



MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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REUNION PLANNING GUIDE

# Mount Royal University Alumni Association Reunion Planning Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

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This guide is designed to assist you in planning and conducting a successful reunion event. Reunions should be fun, interesting and stimulating for group members. There is no standard reunion format. Your class or group has its own personality and will remember the college in a unique way. As well, the kind of reunion you may organize for your 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary may be significantly different from the one you hold for your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Be creative when thinking about what kinds of activities you would like to plan.

The Office of Alumni and Community Relations is ready to assist you in organizing your reunion and will work with you to make your reunion a special experience for you and your reunion group. You can request a copy of your class list by contacting the Office of Alumni and Community Relations. In addition, Alumni Relations staff can assist you in finding the names of “lost” classmates, and help your class to locate missing individuals. If you are interested in reconnecting with your fellow alumni, we are happy to help.

If you have suggestions on how to improve the organization and/or content of the guide, please contact the Mount Royal University Office of Alumni and Community Relations, by phone at 403-440-7000; toll free at 1-866-441-6101, or e-mail, [alumni@mtroyal.ca](mailto:alumni@mtroyal.ca).

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## WHY PLAN A REUNION?

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Reunions give you a chance to reacquaint yourself with former classmates and friends, expand your professional network, and get up to date news on how your old faculty or department is doing. When you come back to Mount Royal University, you can revisit your favorite places and see how the college is growing. Reunions are guideposts, marking the path between rich experiences of the past and the promise of the future.

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## PLANNING AND ORGANIZING A REUNION

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The keys to creating a successful reunion involve a strong reunion committee and as much advance planning as possible. Planning and organizing a reunion is rewarding but involves work. An effective reunion committee will make the work both manageable and enjoyable. Remember that the success of your reunion is directly related to the energy and commitment of your committee. Your reunion committee can meet as often as you feel necessary in person or via conference call or e-mail.

### The Reunion Committee:

A strong, well organized committee is an essential part of a reunion, and including as many people as possible in the planning can build ownership and enthusiasm.

- Organize your committee so that the work is spread out among several people. Your committee should include a chair or co-chairs and several committee members with designated responsibilities. The chairperson and the committee should work closely together to ensure the class reunion will run smoothly, be fun for everyone and lessen the workload for everyone.
- The size of your committee depends partly on the number in your class and how long it has been since your graduation or last reunion. The availability of individual members and the scope of the reunion event are other factors to consider when establishing the committee size and structure.

The chairperson should:

- Assemble the committee
- Direct all plans and act as liaison between the committee and the Office of Alumni and Community Relations
- Coordinate telephone committees
- Work with the Office of Alumni and Community Relations to update classmate contact information and coordinate correspondence to reunion group members

Committee members should:

- Promote the event by telephone and through other direct contacts
- Encourage attendance and build enthusiasm for the reunion
- Coordinate memorabilia, advertising, promotion and hospitality

- Trace lost graduates/group members
- Plan special activities and entertainment

### Planning Your Reunion:

Planning is the key to an exciting and memorable reunion. Steps to take when you are planning your reunion include the following:

1. **Contact the Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events at the Office of Alumni and Community Relations.** Advise the coordinator that you are interested in planning a reunion and request assistance throughout the planning process.
2. **Complete a Confidentiality Form.** Once you have signed the form, a list of your reunion group members and their contact information may be provided to you for use within your committee.
3. **Strike a committee.** Enlist classmates who are able to invest the time and who have a strong interest in planning the best reunion possible.
4. **Identify target audiences and estimate attendance.** Typically, small groups have a 50% or better turnout from the immediate region and a 25-30% turnout from elsewhere. On average, 75% will bring a guest, if invited. Be sure to take into consideration whether you would like the reunion to include group members only or if the reunion will be open to friends and family. It is possible to have multiple events - some for group members only and some that include friends and family.
5. **Pick a date and time for your event.** Select a date that is likely to be convenient for the largest number of people. Consider other major events being held at the college or in the city and religious and statutory holidays.
6. **Decide on a type of event.** The type of reunion you hold will depend on the number of attendees, the length of the reunion, facilities available, your budget and how much effort you wish to dedicate to planning. Be creative, as people will remember a unique reunion. There are many choices available to you as a reunion planner including:
 

• Wine and Cheese reception	• Dance
• Off-campus excursions or city tours	• Sporting events such as Golf games
• Brunches, lunches or dinners	• Picnics
	• Concerts
	• Key note speakers

7. **Decide on venue.** Some venue suggestions include:
  - At Lincoln Park Campus
    - Centre for Continuous Learning - Ross Glen Hall
    - Lincoln Park Room
    - Terrace
    - Liberty Lounge
    - College Residences
    - Other reception and classroom areas
  - Off campus
    - Parks
    - Hotels
    - Lodges and Resorts
    - Restaurants
    - Private residences
    - Out of town venues
  
8. **Plan the menu.** Please speak with the Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events for details about catering options available. All catering including liquor sales inside college buildings are provided by Sodexo Food Services. If you plan to have an at-home or off-campus event, the Office of Alumni Office can assist you in securing catering through the college food service provider or a local caterer.
  
9. **Plan your program.** For any event, be sure to plan a workable program/agenda that is of interest to the majority who will attend. You may want to include a tour of your old faculty or new facilities on campus. Tours of the College can be arranged.
  
10. **Plan audio/visual requirements.** Determine AV requirements for your reunion such as microphones, speakers, podium, and presentation devices including slide projector, VPU for PowerPoint, screens, etc. If the reunion is held at college campus, inform the Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events of your needs at the time you are requesting the venue as it may affect location and costs. If the reunion is held off campus, let the venue provider know and consider these additional costs in your budget.
  
11. **Invite special guests.** You may wish to invite members of your reunion group to give a keynote address, i.e. those who are in a high-profile position or have experienced or accomplished something exceptional since they left the college. As well, you may wish to invite guests such as favorite instructors or college personnel. Please remember to include the costs in your budget if you wish to offer special guest complimentary tickets in your events and if any speaking fees will be paid.

The Office of Alumni and Community Relations staff can assist you in locating available former faculty or staff members you may wish to invite.

12. **Plan special touches.** Prizes, commemorative merchandise, and special decorations or displays of memorabilia can add a special touch to your reunion. If the event is on-campus, mention the special touches you would like to include to the Coordinator, Alumni Chapter and Events, who may assist you in these areas including a possible donation of prizes or giveaways for your reunion participants.
13. **Decide on photography needs.** Capture your reunion with a group photo and shots of special moments. The Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events can assist you in booking a photographer, as well as distributing photos to your reunion group members and displaying shots on the MRC alumni website and in *Reflections* magazine. Photography and mailing costs should be included in the event budget.
14. **Identify special needs.** Some of your classmates may require special considerations at an event (transportation, parking, dietary needs, etc.). Consider these needs in your planning process. If you determine this is a family event, child supervision should be considered. In the registration information, you may offer a discounted meal fee for the children's meals based on the age of the child.
15. **Plan accommodations.** Your committee may be able to arrange a group rate at a local hotel/motel; be sure to book well in advance. It is recommended that the attendees finalize individual accommodation arrangements including payment with the accommodation provider. College residences may also be available for your reunion. The Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events can provide you with options for both on and off campus accommodation.
16. **Develop a budget.** Once you have made all the decisions regarding the program, menu, special touches, etc., you can develop the budget and decide on the ticket price for your reunion. Two options when developing your ticket price are:
  - Set a desired ticket price and work back from there to determine what options will fit that ticket price.
  - Determine the costs for everything you would like to accomplish and set the ticket price to ensure all costs are covered.

Unless your group would like to raise funds to support a specific initiative such as a scholarship, reunions are designed to work on a break-even basis. The Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events can offer assistance on developing the budget and can advise you on any items that you may have overlooked.

**17. Inform your classmates.** The reunion communication plan should include different types of contacts with class members. The Office of Alumni and Community Relations can assist the planning committee to develop a communication plan and can help promote the event in the alumni magazine, in the alumni e-newsletter and on the website.

Provided there is adequate time, two mailings are recommended to promote the reunion:

First Mailing – (6-9 months before the reunion date) this will be an initial “save the date” invitation. Be sure to share your enthusiasm with them and personalize the letter. We recommend you list “lost” members in your letter since many group members will know the whereabouts of these “lost” members and can assist you and the Office of Alumni and Community Relations in updating their contact information. This first mailing will announce the date of your class reunion, explain the tentative plans, and encourage classmates to attend. This mailing can be sent also via email, providing addresses are available, to save cost and time.

Second Mailing – (3-4 months prior to date of reunion) An invitation letter will include detailed plans for the reunion including the purpose of reunion, logistical details, costs, registration information and process, deadlines, and key contacts. Emphasize the importance of the RSVP deadline – this ensures that you have an updated reservation count for meals, etc.

Telephone contact is a critical part of the reunion plan. It is imperative that your committee make personal contact with as many group members as possible.

Telephone campaign- (3-4 weeks following the mailing of the reunion invitation letter and registration information) The exact timeline of the campaign will depend on the reunion date. If more than one committee member is making calls, develop a script that everyone can use as a reference to ensure that information provided is consistent. Consider the typical questions and answers that may come up.

**18.**

**19. Reunion Day.** To ensure the event is successful, keep in mind the following last minute items:

- If the event is held off campus, be sure to finalize and confirm all details no later than a couple weeks in advance.

- All those who register before the event should have a nametag ready for them when they arrive.
- Make arrangements for visible signage to be available for all areas including parking.
- Consider additional volunteer needs on the day of including welcoming and registration stations.

If the event is held on campus, the Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events can assist with the coordination of all final logistics for the event.

- 19. Develop a follow-up plan.** It is important to thank your classmates for attending and to encourage them to stay in touch. As part of your communication plan, be sure to consider how you will thank everyone who attended.
- 20. Relax and have a great time!**

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## RESPONSIBILITIES

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### What the Office of Alumni and Community Relations can do for you:

- Provide a list of classmates or members of your group and available contact information
- Assist in distributing notices to your group members
- For on-campus reunions, we can assist in many aspects of your reunion arrangements including on-campus room bookings, registration, audio/visual needs, decorations, and catering. For all reunions, assistance can also be provided in areas such as mailings and photography.
- Coordinate special correspondence with VIPs
- Answer questions about event planning
- Assist in developing a reunion budget
- Promote your reunion in *Reflections* magazine (if event details are known by publication deadline) and on the Alumni Website and in Alumni e-newsletters.

We recommend that you initially have a meeting with the Coordinator, Alumni Chapters and Events in person or via a phone to determine and confirm your needs and to arrange assistance from the Office of Alumni and Community Relations. You never know unless you ask! Some event and production services require a fee, but will likely result in reducing costs and time.

### What will be your responsibility?

- Decide on the type of event you would like to have
- Plan and confirm all details
- Contact and inform reunion group members about the reunion and to encourage attendance
- Coordinate registration
- Determine all volunteer requirements and recruit volunteers
- Have fun and reconnect with fellow classmates
- Ask for assistance where needed

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## REUNION CRITICAL PATH

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### 4 - 12 months before reunion

- Call the Office of Alumni and Community Relations to discuss your plans
- Call or email your classmates to form a committee
- Select a date and location
- Make your reservations and determine menu, music, entertainment, registration, etc.
- Ask the Office of Alumni and Community Relations for a list of your classmates and their contact information (must sign Oath of Confidentiality)
- Find lost people through your first mail-out and your committee members
- Provide contact information changes to the Office of Alumni and Community Relations
- Get names and contact information for department/faculty or other guests that you want to invite (the Office of Alumni and Community Relations can help you with this)
- Create budget and decide on participant fees
- Create initial “Save-the-Date” letters and distribute to available list
- Arrange for information to be included on the MRC Alumni website, in alumni e-newsletters and *Reflections* magazine (if date corresponds with publication date)

### 1- 3 months before day of the reunion

- Update lists with found classmate information
- Create invitations and registration packages
- Make follow-up phone calls to reinforce the invitation and address any questions

### 2 weeks to day of reunion

- Confirm all logistical details with providers, i.e. entertainment, catering, bookings, AV requirements, photographer, decorations and special touches, etc.
- Identify all committee and volunteer jobs during the event
- Finalize numbers for catering, etc.

### Day of Reunion

- Make arrangements for exchange of fees if you are allowing day-of registration
- Relax and enjoy the day
- Remind classmates to stay in touch through future reunion, chapter/branch or college-wide activities
- Take photographs of class groups and special moments throughout the reunion

### After the Reunion

- Write all of your thank-you notes and reconcile all expenses

- Send a written summary and pictures to the Office of Alumni and Community Relations
  - Congratulate yourself and committee members in a special way
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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Office of Alumni and Community Relations is located in F101, along Main Street at Mount Royal University, next to the Mount Royal Bookstore and across from the Library.

Please feel free to drop by our offices to ask questions or just pay us a visit.

### Our mailing information is:

Office of Alumni and Community Relations  
Mount Royal University  
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW  
Calgary AB T3E 6K6

Phone: 403-440-7000

Toll free: 1-866-441-6101

Fax: 403-440-7070

E-mail: [alumni@mtroyal.ca](mailto:alumni@mtroyal.ca)

Web: [www.mtroyal.ca/alumni](http://www.mtroyal.ca/alumni)

### For specific inquiries, you are welcome to contact one of our staff:

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We are available throughout the year to answer questions about reunion planning and to help you prepare for a wonderful event for you and your classmates. Good luck planning your reunion!