they make a donation
- Stay abreast of participation goals and progress; communicate to fellow Class Officers



## Planning a Reunion

Overall, there are aspects of Reunion Weekend that will be planned by each class's reunion committee, and others that are coordinated by campus staff members that all classes are encouraged to participate in and enjoy. **Our goal is to give you the tools needed to incorporate elements unique to your class and which reflect your class' shared experiences and stage in life into your reunion, while also providing opportunities to engage with other reunion classes and the Gustavus community to get the most out of the experience.** This structure will result in robust and meaningful programming, while not representing an onerous task for the reunion planning committee.

Planning can be done in person, over Zoom, and/or via email and phone, so encourage participation by anyone interested. The time commitment made by a committee member will vary depending on the committee size, stage of the planning process, and group efficiency. On average, a member will spend 1-2 hours a month working on reunion planning, with the majority of time spent communicating with peers via email or social networks.

Knowing that a large-scale event such as a reunion requires thought, planning, feedback, and preparation means that keeping a timeline is crucial. We will help to guide your work in the year leading up to your reunion so that you and your committee members find the work manageable and enjoyable and are able to take great pride in the finished result!

## Organizing a Committee

**Reunion planning committees who have enjoyed success in the past say that it is essential to include others in the planning of the event and not to “go it alone.”** These peers will help share in decision-making, planning, and information dissemination. Forming a committee is easy! You may have friends or classmates in mind to ask to help, and that's great! If you don't have ideas on who to ask to join you, the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement can be of assistance. Our office can help identify members of your class who have been engaged and involved with Gustavus. We can also assist in locating people with diverse interests, backgrounds, and skill sets, so that you're able to plan activities and events that are inclusive of classmates' varied experiences as students and alumni. Again, experience has told us that a robust committee leads to success, so don't underestimate the value of reaching out to as many people as possible.

## What should I be doing in a non-reunion year?

We know that reunion years require planning leading up to the event, and that those events are attended by a large segment of your graduating class. **However, it's important to keep the momentum going in non-reunion years, as there's plenty to celebrate and lots of fun ways to connect.** We recommend that you help your class plan at least one event in between your reunion years.

### Here are some other ideas:

- Happy Hour
- Potluck picnic in a park
- Group outing to a sporting event or fine arts performance (bonus points if it's a Gustavus event!)
- Celebration of a milestone birthday (most of your classmates turn 30, 40, 50, 60, etc. in the same year)
- Brewery/winery visit and tour
- Recreational sporting event or tournament
- Coordinated attendance at a larger event (Gustavus Homecoming, Christmas in Christ Chapel, Basilica Block Party)
- Workshop or seminar relevant for classmates (home ownership, retirement, financial planning, parenting, etc.)

The Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement can assist you with registration forms, mailers, electronic communications, Facebook groups, and other ways to make your event a success, so don't hesitate to ask. In addition, we can supply swag for attendees and reimburse up to \$100 for hospitality—just give us 6-8 weeks lead time to follow internal processes.



## Ensuring Effective Communication

**Classmates rely on information from class letters and updates in the *Gustavus Quarterly* to maintain a connection to the College.** At the same time, those communications are not as effective as they could be if the College's database is not kept as up-to-date as possible.

Class letters are sent via email to all members of a class with an active email address, and by postal mail to those whose record only includes a physical address. Class letters should be developed, written, and submitted twice a year (August and January at a minimum, more frequently in a reunion year). They should concisely include professional, volunteer, family (weddings/births), and all other news submitted by classmates, plus an introductory piece authored by the Communication Chair or designee. News received by the Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement will be emailed to all Class Officers approximately two weeks before a class letter is due, and will be incorporated into class letters as they are received by the office. All letters will be edited/proofed and relevant campus news will be added before publication.

### Here are some tips for class letter writing:

- Include as many different classmates as possible in each letter
- Stay informed and involved in events of the College and write about them
- Consider more frequent letters during a reunion year
- Incorporate a few pictures in your letter to help create interest and bring back memories (they can be found in the College's electronic archives if needed)
- If you're running short on ideas for your introduction, just write about a memory from your college days
- Invite a classmate to be a guest letter writer – you don't always have to be the author!
- Try "calling out" classmates that you'd like to see updates from; classmates will usually come through with an update if they've been identified in a letter
- Be certain your news is accurate (watch for stories heard through the grapevine) and stay positive
- If you invite others to write content for the letter, please compile it and submit one document for review and publication

**In addition to serving as the lead on producing class letters, Communication Chairs are encouraged to maintain a presence on social media by posting within the class Facebook group and sharing campus news on their personal feeds.** We encourage creative thinking on how to engage online in ways that involve classmates. Posting Facebook polls, posing questions, and tagging people in throwback photos or posts are all great ways to encourage others to chime in!

Finally, realize that all of the work of the Communication Chair will be for not in the absence of good information in the College's database. Reaching out via email, postal mail, phone, and other means is of paramount importance for the work of all Class Officers. Throughout the year, you are encouraged to help fill in gaps in our database with updated contact information for your classmates. The Office of Alumni and Parent Engagement is happy to provide lists of current contact information, including inaccurate entries, so that you might help us update our records.





# Giving to Gustavus

**Spreading the word about giving to Gustavus is the number one goal of the Gustavus Fund Chair.** It’s not about *how much* our alumni give, but *that* our alumni give. While we strongly encourage alumni to consider the Gustavus Fund in their philanthropy, all gifts made to the College are counted in alumni giving participation. The bottom line is that colleges like Gustavus rely on philanthropic support from constituents, especially alumni and parents, to deliver a world-class experience and keep costs as affordable as possible.

With your help, we can harness the Gustie spirit of generosity to accomplish something great for current and future Gusties. Giving participation is highlighted and celebrated, and we know there is no more effective method for encouraging Gusties to give than through gentle encouragement from a classmate.

ACTIVITY	Description	Role
General Outreach	Work to increase class participation in giving annually by engaging in donor stewardship and inviting participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite your classmates to give to Gustavus via email, letter, phone, social media, personal ask, etc.—this can be done in collaboration with the Communication Chair</li><li>• Track and monitor class participation and the involvement of fellow Class Officers in philanthropic asks</li></ul>
Reunion Giving	Every five years, work with fellow Class Officers, reunion committee members, and staff in Alumni and Parent Engagement to encourage giving in honor of reunion celebrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruit a reunion committee that includes classmates comfortable with inviting philanthropic support of Gustavus</li><li>• Reach out to classmates encouraging gifts in honor of reunion - any and all gifts and commitments are counted in the “big check”</li><li>• Strive for a participation goal in reunion years that is higher than in non-reunion years</li></ul>
Beyond Monetary Gifts	Help classmates understand that any and all gifts of time, talent, and treasure are valued and appreciated by the College, and invite them to participate in a way that speaks to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiarize yourself with the various ways to give back to the College, including prospective student referrals, service as a mentor or volunteer leader, monetary support, etc.</li><li>• Reach out to classmates and encourage them to plug in</li><li>• Talk about your participation as a volunteer leader and the other ways you “pay it forward” so that classmates can see you as an example</li></ul>

# Stewardship

**Showing our gratitude for alumni who make a donation is the other essential role of the Gustavus Fund Chair.** While the College reaches out with gift receipts and shows appreciation for gifts received, personal expressions of gratitude go a long way to ensuring donors know their contributions are valued and appreciated and not just “lost in the shuffle.” You will receive a class giving report monthly, showing which classmates gave in that month. We ask that you reach out to those classmates and thank them for their donation.

You can connect with donors via phone, email, or hand-written card—Gustavus will provide cards or other materials as needed. This personal touch lets alumni know that their gift matters and helps us retain our alumni donors year after year.



MAKE YOUR LIFE **COUNT**®

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