

The background features a large, light gray watermark of the Lakehead University crest. The crest is a shield-shaped emblem containing a central grid, two open books on either side, and a laurel wreath arching over the top. The text 'Lakehead' is written in a serif font across the top of the crest, and 'ALUMNI' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the crest.

# Lakehead **ALUMNI**

Reunion Planning Guide

## **Why Plan a Reunion?**

Reunions give you a chance to reacquaint yourself with old classmates and friends, expand your professional network and get up to date news on how your old faculty is doing. When you come to Lakehead, you can revisit favourite haunts and see how the university is growing. Reunions say as much about the future as they do about the past.

Your reunion committee members plan your reunion with help from staff at the Office of Alumni Relations. Planning and organizing a reunion is rewarding but involves plenty of work too. You must write letters of invitation, choose a venue and plan and promote the event. To be successful, your reunion depends on a strong reunion committee. Many committed hands will make the work both manageable and enjoyable. Enthusiasm is contagious, and the example you and your committee set will make the difference. Invitees who are not contacted personally by a committee member are unlikely to attend – there's no substitute for personal contact. The strength of your team will build commitment from many of your reunion group members. Remember that your success is directly related to the energy and commitment of your committee!

We support and encourage all group reunions, although special attention will be paid to 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> class anniversaries. There is no standard reunion format. Your class or group has its own personality and will remember the university in a unique way. As well, the kind of reunion you may organize for your 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary may be much different from the one you hold for your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Reunions should be fun, interesting and stimulating for group members. Be creative when thinking about what kinds of activities you would like to plan.

We would like to offer this as a guide for you to use in organizing your reunion. Our staff are ready to help you organize your reunion and are there every step of the way to give you ideas, encouragement and a wealth of experience. We'll work closely with you to make your reunion a special experience for you and your reunion group.

## **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 size of your committee depends on the number in your class, and how long it's been since your graduation or last reunion. A large committee is very helpful to the reunion chairperson -- it takes some of the responsibility off his/her shoulders and lessens the workload. A reunion is supposed to be fun for everyone! Class reunions will run smoothly if the chairperson and the committee work together closely.

### **The Chairperson should:**

- Assemble the committee.
- Direct all plans and act as liaison between the committee and the Office of Alumni Relations.
- Coordinate telephone committees.
- Work with the Alumni Officer to update addresses and telephone numbers and draft correspondence to reunion group members.

### **Committee members should:**

- Participate on the telephone committee to encourage attendance & build enthusiasm.
- Coordinate memorabilia, advertising, promotion and hospitality.
- Trace lost graduates/group members.
- Plan special activities & entertainment.

## Planning Your Reunion

Planning is the key to an exciting and memorable reunion. Here is a list of the steps to take when you are planning your reunion.

1. **Contact the Alumni Officer** at the Office of Alumni Relations.  
Please advise them that you would be interested in planning a reunion and they will be able to assist you throughout the planning process.
2. Sign a **confidentiality form**.  
Once you have signed the form, a list of your reunion group members and their contact information will be given to you for use within your committee.
3. Strike a **committee**.  
Enlist classmates who are able to spend the time and who have a strong interest in planning the best reunion possible.
4. Estimate **attendance and target audience**.  
Universities that have been conducting reunions for some time indicate that, in their experience, small groups have a 50% or better turnout from the immediate region and a 25-30% turnout from elsewhere. On average, 75% of those who attend will bring a guest. 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 as well. It is possible to have multiple events – one for group members only and one that includes 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 and that doesn't conflict with other major events being held on campus or in the city. Speak with the Alumni Officer for a listing of these events.
6. Decide on a **type of event**.  
There are many choices available to you as a reunion planner. The type of reunion you hold will depend on: the length of the reunion, facilities available, your budget and how much effort you wish to dedicate to planning. Be creative! People will remember your unique reunion.

Some possible reunion ideas include:

- Wine & cheese reception
- Off-campus excursions
- Brunches, lunches or dinners
- Dance
- Boat cruise
- Golf game
- Picnic
- City tour
- Concerts
- Key note speakers

7. Decide on a **venue**.

Some venue suggestions:

On campus:

- Lakehead University Outpost
- The Agora
- Faculty Lounge
- Lakehead University Residence
- University Centre
- ATAC
- Avila Centre (Alumni House)

Off campus:

- Kakabeka Falls
- Sibley Provincial Park
- Trowbridge Falls
- Chippewa Park
- The Marina
- a resort
- a restaurant
- a private residence
- White Fox Inn
- Valhalla Inn
- Victoria Inn
- Days Inn
- The Charity Casino

8. Plan the **menu**.

Please speak with the Alumni Officer for details about catering options on campus. Multiple catering options are available for any event from a reception to a formal dinner. Customized catering and bar service is also available. To view menus, please visit:

<http://confservices.lakeheadu.ca/default.aspx?ID=9>

9. Plan your **program**.

Organize a tour of your old faculty or new facilities on campus. Tours of the University can be arranged, as can tours of Thunder Bay points of interest. For any event, be sure to plan a workable program/agenda. The Alumni Officer is available to assist in this process.

10. Plan **entertainment**.

You may wish to include some form of entertainment for your reunion, be it a local band, DJ etc.

11. Plan **audio/visual requirements**.

If you would like to have a microphone, speakers, podium, slideshow etc. at your reunion, please make these requests known to the Alumni Officer. A nominal fee to rent this equipment will be included in your reunion budget.

12. Invite **special guests**.

You may wish to invite members of your reunion group to give a keynote address (i.e. those who are in high-profile positions or who have done something special with their life). As well, you may wish to invite guests such as favourite professors or other university personnel (such as Deans or Chairs of departments). Please remember, if you wish to offer special guests complimentary tickets to your event, this must be included in your reunion budget. Also remember to include any fees paid to keynote speakers.

13. Plan **special touches**.

You may wish to have prizes or issue some commemorative merchandise at your reunion. You may also wish to decorate your venue and/or bring memorabilia to display. Discuss these and other considerations well in advance with the Alumni Officer. The Alumni Association may be able to assist with donations of prizes and trinkets for your reunion.

14. Decide on **photography** needs.

Many groups like to remember their reunion with a group photo taken at the event. The Alumni Officer can assist you in booking a photographer to take a group photo and other photos at your event. Following the event, the Office of Alumni Relations can assist you in distributing photos to your reunion group members. A nominal fee is charged for this service (photographer, developing and mailing costs).

15. Identify **special needs**.

Some of your classmates may require special consideration at an event (for example, a ramp entrance to a building or special dietary needs).

16. Plan **accommodation**.

If your committee is arranging a group rate at a local hotel/motel, be sure to book well in advance. The responsibility for booking accommodation is entirely up to the reunion committee. The Alumni Officer can provide you with options both on and off campus.

17. 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 a ticket price for your reunion. There are two options when developing your ticket price:

- a) set a desired ticket price and work back from there to determine what options will fit that ticket price
- b) determine the costs for everything you would like to accomplish and set the ticket price to ensure all costs are covered.

Reunions are designed to work on a break-even basis. The Alumni Officer can offer assistance on developing the budget and can advise you on any items you may have inadvertently overlooked.

18. Write your **invitation letter**.

This letter will outline your planned reunion activities and will be the first time your reunion group members are informed about your upcoming event. Be sure to share your enthusiasm with them! You can also assist in personalizing the letter. We recommend you list "lost" members in your letter since many group members will know the whereabouts of the "lost" members and can assist the Office of Alumni Relations in updating their address.

19. Mail out a **reunion letter and registration** to your group members.

Your letter, along with a registration form, will be mailed, from the Office of Alumni Relations, to all group members for whom we have current addresses.

20. Take part in a **telephone campaign**.

To encourage attendance at your reunion, it is imperative that your committee make personal contact with as many group members as possible. Typically the telephone campaign can begin 3-4 weeks following the mail out of the reunion invitation letter. The exact timeline of the campaign will depend on the reunion date.

21. **Reunion Day**

The Alumni Officer will assist you with the coordination of all final logistics for the event. Now it's time to relax and have a great time!

## **Responsibilities**

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

- Provide a complete list of classmates or members of your group, including those for whom we have out-of-date addresses.
- Assist in mailing notices to your group members.
- Co-ordinate many aspects of reunion arrangements including: on campus room bookings, mailings, photography, audio-visual needs and catering.
- Handle special correspondence with VIPs.
- Answer questions about event planning.
- Assist in developing a reunion budget.
- Promote your reunion in the Lakehead University magazine (if event details are known by publication deadline) and on the Alumni Association website.
- Help you track registrations to better estimate attendance.
- Provide registration at your on-campus event.
- Collect money, settle accounts, full accounting of event's finances. Please note: the Alumni Office will collect all money for both your on and off campus events for ease of registration purposes. You will be given money collected for off campus events.
- Make name tags, place cards, programs and any other special notices.
- Provide banners for your group to use.

Please note: In order to provide these services we must charge a nominal administration fee for these services, and for production, reunion stationery and mailing costs. These charges will be recovered through the ticket prices for reunion events.

### ***What will be your responsibility:***

- Decide on the type of event you would like to have.
- Plan the event with the assistance of the Alumni Officer.
- Call reunion group members to encourage attendance.
- Book accommodation for your group (if required).
- Coordinate registration at any off-campus events.

## **Contact Information**

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