

Class Officers Handbook

The MIT Alumni Association serves more than 122,000 alumni across the world. Of these, more than half have attended MIT as undergraduate students and are considered part of an MIT class.

The activities of MIT's class officers vary, but all share a focus on MIT and the MIT experience in three ways:

- providing connections among classmates
- strengthening ties to MIT and its mission
- encouraging financial support for the future of MIT

1. Class Organization and Officers

Most classes conduct a business meeting with an election of officers every five years at a class reunion event. Officers are elected for five-year terms from July 1 of the reunion year to June 30 of the next reunion year. Class officers are encouraged to **remain active between reunions** but activity increases in the 12-18 months before a class reunion.

The Alumni Association recommends that each class fill these positions at least:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Webmaster

Classes frequently elect additional officers, such as members-at-large or assistant officers, or an executive committee. The class president appoints other volunteers such as the reunion chair and the reunion gift chair, in consultation with the Alumni Association staff. Class agents are recruited in consultation with the Alumni Fund staff.

Election of Officers: Class officer appointments are not for life. The Alumni Association requests that all classes recruit a slate of officers during reunion planning, and hold an election by one of two methods:

- Online elections via the Alumni Association Web site
 - This allows classmates not attending the reunion to participate in the vote.
- Voting at a class meeting during the reunion
 - This is best if officer positions are uncontested and offered as a slate.

Nominating Committee: Six months before a reunion, a class president may choose to appoint a nominations chair or nominating committee to recruit officer candidates. These could be composed of

- All former class presidents
- Former class officers
- Retiring officers

2. Class Events and Activities

Reunions: Traditionally class reunions take place every five years during Commencement Week, usually one of the first weekends in June, and are the principal activities of MIT classes. The best MIT reunions have combined socializing with serious intellectual content.

Class reunion committees and Tech Reunions staff work as partners in reunion planning. The classes are responsible for the personality of their class events, while the Alumni Association arranges the technical and logistical assistance to produce them successfully. Class events are planned around a schedule of reunion events to which all classes are invited, such as

Tech Night at the Pops, the Technology Day Program and Luncheon, the Tech Challenge Games, and the Reunion Row. Please see the **Reunion Planning Handbook** for more details.

Mini-Reunions: Some classes arrange mini-reunions events in non-reunion years, such as:

- Arranging destination reunions at a resort or place of interest. Foreign countries have been popular when a classmate living there is willing to make all the arrangements.
- Events on campus with scholars and/or professor supported by your class
- Attending MIT events as a class
 - Tech Night at the Pops
 - MIT Club events
 - MIT Alumni Travel Program

3. Marketing & Communications

Class Notes: The alumni magazine, *Technology Review*, is offered free of charge to all MIT alumni, courtesy of the Alumni Association. Many alumni turn first to this section to read the latest news on friends and acquaintances from the class secretary; it is part of the “glue” that binds the class together. Class Notes are also available online.

Class Email Lists: The Alumni Association maintains class email lists, offering email as a vehicle for class communication. Common uses of Association email lists will be notification of events, solicitation of class notes, reunion updates, and other purposes for which the volunteer and staff have agreed.

Class Web Sites: The Alumni Association will host a class Web site on the Alumni Network Services server free of charge. AlumniSiteBuilder and technical advice are available to support volunteers. The Association server is home to more than 100 Web sites maintained by various alumni groups.

Mailings: During quinquennial reunion years, the Association designs and subsidizes reunion mailings that market the class’ reunion events.

4. Class Treasury and Class Accounts

One of the first steps for a class after its graduation is to establish a bank account (typically a CD or savings account) for funds left over from undergraduate treasuries. MIT allows classes to use its tax ID number on these accounts and in other transactions, giving the class tax-exempt status. However, class treasury funds cannot be held in mutual funds, stocks, or other investment vehicles with potentially high yields to avoid possible tax problems for MIT. Classes generate revenue in three ways:

- solicitation of dues from classmates
- setting the price for reunion events high enough to generate a profit
- selling reunion souvenirs

Dues: Annual class dues are intended to be used to support activities between reunions and early expenses for class reunions. Classes collect dues early in the reunion planning process to assist with reunion committee expenses and planning. The treasurer receives, records, and deposits these checks in a timely fashion.

Tax-Exempt Status: Classes may choose to use MIT’s 501(c)(3) status, which provides exemption from federal taxes on interest-bearing class treasury accounts. *A class using this number has a legal obligation to report all income received to the Association, and, at the end of each fiscal year, the treasurer must send the Alumni Association a status report.* In some instances, classes may also be exempt from state taxes on purchases, such as sales tax, facility rental, catering, vendors, etc. Not all states offer an exemption, however, and not all expenses fall into the tax-exempt category.

Liability: Classes are responsible for all costs and liabilities related to reunion and other class events that take place away from the MIT campus, such as resorts. Before allowing a class to use the Association’s 501(c)3 status and/or negotiating a

contract for accommodations/services at the behest of a reunion committee, the Association will need to ensure that the class treasury can cover any potential liability.

Class Officer Job Descriptions

The following job descriptions are intended as a guide only. Officers and duties vary with the class, its projects and the individuals involved.

President:

- Acts as chief executive officer of the class.
- Takes the lead in determining class objectives.
- Works with all class officers to ensure that they collaborate effectively on behalf of their classmates.
- Sets the tone for the class and its relationship with MIT.
- Maintains contact with MIT on behalf of the class.
- In consultation with the Association staff, appoints a reunion chair and other volunteer positions.
- Ex-officio member of reunion and reunion gift committees.
- Fills officer vacancies arising between elections.

Vice President:

- Works with the class president and other officers in planning, organizing, and implementing class programs.
- Exercises the powers and duties of the president.
- Fills officer vacancies arising between elections.

Secretary:

- Edits and publishes Class Notes six times a year in *Technology Review*.
- Solicits news from classmates in a variety of ways, such as:
 - Holiday or birthday cards.
 - E-mail, call, or visit classmates.
 - Listing names of classmates in columns with request for news/information.
 - Requesting assistance of other class officers and classmates.
- Solely responsible for delivering complete column to *Technology Review*.

Treasurer:

- Accurately maintain all financial records of the class.
- Accurately record receipt of class dues with Alumni Association staff.
- Work in partnership with the reunion committee and Association staff to budget for the reunion.
- Report annually to class officers and Association staff on status of class accounts.
- Class treasurer terms begin July 1 of the reunion year and end December 31 of the following reunion year to allow for settlement of all reunion accounts.

Class Webmaster:

- Creates and maintains a class Web page, linked to the Alumni Association pages.
- Has knowledge of, or interest in, learning HTML or other Web development software.
- Updates class Web pages on a quarterly basis, at minimum.
- MIT provides server space and limited technical assistance.

The Alumni Association has developed AlumniSiteBuilder as a template for Webmasters with limited HTML knowledge who want a class Web site with an MIT identity.

Members-at-Large:

- Works with the class president and other officers in planning, organizing, and implementing class programs.
- Assume needed positions in the class associated with a particular project, such as a mini-reunion chair or class book editor.

Non-Reunion Year Guidelines for Class Officers

While each class officer has roles and responsibilities unique to his or her position, all class officers share the collective responsibility of keeping classmates connected, informed, and engaged with the class and MIT community.

Many classes maintain a high level of class-based activities in non-reunion years, and have consequently reaped the benefit of increased participation in reunion activities and reunion giving. Successful classes are led by officers who choose to stay in touch throughout their five-year terms; this has proven beneficial not only to the classes at large, but to the officers themselves.

The Alumni Association, with input from class officers, has drafted guidelines and best practices for how officers can maintain class connections, during and between MIT reunions. The ideas outlined here are basic practices your fellow officers can adopt to establish effective leadership during your five-year terms.

Best Practices for Class Officers

Set examples for classmates:

- Submit own Class Notes and assist secretary in seeking news from classmates.
- Make annual gift to MIT, particularly in support of the Class Project.
- Attend reunions and class events.
- Pay class dues.

Work together with other officers:

- Keep other officers informed of relevant class news (e.g. scholarship recipients).
- Copy fellow officers on class correspondence.
- Hold regular officer meetings or conference calls.
- Help Webmaster keep class Web site fresh, relevant and up-to-date
- Encourage at least one officer each year to attend the Alumni Leadership Conference
- Identify and recruit additional classmates to serve as future officers/volunteers
- Nominate outstanding volunteers for the Volunteer Honor Roll of Service or one of many national awards or leadership positions

Online Resources for Class Officers:

- Job descriptions:
- Officer toolkits:
- Webmasters reference:
- Volunteer recognition and awards:
- Alumni Association events calendar:

Year 1, July – June (immediately following your reunion):

- Add names, contact info, and brief bios of new class officers to class Web site.

- Fill any vacant officer positions.
- At least one class officer should attend ALC and report back to fellow officers.
- Hold annual class officer meeting. Sample agenda items:
 - Establish class goals for the next four non-reunion years.
 - Plan communications for the year, such as:
 - Post-reunion report to class.
 - Class Notes schedule, deadlines, and solicitation.
 - Regular updates to the class Web site (at least quarterly).
 - Plan non-reunion year events, such as a mini-reunion or smaller regional events where there is a critical mass of classmates, such as:
 - A class presence at a local club event (e.g. Class of 1989 table at Club of Boston Gala).
 - A group of classmates attending Tech Reunions events, such as Tech Night at Pops or Technology Day.
 - Casual social events in different cities (pub nights, barbecues at classmates' homes, tours of local attractions).
 - Large scale mini-reunion at a resort (e.g. Las Vegas, Miami). An event of this scale requires considerable planning.
 - Discuss dues collection to support next reunion. The Alumni Association recommends that classes collect dues once every five years. Most classes collect dues in their reunion year.
 - Annual officer reports, including:
 - Treasurer's report.
 - Secretary's report on deceased and missing alumni.
 - Class Agent's report on class giving and projects.

Year 2, July - June:

- At least one class officer should attend ALC and report back to fellow officers.
- Hold annual class officer meeting. Sample agenda items:
 - Reassess strategies discussed in Year 1; plan non-reunion year events.
 - Plan communication for the year. Please send an update to the class about the past year's activities.
 - Annual officer reports, including:
 - Treasurer's report.
 - Secretary's report on deceased and missing alumni.
 - Class Agent's report on class giving and projects.

Year 3, July - June:

- At least one class officer should attend ALC and report back to fellow officers.
- Hold annual class officer meeting. Sample agenda items:
 - Reassess strategies discussed in Year 2; plan non-reunion year event(s).
 - Plan communication for Year 3. Please send an update to the class about the past year's activities.
 - Annual officer reports, including:
 - Treasurer's report.
 - Secretary's report on deceased and missing alumni.
 - Class Agent's report on class giving and projects.
- Pre-reunion preparation:
 - Begin a class-wide effort to locate missing alumni.
 - Consider surveying class regarding possible reunion activities.

Year 4, July - June:

- As many officers as possible should attend ALC and report back to fellow officers.
- Hold annual class officer meeting. Sample agenda items:
 - Reassess strategies discussed in Year 3; plan pre-reunion year event(s).
 - Plan communications for Year 4. Please send an update to the class about the past year's activities.
 - Annual officer reports, including:
 - Treasurer's report.
 - Secretary's report on deceased and missing alumni.
 - Class Agent's report on class giving and projects.
- Pre-reunion preparation:
 - Collaborate with Alumni Association staff to select Reunion and Reunion Gift Chairs.
 - Assist new chairs in committee recruitment.
 - At least two officers and all chairs should participate in Alumni Association's Reunion Training in April and report back to fellow officers.
 - Reassess class finances and class dues.
 - Survey class regarding possible reunion activities, if not done in Year 3.

Year 5, July – June: REUNION YEAR

Role of Alumni Association Staff

The staff of the Alumni Association works with class officers to support class organizations and ensure successful class activities and reunions. The staff is always available to answer questions or give assistance:

Class Events and Activities

- Offer event ideas and provide event-planning expertise.
- Provide timelines, planning and budget worksheets, and examples of marketing.
- Review contracts.

Marketing and Communications

- Assistance in production, printing and sending of class communications in non-reunion years.
- Maintenance and supervision of class email list.
- Provide server space and technical support for class Web site.
- Maintain data on classmates, including contact information, volunteer record and giving history.

Class Officer Elections

- Provide list of classmates with volunteer history to assist in identifying potential candidates for class officer slate.
- Provide all technical support for on-line election in the six months leading up to the reunion.

Alumni Association Services and Programs

Training and Resources

Online Tools: The Alumni Association provides a variety of **online tools for class volunteers**.

Alumni Leadership Conference (ALC): Class officers and other volunteers, are invited and encouraged to participate in the annual Alumni Leadership Conference. This event, usually held in September, provides the opportunity to hear from Institute leaders about MIT happenings, attend volunteer training workshops, and to celebrate the work of outstanding volunteers. The conference includes special workshops for class officers and reunion volunteers.

Infinite Connection

The Infinite Connection is a suite of Web-based services offered by the Alumni Association to help alumni stay connected with MIT through out their lives. It's fast and easy to register for an Infinite Connection account—once you've chosen a username and password you can start using these great features.

Online Alumni Directory: By registering you can have free access to the entire MIT alumni community and can search for old friends and classmates. You can update your own listing in the directory and even add a picture or personal message.

Class Notes Online: Catch up with your class news online, with complete Class Notes dating back to 2005.

Staff Contact List

1935 – 1954	Donna Savelli	617-253-7558 dsavelli@mit.edu
1955 – 1969	Robert Dimmick	617-253-8225 rdimmick@mit.edu
1970 – 1979	Peter Muise	617-253-8203 pmuise@mit.edu
1980 – 1994	Jen Ademi	617-452-3675 jademi@mit.edu
1995 – 2009	Elena Lee	617-253-4547 elenalee@mit.edu