

Concordia University College of Alberta

ALUMNI REUNION PLANNING GUIDE

Helping You Host A Successful Reunion

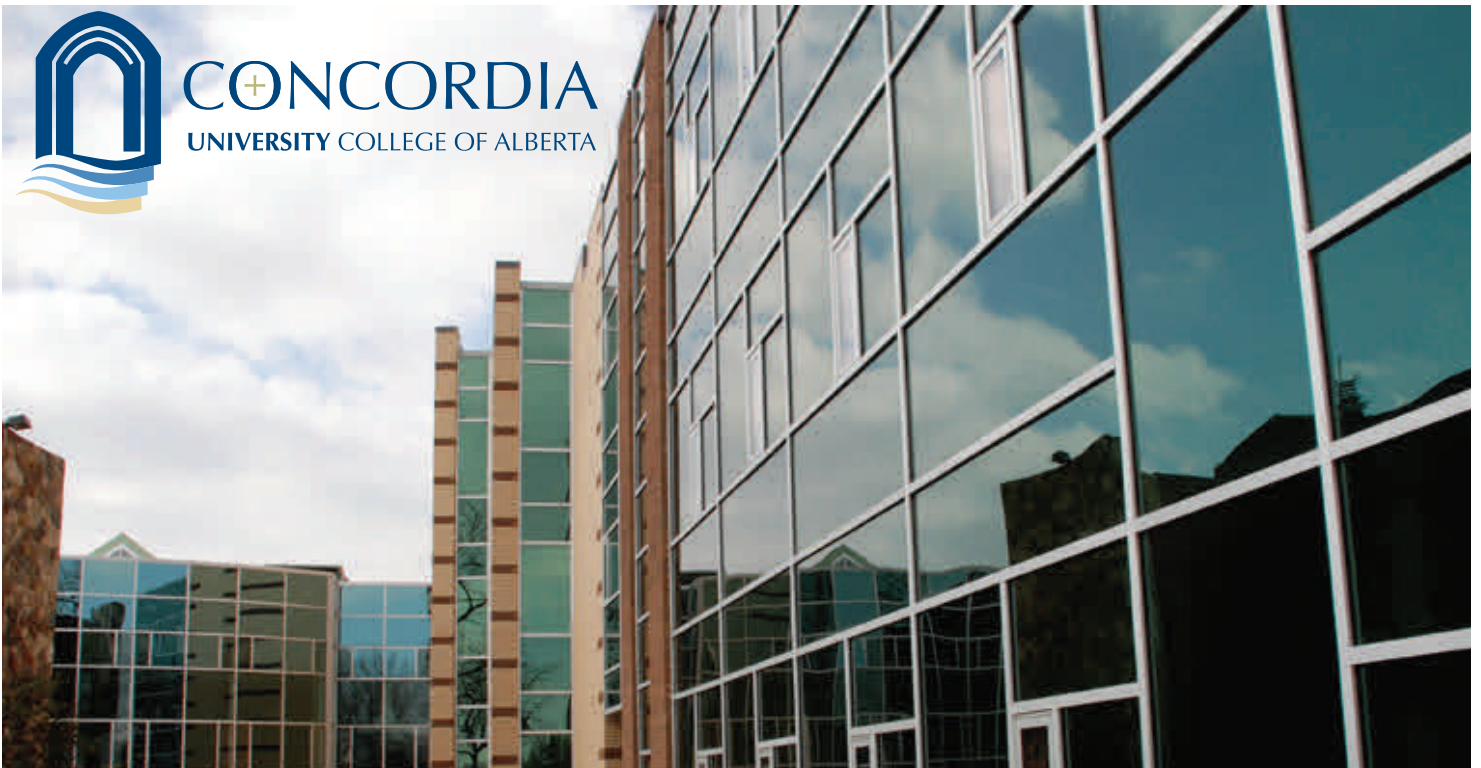


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A GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR REUNION

Introduction

Reunions are a great way to share memories and laughs with former classmates. What a perfect excuse for coming back to campus to have a look around to see what's changed – and to see what's still exactly the way you remember it!

Use this guide as a tool for organizing your reunion. As you plan your event, you will probably have some questions or need additional information. In that case, don't hesitate to contact your Alumni Relations Officer at (780) 479-9232 or email at alumni@concordia.ab.ca. We are here to support you in this exciting initiative.

Why have a reunion?

Planning a reunion can be a lot of work but the benefits make it worthwhile.

Benefits include:

- Renewing friendships with classmates
- Networking with professionals in their industry
- Re-acquainting with former instructors to learn about program changes
- Revisiting favourite 'haunts'
- Fun!

What's involved in planning a reunion?

This handbook was developed to take some of the guess work out of planning a reunion and help you plan the best reunion possible. It includes a checklist to follow, a budget worksheet and ideas of different types of activities, food and more. With a good committee, dedicated volunteers and this handbook, your reunion is sure to be a success.

We look forward to working with you to make your reunion a great experience!

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Getting Started

The Alumni Relations Officer is the first link in planning your reunion. Contact the Alumni Relations Officer to let them know you would like to host a reunion. After signing a confidentiality agreement, your class list with contact information can be released to invite alumni to your reunion.

The Alumni Relations Officer will be able to:

- Provide event-planning advice
- Promote your reunion in *The Concordia Magazine*, *Alumni Links E-Newsletter*, the Concordia Alumni website and social networking sites
- Liaise between the Reunion Planning Committee and Concordia personnel.

The Alumni Relations Officer
Concordia University College of Alberta
780-479-9232 or 780-554-0819
alumni@concordia.ab.ca
<http://concordia.ab.ca/alumni>

Reunion Organizers: Who Will Be In Charge Of This Event?

Reunion organizers play an important role in making reunions happen. The reunion organizer, along with a small committee of classmates (if possible) will liaise with the Alumni Relations Officer to make plans, and get the reunion plans started.

Forming a committee of local alumni is a good first step. A successful reunion depends on a strong committee with committed members who will work throughout the year to get the job done. This group will share in the planning and promotion of the reunion. Having excellent reunion leaders and a hard-working committee who organize and begin their work early in the planning process will ensure a successful reunion.

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Most reunion committees have a chair or co-chairs who oversee all aspects of planning the reunion event. Typically, you should plan to have 5-8 individuals (depending on the size of your reunion) that would make a great planning team. Schedule your meeting times in consideration of your committee's daily routines and if necessary hold a conference call. Regular emails are important to keep all members up to date on the progress of the reunion planning. Your committee members should be given designated responsibilities and time commitments should be made clear. To make the best use of your committee members, identify their strengths and assign roles appropriately.

A reunion planning committee can consist of:

A Chairperson

Responsible for:

- Finding and inviting committee members to participate
- Scheduling committee meetings and notifying members of the meetings
- Presiding over meetings and keeping everyone on track
- Assisting in recruiting volunteers and developing job assignments
- Motivating people to follow through
- Working with the Alumni Relations Officer to update contact information

The Committee

Responsible for:

- Participating in finding and phoning alumni (including locating lost alumni)
- Encourage attendance and build enthusiasm
- Assisting in all aspects of planning and executing the event including:
 - Finance: From the beginning stages of planning, ensure there is a treasurer who will open up the bank account, deposit registration cheques (if applicable) and pay invoices.
 - Food
 - Activities
 - Communications
 - Fundraising
 - Accommodations
 - Venue(s)
 - Volunteers
 - Set-up and Clean-up

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Getting Started – Questions To Keep In Mind

1. *Timelines: When do you want to host this event?*

GIVE YOURSELF ONE YEAR: It often takes a least one year to plan a reunion weekend properly. Most people need to be notified of the event at least 12 months ahead of time to assure their attendance.

2. *Reunion Styles: What type of reunion do you want to host?*

Choose an event with a workload you and your committee can handle and one that suits the interest of your guests. Different types of reunions to consider include:

- Single class reunion celebrating 10, 15, 25, 30 etc... year reunions
- Entire program reunion – on any occasion, or on a milestone
- Formal or casual events
- One night or a weekend
- Networking, educational or celebration based
- Specialty reunion – take a trip, go camping, stay at a resort, take a cruise – it all depends on the guests and the amount they are willing to spend.

3. *Facilities: Where do you want to host this event?*

Venues

Most reunion classes have held their reunion events on campus, however, some reunion classes may choose to use restaurants or bars for some scheduled activities. Please note that ALL off-campus facility bookings are the responsibility of the reunion committee.

On campus spaces include:

- Tegler Student Centre
- Cafeteria
- Auditorium

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- Gymnasium
- Various classroom/lecture space

Most on campus spaces may be used free-of charge by alumni depending on availability. All requests to use any on-campus facility or the athletic field are made through Plant Operations. Every effort will be made to accommodate a reunion committee. Facility bookings should be done as early in the planning process as possible. Contact Lorraine Blackburn in Plant Operations at 780-479-9340 to book your facility needs.

Accommodations

The on-campus residences including Alumni House, Wangerin House, Eberhardt Hall and Founders Hall, are available for a fee during the summer months. These facilities should be booked as early in the planning process as possible. Contact Lorraine Blackburn in Plant Operations at 780-479-9340 to book your accommodation needs.

Reunion guests staying in Concordia's residence facilities are required to bring their own towels and sleeping bags or linens may be provided at an extra cost. Please note that the residences are not an option for reunion accommodation during the academic year (September – April).

There are a number of off-campus hotels within a 5 minute drive from Concordia's campus. The reunion committee is responsible for all off-campus bookings. Please refer to Appendix D: "Staying Around Concordia" for an extensive list of hotel options.

4. *Food*

Catering

Choices, Concordia's in-house food services agency, is available to cater all meals throughout your reunion weekend. Please note that the reunion committee must contact Choices directly to hire their catering services. Contact Michel Lamontagne with Choices at ourchef@hotmail.com to arrange for your catering needs.

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BBQ

Concordia's BBQ may be used on the east side of Tegler for your convenience – supply your own hotdogs and hamburgers and you're in business. Contact Plant Operations to reserve the use of the BBQ at 780-479-9340.

5. *Parking & Transportation*

Parking

Reunion guests may use Concordia's parking lot free of charge for the duration of the event. Parking passes are provided by the External Relations and Development Office and distributed to guests by the Reunion Committee. The parking passes must be placed face up on the dash.

Public Transit

The Edmonton Transit System has a bus stop directly in front of Concordia's campus and the LRT is approximately 2.5 kilometers away.

6. *Budget: How much will this event cost?*

All Concordia reunion costs are the responsibility of the organizing committee.

When developing a budget for your reunion, remember to include all the small items; they tend to add up faster than you think. Remember to leave room in the budget for miscellaneous/back-up funds to cover you in case of unexpected expenses. *Please review Appendix C for a sample reunion budget.*

7. *Advertising: How will you publicize your reunion?*

Mailings

Mail out your Save-The-Date invitations at least one year in advance. The first mailing may include some or all of the following: invitation to classmates to join the reunion planning committee, a schedule of

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events for the reunion event, local hotel info., a Lost Classmates list and return form to gauge classmates' intent to attend their reunion and ideas/suggestions from classmates for their reunion event and other class-specific activities.

The second mailing contains the specific details for the class reunion event (and other class activities, if applicable), a schedule for all reunion event activities and instructions on how to register for both.

Committee members are encouraged to write both reunion letters or, at the very least, the opening paragraph(s). The best opening paragraph(s) usually evoke fond memories or talk about all that has changed on campus since graduation. Letters should be signed by at least one of the committee members, and it's helpful to list all the committee members on the letter – some classmates might remember one but not another!

Blast E-mails

It is encouraged that all mailings are also sent electronically.

Web

Your reunion event may have a webpage on our Alumni website. The contents of all mailings can be posted here. The page can also be used to display a gallery of photos from classmates and have links to pertinent sites, such as online registration and class gift goals and information.

Electronic Social Networking

With the recent explosion of social networking sites, reunion committees have found them to be valuable communication tools, particularly the social networking site, Facebook. On Facebook, for example, a reunion committee member can create a personal account and then create a group for their class (example: Concordia Class of 1999). They can then use the search tool to identify fellow Concordia alums from their class year who also have accounts, and invite them to join their "reunion class" group. When creating the group, it is suggested that Concordia's Alumni Relations Officer also be listed as an administrator for the group.

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Advertising for your reunion event may also be included on Concordia's existing Facebook alumni group site.

Publications

Reunions will be advertised in Concordia's publications, *The Alumni Links E-Newsletter* and *The Concordian*.

Lost/Inactive Alumni

Often alumni move and the university loses contact with them. The Alumni Relations Officer will provide a list comprised of "lost" or "inactive" alumni. Should you find these alumni in the process of planning your reunion, please inform the Alumni Relations Officer so that we can continue to keep them engaged with the Concordia community.

Throughout the reunion planning cycle, committee members are encouraged to contact classmates and encourage their attendance at the reunion event. *Classmate to classmate communication is the most effective way to generate enthusiasm and interest in attending your reunion.* Personal telephone calls and emails are effective methods of communication as a follow up to all mass mailings. Each reunion committee member can receive a confidential list of all classmates with their address, preferred telephone numbers and email address. Additionally, The External Relations & Development Office can help you locate alumni by class year or program of study.

It is also helpful to pull out your yearbooks and flip through them to jog your memory about various events that happened during your years on campus.

Regardless of the method of communication that is chosen, the External Relations and Development Office asks that committee members always be respectful of a classmate's privacy and not share their personal information with others without their consent. To ensure confidentiality of alumni personal information, committee members will be asked to sign an Agreement before any contacts are distributed to the reunion committee.

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9. *Activities: What will you do at the reunion?*

The following are some possible activities you may want to include in your reunion schedule:

- Wine and Cheese reception – Concordia is a dry campus. However, written permission may be acquired from the President to serve alcohol when hosting closed receptions.
- Off campus excursions
- Brunches, lunches or dinners
- Dance
- Golf Game
- Picnic
- Concert
- Keynote Speakers
- Campus Tours

Loose Ends & Reunion Tips

Some things to remember for the main event:

- *Nametags*
Creating nametags with a photo of your guests from when they were a student is a fun and handy way for people to get reacquainted with each other.
- *Displays*
Ask classmates to bring old yearbooks, photos, memorabilia, clothes (uniforms, sweaters, etc..) for display.
- *Be Prepared!*
On average 30% of your RSVP's will come to the reunion activity early!
- *Photos*
Arrange for a designated photographer for the duration of your reunion and forward copies of those photos onto the Alumni Relations Office. Don't forget to take a group photo.

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- *Reunion Merchandise and Memorabilia*

Decide what kind of memorabilia you would like to offer reunion attendees. Suggestions include:

- Concordia reunion mugs
- Reunion biography book (See Appendix B)
- Concordia t-shirts or hoodies

It must be determined which committee member will be responsible for acquiring and selling the merchandise.

Reunion Post-Mortem

It is strongly recommended that each reunion committee hold a wrap-up meeting after the reunion event. This provides the committee with an opportunity to discuss what worked well or what could be improved for their next reunion. It also provides the External Relations & Development Office with feedback as to how it can better meet the needs of Concordia's alumni.

Report for *The Concordian*

Reunion committee members are asked to write a brief, one paragraph recap of their reunion activities for inclusion in the Fall issue of *The Concordian* magazine. This report should be sent to the Alumni Relations Officer no later than one month after the reunion event.

Donations

During your reunion if your group decides to make a donation to Concordia, please contact Barbara Ash, Administrative and Donations Coordinator. Barbara can be reached at 780-479- 9234 or email barbara.ash@concordia.ab.ca . A reunion gift can be directed to a project your group feels passionate about such as student scholarships and bursaries, a particular program, infrastructure or designated to the area of highest need at the President's discretion.

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Phone Directory

Alumni Relations

Alumni Relations Officer

780-479-9232 or 780-554-0819

alumni@concordia.ab.ca

<http://concordia.ab.ca/alumni>

External Relations & Development

Barbara Ash, Administrative & Donations Coordinator

780-479-9234 or 780-405-3983

barbara.ash@concordia.ab.ca

Plant Operations

Lorraine Blackburn, Secretary

780-479-9340

lorraine.blackburn@concordia.ab.ca

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE REUNION PLANNING CHECKLIST

	Contact the Alumni Relations Officer regarding your interest in planning a reunion.
	Sign confidentiality agreement for access to class contact information.
	Choose your Planning Committee
	Set your first meeting date at least 12 months prior to the event.
	Set the date for the reunion and send out <i>Save the Date</i> mailers
	Establish a budget to guide your planning and spending.
	Consider event location, activities, events, food, accommodations etc...
	Plan theme/decorations for reunion event.
	Plan and order reunion merchandise.
	Make arrangements with guest speakers and/or special guests.
	Send Official Invitations to guest list and follow up.
	Advertise event on alumni and university websites/publications.
	Book your facilities/rentals.
	Prepare display materials.
	Book audio/visual requirements
	Plan flow and format of the reunion

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APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INVITATIONAL LETTER

Date

Dear Classmate,

We invite you to join us in celebrating our (number years) anniversary as graduates of the (name program) at Concordia University College of Alberta. This will be a great opportunity to reunite with your classmates, to relive the great memories of your Concordia days, and catch up on what your classmates have been doing since graduation. Join us on (insert date here) and show the graduating class of (insert year here) what the Concordia spirit is all about! Plans are underway for a special reunion, and we hope that you and your family can attend.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact us. We hope to see you in (insert month here)!

Jane Doe
Volunteer Reunion Coordinator

Daniel Mosher
Alumni Relations Officer

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APPENDIX C: SAMPLE BUDGET

Revenue

\$ _____

Expenses

Communications/Marketing

Envelopes, paper and postage for mail-outs

\$ _____

Long-distance phone calls including faxes

\$ _____

Advertising

\$ _____

Equipment Rental or Purchases

Tent shelters

\$ _____

PA system

\$ _____

Music/video equipment

\$ _____

Lighting

\$ _____

Venue/facility fees

\$ _____

Transportation (designated driver)

\$ _____

Event Supplies

Decorations

\$ _____

Prizes or awards

\$ _____

Paper plates and cups or rentals

\$ _____

Plastic silverware or rentals

\$ _____

Table cloths, center pieces, napkins, name cards

\$ _____

Food

Groceries

\$ _____

Caterers

\$ _____

Restaurants

\$ _____

Taxes

\$ _____

Tips and gratuities

\$ _____

Printing

Save-the-date cards

\$ _____

Invitations

\$ _____

Reminder mailers

\$ _____

Name tags

\$ _____

Memorabilia merchandise (t-shirts, mugs, etc...)

\$ _____

Award certificates

\$ _____

Signage

\$ _____

Misc.

\$ _____

Total Cost

\$ _____

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APPENDIX D: STAYING AROUND CONCORDIA

La Boheme Restaurant—Bed and Breakfast
6427 112 Ave
PH: 780-474-5693
E-Mail: info@laboheme.ca
Web: <http://laboheme.ca>

Eastglen Inn
6918 118th Ave
PH: 1-888-411-2610
E-Mail: info@eastgleninn.com
Web: www.eastgleninn.com

Coliseum Inn
11845 Wayne Gretzke Dr. South
PH: 780-471-1231
E-Mail: info@coliseuminn.ca
Web: www.coliseuminn.ca

The Fairmont Hotel MacDonald
10065 100th Street
PH: 1-866-540-4468
E-Mail: hotelmacdonald@fairmont.com
Web: <http://www.fairmont.com/macdonald/>

The Sutton Place
10235 101 Street
PH: 780-428-7111
Web: www.edmonton.suttonplace.com

The Delta Edmonton Center Suites
10222 102 Street
PH: 780-429-3900