

A photograph of a modern building with large glass windows and a courtyard at dusk. The building's interior lights are on, and the courtyard is paved with grey bricks. There are some outdoor seating areas with tables and chairs, and some small trees and plants. The sky is dark with some clouds.

# CLASS AGENT HANDBOOK



**Grinnell College**  
Office of Development  
and Alumni Relations



Dear Class Agent,

We would like to start this letter with a note of thanks. Thank you for your support, dedication, and enthusiasm for Grinnell College and the alumni community.

As you will learn, Class Agents play a significant role in promoting and sustaining relationships between your classmates and the College. In your new role as an ambassador for the College, you will be a critical part of Grinnell College's efforts to engage the talent, passion for learning, and generosity of its alumni.

Through your communication, you will connect your classmates with Grinnell from miles, states, and countries away. It will be a space to celebrate and support your class and their individual successes—awards, promotions, family additions, weddings. It will also offer support through the difficult and challenging times. It can offer advice during a tough time, honor the life of a lost classmate, or celebrate a birth of a future Grinnellian.

Welcome to the Class Agent Handbook, your guide to navigating your volunteer role. Enclosed, we hope you will find the resources you need; tips and tricks to make your time in this role a success. If you have additions to this resource, please share them with us! We would love to hear your ideas and add them to this document.

Again, thank you for everything you do.

Best regards,



Jessica Stewart

Senior Associate Director of Alumni and Donor Relations

## MISSION STATEMENT

Class Agents are a vital part of Grinnell College's efforts to engage the talent, passion for learning, and generosity of its alumni—starting in the first year of college and continuing through a lifetime:

- Class Agents should foster existing connections and promote new relationships among their fellow classmates, other alumni, and the College.
- Class Agents should model a spirit of volunteerism and giving back to the College.

Class Agents should inspire excitement about the College and keep Grinnell present in the lives of their classmates beyond graduation, to span time and distance and keep the flame alive.



# JOB DESCRIPTION

The Class Agent should play a leading role in **promoting and sustaining relationships between classmates and the College.**

The Class Agent should **build and enhance alumni networking** through various methods, such as through class letters and emails, social media, phone calls, listserv usage, etc.

The Class Agent should serve as a **contributor to the College's history** by submitting documentation (i.e. previous class letters or emails, curator of social media sites, etc.) to the College archives.

The Class Agent should choose to engage classmates by **communicating relevant College information** (as they deem appropriate), such as regional events, virtual engagement opportunities, reunion updates, volunteer opportunities, and campus events, etc.

The Class Agent should be a **conduit for information to the College regarding classmate updates**, etc.

While fundraising is not a direct job responsibility of Class Agents, it is expected that **they support philanthropic efforts and the continual creation of a culture of philanthropy** for their class and the College.

It is highly encouraged that Class Agents **make a yearly gift** to the College to support the efforts of their fellow volunteers, Class Fund Directors, and showcase leadership within the class.

Class Agents are expected to **play a role in planning reunion** by being an active participant on the class committee and assisting with recruitment of the committee. While not required, Class Agents are often looked upon for leadership during the reunion planning process.

# EXPECTATIONS

Class Agents should demonstrate whole-class engagement twice a year, including at least one class letter or email. Other engagements can include posting items on the listserv, actively working within social media, or using some of the other strategies outlined above. Different Agents will employ a mix of strategies to engage classmates in a way that resonates with the class.

Class Agents should come back to Grinnell to attend Volunteer Weekend activities and Reunion Weekends as often as they are able.

The College will monitor signs of class engagement including reunion attendance, regional event attendance, giving levels, volume of contributions to class emails/letters, etc. They may also survey alumni to measure feelings of engagement. Class Agents will receive reports from the College and should provide feedback to the College in terms of how to build continuing engagement.

Alumni Relations staff will do periodic phone check-ins and webinars with Class Agents throughout the year.

A Class Agent should respond to annual self-evaluation forms sent out by the College in a format that is easy for the Class Agent to complete on a timely basis.

If a Class Agent is struggling to meet these expectations, Alumni Relations staff will reach out to the volunteer to determine the best path forward.

# GATHERING NEWS

Here are some ways to gather class notes from your fellow classmates for an upcoming letter. If you have any additional suggestions, please share them!

**Published News:** Feel free to include any published news about your classmates in your letter or email. It is recommended to contact your classmates to confirm the news prior to sharing it in your letter or email.

**Email Blasts:** Contact the Alumni Relations staff to send out an email blast to your class. This is an easy and quick way to reach a large percentage of your class.

**Individual Contacts:** A lot of success can be seen in contacting your classmates directly for news and updates regarding their lives. To assist in your efforts, contact Alumni Relations staff for an updated roster. These contacts can be made via a variety of mechanisms: email, letters, phone, text, etc.

**Social Media:** Contacting your classmates can also be done through social media. Many people offer updates on their lives through these online tools. Prior to including it in your letter or email, it is recommended to ask the classmate for permission.

**Ask Other Volunteers:** Be sure to rely on your fellow class volunteers for additional news about your classmates. They can help expand your reach.

**Questions:** Some Class Agents have found success in asking a question in their letter or email. Answers to the question can be found in the following communication.

**A Note of Caution:** Prior to sharing any information, make sure you have permission from your classmate to share with the wider class.



# CLASS LETTER WRITING

Now that you have some class notes, you can begin writing your class letter or email.

**Names/Nicknames:** When sharing news about your fellow classmates, be careful to spell names correctly. You can check name spellings by using the online directory or emailing the office to request an updated class roster. It is also recommended to avoid using nicknames in your letter. The first mention of a classmate's name in a letter should be bolded or in ALL CAPTIAL LETTERS (i.e. John Smith or JOHN SMITH). If your classmate has a maiden name, that should be included in the first mention of their name as well.

**Class Years:** Alums from other classes that are mentioned in the letter should not be formatted with bold or all capital letters, but simply with their full name and two-digit class year (i.e. John Smith '75). If you do not know the class year, Alumni Relations staff will be able to assist you.

**Photos:** Including pictures in your letter is welcomed and encouraged. All letters that go out via email will have colored photos, but printed letters will be in black and white, unless there is a special circumstance. If you are having trouble arranging the photos in your letter, you may attach them to an email along with your letter, and Alumni Relations staff can help arrange them for you.

**Deceased Classmates:** The class letter or email is a resource for all information regarding your class. The DAR office will send out a list of recently deceased alumni to all Class Agents once a month. If a member of your class is on that list, please make note and share that information in your class letter. If you need help finding an obituary or would like further information regarding your classmate, please reach out to the office.

**Fact Checking:** When writing your class letter or email, make sure to fact check class notes—especially if note was not given to you by the source.

**Include a variety of people:** Throughout your writing process, include a variety of voices to allow for inclusivity of the whole class. If you have class notes from the same people, make an effort to reach out to different people.

# SENDING YOUR CLASS LETTER OR EMAIL

Once you have completed your letter or email, please email it to your DAR representative, preferably in Word format, though PDF is acceptable if necessary. Also, include a transmittal form, which will share specifications on how you would like the letter processed and sent. Once we receive it, we will proofread and format it to the College specifications, and then return the final draft to you for your approval.

After final approval is received, the letter or email will be sent to your class as specified in the transmittal form. If being sent via email, there will be a two to three-day delay as the final letter is processed for online accessibility. If being sent via postal mail, you may specify two options for mailing in your transmittal form. The letter can either be mailed directly from the DAR office immediately or all letters and prepaid envelopes can be printed and mailed directly to you for stuffing and mailing.

Once you have received the letter or email, please alert the office that it has arrived and then keep a copy for your records.





## SUPPLIES

After each communication is processed, you will receive via email or postal mail, an updated mailing roster, class roster, and transmittal form from the office. The mailing roster is a list of everyone who received your class letter, including those from outside your class who have asked to receive the letter for your class year. If a classmate has opted out of communications from the College, they will not be on the mailing roster. The class roster is a list of all living members of your class, as well as their email, phone number, and mailing address. If they have asked that any of this information not be shared, it will not show up on the class roster.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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