REUNION PLANNING GUIDE
SUGGESTED PLANNING TIMELINE

12-24 MONTHS
- Begin planning and generating ideas
- Recruit committee members and set initial meeting
- Select dates
- Begin making inquiries about hotel, banquet/meeting space, etc.
- Request a mailing list of potential guests from the MSU Alumni Office

9-12 MONTHS
- Begin spreading the word (formally or informally)
- Update addresses and collect email addresses
- Send a “Mark Your Calendar” reminder
- Make reservations with hotels, facilities, caterers, photographers, etc.

6-9 MONTHS
- Gather ideas for activities and entertainment

6 MONTHS
- Finalize all reservations with hotels, facilities, caterers, photographers, etc.
- Finalize schedule of activities/events
- Determine participant cost
- Set budget and designate financial account
- Arrange for special tours of campus sites, i.e. residence halls, campus tour, facility tours, college visits

4 MONTHS
- Continue to meet with committee
- Make informal contact with potential guests and encourage them to attend
- Purchase gifts, door prizes, etc.

3 MONTHS
- Design/print reservation materials
- Compose email content and have the MSU Alumni Office review
- Request name tags and decorations from the MSU Alumni Office

2 MONTHS
- Send reservation materials

3-6 WEEKS
- Accept reservations
- Discuss details with hotels, facilities, caterers, photographers, etc.
- Re-confirm all arrangements

2 WEEKS
- Assemble registration packets — include name tags

1 WEEK
- Call caterers with final number

ALUMNI RECORDS

In today’s mobile society, it can be difficult to keep alumni records up-to-date. The MSU Alumni Office can assist you by providing the most current addresses in list and/or mailing label format. Please allow four weeks to receive the mailing list. Email services are also available. Again, it is never too early to start!

Under no circumstances can alumni lists be used for solicitations or political purposes. Ask the reunion coordinator for further details and for the paperwork required to receive an alumni list.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Once you have a good idea of what your reunion will entail, it’s very important to set a budget. This is one of the most difficult and important things to do. By calculating all of your costs initially, you can set realistic prices that will cover all of the reunion’s expenses.

Step One: Make a list of all of the expenses that you expect to incur. Don’t forget to include tax and gratuity, bartending fees, audio-visual fees, awards, photographer fees, etc. Consult the list on page eight for additional items to consider.

Step Two: Consider sponsors and provide the opportunity for donations. Do any members of your organization have business or personal connections that could potentially defray the costs of the reunion? Even something as simple as having items donated for door prizes or receiving a discount on printing can be helpful in enhancing the reunion and/or cutting costs. In addition, you may want to consider asking group members who are unable to attend the reunion to make a contribution (monetary or otherwise) to further offset expenses. You might be surprised at how many people are willing to help.

Step Three: Set the cost per guest. You may choose to put one price tag on the whole package, or itemize the events. The package approach is simpler and is recommended for smaller reunions; the itemized approach allows more flexibility for your guests, and works well with larger groups and multiple-day reunions.

Since each reunion is different, some of these guidelines may not apply to you. Keep in mind, however, that there are very few things that you can do too early!
COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY

Nothing is more important than keeping members of your group informed about what is going on. Here are some different techniques:

“MARK YOUR CALENDAR” POSTCARD OR LETTER
This early mailer/email can be sent out nine-12 months prior to your reunion or as soon as your dates have been selected. This works well with groups of all sizes and is easy and inexpensive. Simply include the dates, a theme, if applicable, and a promise of more information to follow.

INVITATION
This is the most important piece you will send out. We recommend providing as much information as you can, including a schedule of events, locations, prices and contact information for those that alumni can call with questions. Make sure you have designed the form to include everything you need to know about your alumni, their guests and their intentions for the reunion.

SUGGESTED REGISTRATION FIELDS
These fields will help gather the proper data needed for the MSU Alumni Office to locate former classmates in the MSU database and will help you learn more about those attending the reunion.

- First name
- Middle initial
- Last name
- Maiden name
- Nickname
- Year(s) of undergraduate degree graduation
- Year(s) of graduate degree graduation
- Address
- City
- State
- Zip
- Home telephone number
- Cell phone number
- Email address
- Spouse name
- Did your spouse graduate from MSU? If so, in which year?
- Which events would you like to attend (sample events only listed below):
  - Cocktail reception [yes/no]
  - Football game [yes/no]
  - Reunion dinner [yes/no]
- What have you been doing since graduation? Please provide your bio for the biography booklet.
- Please provide memories for the reunion booklet.
- What student organizations were you a member of?
- Do you require a vegetarian meal or have special dietary needs?
- Please consider a monetary donation to help support this reunion.

CONFIRMATION CARDS/EMAIL
Ideal for larger groups, confirmation cards or an email can be sent upon receipt of the registration materials. Confirmation cards/email are especially helpful if a time change occurs on your schedule or if there is a discrepancy between the registration form and the payment.

CALLING COMMITTEE
Past experience has shown us that alumni are most likely to attend a reunion if they receive a personal contact from a friend who is also attending.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION
Consider developing a Facebook group. This will give you and former classmates a way to connect with one another and will allow you to locate more classmates.

USING COMMITTEES EFFECTIVELY
Forming a reunion committee provides a number of benefits. First, it divides up the amount of work so that many people feel like they have a hand in the success of the reunion. Secondly, it provides for a checks-and-balances system. If there is something that you forget, chances are that someone else will catch it. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, using a committee is the best way to spread the word and thus, increase attendance.

THE CALLING COMMITTEE
Calling committees are your best ambassadors for generating interest in a reunion. No matter how clever the theme or how exciting the schedule, the one thing that will really draw your alumni is the promise of seeing their friends again.
The idea of a calling committee is a simple one. Committee members agree to call (or write, tag or email) information about the reunion to their former classmates, urging them to attend. In addition, assuming that they will be attending, they endorse the reunion on all of your correspondence. Thus, when your alumni receive an invitation, they are receiving it from a whole committee of people rather than from just one person. A dozen names on a letterhead indicates a great deal of support and thus a large number in attendance.

When selecting committee members, try to include the most active members of your organization. If your reunion spans many years, try to include at least one representative from each class year. Your alumni will want to hear from someone they know.

We recommend giving committee members specific guidelines on what to include in their correspondence. Thus, when your alumni receive an invitation, they are receiving it from a whole committee of people rather than from just one person. A dozen names on a letterhead indicates a great deal of support and thus a large number in attendance.

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ITEMS TO CONSIDER

Here are some things to think about when making plans and setting your budget. You may or may not want to utilize all of these for your reunion, but it’s better to consider them up front than to do so after your prices have been set!

- Hotel/accommodations
- Banquet/meeting space
- Caterer
- Tax and gratuity
- Bartender
- Audio/visual equipment
- Room set-up needs (podium, stage, head table, etc.)
- Table linens
- Centerpieces
- Decorations
- Flowers
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Name tags
- Name tag badges and lanyards
- Placecards
- Awards
- Gifts/favors
- Printing
- Postage
- Transportation
- Emcee
- Entertainment
- Speakers
- Music
- Honorarium
- Transportation
- Committee recognition

Discuss your ideas with the sales and catering representative at the facility of your choice. They may have suggestions and/or may be able to supply some of these things at little or no cost.

CAMPUS CONTACTS

The MSU Alumni Office’s reunion coordinator is available to help you find the campus resources that you need. In addition, we work with many local businesses for our events, and we will gladly make recommendations for any of your needs. Some frequently requested information is below.

CAMPUS FACILITIES

- MSU Union, (517) 432-2446, union.msu.edu
- Kellogg Center Hotel & Conference Center, (800) 875-5090, kelloggcenter.com
- University Club of MSU, (517) 353-5111, universityclubofmsu.org
- Candlewood Suites, (517) 351-818, cwsuites.com
- Hotels: A complete list of area hotels can be found at the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor’s Bureau website, lansing.org.

UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS

- Admissions Office, (517) 355-8332
- Alumni Office, (517) 884-1000
- Athletic Department, (517) 355-1623
- Athletic Ticket Office, (517) 355-1610, (800) GO-STATE
- Forest Akers Golf Courses, (517) 355-1635
- Recreational Sports & Fitness Services, (517) 355-5250
- President’s Office, (517) 355-6560
- Eli & Edythe Broad Museum, (517) 884-4800
- MSU Museum, (517) 355-7474
- Wharton Center for Performing Arts, (517) 432-2000
- Abrams Planetarium, (517) 355-4672
- Residence Hall Events, (517) 353-9300
- Jack Breslin Student Events Center, (517) 432-1989

To reach additional departments or individuals on campus, consult the Michigan State University website at msu.edu or contact Reunion Coordinator Regina Cross at (517) 353-3069 or crossreg@msu.edu. For additional information, assistance and publicity contact the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor’s Bureau at (888) 252-6746 or lansing.org.