



REUNION PLANNING GUIDE



ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY
Illinois' first public university

Illinois State University Reunion Planning Guide

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Dear Illinois State Alumni,

Thank you for your interest in coordinating an alumni reunion! A reunion is an exciting opportunity for our alumni to share their fondest memories and pride for Illinois State with friends and family.

The reunion planning guide was created to help you in the process of coordinating your reunion. We ask that you read through this planning guide as it was prepared especially for you to become more aware of the many services that your Alumni Engagement office provides. Most importantly, it provides you with the essential tools to create a fun and successful event!

Reunions provide an excellent opportunity to come together with old classmates and friends, expand your professional network and get updated news on how the University is advancing. When you come back to Illinois State you can revisit your favorite places and learn how the University and local community are thriving. Reunion planning is a gratifying experience that involves plenty of work-- recruiting committee members, preparing an invitation list, choosing a venue and promoting your event, etc. One key factor in the success of your reunion is dependable upon the commitment of you reunion planning committee. A well-organized and dedicated team will definitely speak volumes to the success of your event.

Your class or group will remember the University in its own distinctive way. Your event(s) should be fun and enjoyable, and even educational for all reunion participants. You may plan for many exciting opportunities to engage all age groups, interests, and abilities. The University and Bloomington-Normal communities offer various entertaining and family-oriented venues to hold your reunion events and activities.

We'll work with you to make your event(s) a wonderful experience for all that attend. Remember, in your event planning to keep your Illinois State traditions alive and to keep *Spreading the Red!*

With Redbird Pride,

Alumni Engagment

What makes a successful alumni reunion?

Thank you for your interest in coordinating an Illinois State University alumni reunion! Reunions provide alumni with an opportunity to share their personal and fondest memories of Illinois State with other alumni and friends. Class and affinity group reunions play a significant part in the engaged alumni experience long after graduation.

A successful reunion begins at the core of a well-organized, dedicated committee. It is essential to include a good mix of 4-6 resourceful former classmates or group members in the planning process. Make sure that everyone has their individual responsibilities or a defined set of tasks to complete. Be sure to hold bi-weekly or monthly meetings to assure all reunion planning updates are shared and that everyone is staying on task leading up to the day of the reunion.

In your reunion plans, include fun and memorable activities and events for all to enjoy. You may want to bring along old photos and scrapbooks, arrange to have a former faculty member or advisor as a guest of honor or compile personal notes for a reunion memory book. There are endless possibilities when creating your reunion and the format of your event(s) is flexible.

What are your reunion committee responsibilities?

Prior to the reunion:

- Notify Alumni Engagement of your reunion plans and date.
- Prepare and direct all plans (see timeline for additional specifics). Partner with Alumni Engagement in hosting a memorable reunion for your class or affinity group.
- Cover all expenses for the reunion—all reunions are self-supporting. Alumni Engagement will be responsible for all promotional expenses.
- Talk up the reunion! If you know anyone who hasn't yet heard of your reunion plans, invite them!

During the reunion:

- Have fun with your fellow alumni and their families and friends!
- Wear your Redbird gear with pride.
- Greet guests and provide direction for a brief introductions and/or program.
- As possible, your Alumni Engagement liaison representative will be there to assist with the event details, program, etc.

After the reunion:

- Send any photos that were taken during the reunion to Alumni Engagement so they can be used on the website or in the alumni magazine.
- Provide a final list of who did and did not attend the reunion.
- Provide feedback on the reunion and the planning process to the Alumni Engagement office.

How can the Alumni Engagement Office help with reunion planning?

The Illinois State University Alumni Engagement Office is your connection to the campus community. As alumni, your role is vital to the succession of the University and keeping Illinois State traditions and pride alive. Your Alumni Engagement Office can provide you assistance in your reunion planning process from beginning to end. The following resources from the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinators can be helpful to you during your reunion planning:

- Communicate with classmates affinity group members on your behalf to inform of reunion events/activities.
- Assist in mailing reunion notices to your class or affinity group members.
- Manage on campus venue bookings, mailings, photography, audio-visual needs, and catering.
- Handle communication with University VIPs.
- Promote your reunion in the monthly Alumni e-Newsletter and social media.
- Review all contracts and agreements with all vendors. Alumni Engagement must review each document to assure that all arrangements are in compliance with Illinois State University policies and procedures. Alumni Engagement must sign off on all legal documents regarding reunion activities.
- Collect RSVP's including money and cover full accounting of event's finances.

Please note: The Alumni Engagement office will collect all money from reunion participants for both your on and off-campus events for ease of registration purposes. Funds for reunion purchases can be handled any of the following options:

- 1. Direct billing to Alumni Engagement.**
- 2. Reunion committee members may pay for reunion expenses prior to the reunion and then provide proof of purchase(s) (i.e. original receipts and invoices only) for reimbursement.**
- 3. Vendors/venues may provide invoices to Alumni Engagement following the reunion to complete payment.**

- Provide Alumni Association or reunion banners, giveaways for your event(s)
- Create name tags, place cards, programs and any other special notices.
- Supply campus maps and other important campus brochures, fact sheets.
- Provide an Alumni Engagement staff member to attend main event and provide an Alumni Association welcome.

Frequently asked questions about reunion planning

How do I get started planning a reunion?

Please advise the reunion coordinator that you are interested in planning a reunion in order for the Alumni Engagement staff to begin assisting you throughout the planning process.

How do I obtain a list of class or group members?

The Illinois State University Alumni Engagement office will not disclose alumni contact information to anyone unless for official University business (i.e. reunions, alumni gatherings and tailgates, etc.). The lists provided to you will be for the exclusive use of making contact with alumni to encourage them to participate in reunion activities, which is considered official University business. Once you have signed this form, a list of your reunion group members and their contact information will be given to you for use within your committee.

How should I begin forming my reunion committee?

Recruit classmates/group members who are willing and able to dedicate their time and commitment to coordinate your reunion.

Where should we hold our reunion?

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 town. Visit the University's Calendar (<http://www.calendar.ilstu.edu/>) for a list of major University events, as you may want to consider holding your event during another major Homecoming event to take advantage of programming and/or entertainment going on at the time.

How do we set a budget?

Take into consideration whether your reunion activities will include classmates/group members in addition to family members and friends. Remember that your overall budget will need to account for all individuals in attendance at your reunion activities/events.

Once you have made all the decisions regarding the program, menu, special touches, etc., you can develop the budget and decide on an event fee(s) for your reunion. Determine the costs for everything you would like to accomplish and set the event fee to ensure that all costs are covered. Reunions are designed to work on a break-even basis. The Alumni Engagement office reunion coordinator can offer assistance on developing the budget and can advise you on any items you may have accidentally overlooked. Please remember, if you wish to offer special guests complimentary tickets to your event, this must be included in your reunion budget.

What type of event should we have and where should we have it?

The type of activities/event(s) you plan will depend on the length of the reunion, your budget, facilities available (on and off-campus), and how much effort is dedicated to planning. Get creative, have fun! *Check out our supplemental information on reunion events ideas at the end of the reunion guide.*

When deciding on a venue to hold your reunion event(s), please keep in mind the following concerns that your reunion attendees may have: location, family-oriented atmosphere, handicap accessibility, etc. *Check out our supplemental information on for on*

and off-campus venue ideas at the end of the reunion guide.

What catering options are available?

Please speak with the Alumni Engagement office reunion coordinator for details about catering options on campus. Multiple catering options are available for any events from a reception to a formal dinner. Cash bar service is also available. Please note that if your event will be held in the Bone Student Center, it is University policy that you use Campus Catering. Any other University or community venue will be held at the responsibility of your committee to make this contact. To view the campus catering menu, please visit <http://catering.illinoisstate.edu/menus/>

How do we plan the activities for the reunion? What other concerns should be considered?

Planning for the main reunion event, may involve organizing an agenda for the evening. This may include a welcome statement, key note address, a special recognition/award segment. Many reunion groups arrange for a keynote speaker (i.e. faculty member, past class/group president, etc.) to speak during the main event. If there is a fee for the keynote speaker, please remember to include this expense in your budget. The Alumni Engagement office reunion coordinator is available to assist in finding speakers for your event.

You may wish to include some form of entertainment for your reunion (a band, DJ, or speaker, etc.). If you would like to use any audio/visual equipment (i.e. microphones, speakers, podium, projector, etc.) please make these requests known to the Alumni Engagement office reunion coordinator. A nominal fee to use this equipment should be included in your reunion budget.

How do we promote the reunion through Alumni Engagement?

Your reunion committee may send your event(s) details to the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator. The Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator will work with our Web site manager to have your event(s) details posted online on the Alumni Association events page and online registration page, and the University Calendar. The coordinator will also use this information to promote in emails and social media.

Will the Alumni Engagement office provide alumni merchandise or giveaways?

The Alumni Engagement office will be able to provide your class or group with special commemorative alumni merchandise at your reunion. You may also wish to decorate your venue and/or bring memorabilia to display. Please discuss these and other considerations well in advance with the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator.

Should we have a photographer or videographer?

The Alumni Engagement office reunion coordinator can assist in arranging for a University photographer to take group photos and other candid photos at your event. Following the event, the Alumni Engagement office can assist you in distributing photos to your reunion group members. A nominal fee may be charged for this service (developing and mailing costs).

How do I plan for hotel blocks?

If your reunion committee is arranging a group rate at a local hotel, be sure to arrange well

in advance. You may contact Alumni Engagement for advice on local hotels. Alumni Engagement can not book blocks for reunions.

How do we handle invitations and registration information?

The invitation will outline your planned reunion activities and will inform your reunion class/group members about your upcoming event. The invitation will be customized based on your reunion group and the message. The Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator can assist you in locating “lost” class or group members and to gather information to update their alumni records.

Your invitation will be mailed through the University’s Mail Services to all class/group members for whom we have current addresses. If “lost” class or group members are located after the reunion mailing is sent out, please contact the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to ensure your reunion information can be sent to this individual(s). Invitations can also be electronically emailed through the University email system.

Reunion planning checklist (suggested)

12 months before the reunion

- Make key contacts and update alumni lists
 - Contact the Alumni Engagement Office to assist you with your reunion planning:

Phone: (309) 438-2586
Fax: (309) 438-8057
E-mail: alumni@ilstu.edu

- Develop your reunion committee and arrange your first meeting.
 - Coordinate the search for former classmates/group members (if you need assistance, please contact the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator).

- Agree and provide signature on the Reunion Coordinator/Committee Agreement Form and obtain list of reunion class or group members.

- Develop your reunion budget.
 - Estimate reunion attendance.
 - Estimate expenses (i.e. venue, catering, entertainment, etc.).
 - Estimate reunion event(s) prices.

9 months before the reunion

- Make files for organizing all committee paperwork.
 - Plan the reunion's main event.
 - Work with Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to locate possible venues (on and off-campus).
 - Once the committee has decided, book the venue and arrange meeting with Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to discuss proper University policies/procedures on signing contracts/agreements.
 - Prepare the first announcement of your reunion. Keep in mind that the alumni reunion coordinator will send all emails regarding your reunion to your class or affinity group members. If you need assistance, work with Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to arrange mass email or letter to reunion class or group.

- Develop your main event menu. Contact the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to arrange a meeting with campus catering staff for on-campus events.

- Identify and contact your keynote speaker (optional).

- ❑ Select the entertainment (please provide the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator a copy of this contract/agreement).
- ❑ Re-visit reunion budget to make sure all expenses are documented and accounted for.

6 months before the reunion

- ❑ Make updates to alumni class or group list.
- ❑ Contact special guests, University administrators, key community figures, etc.
- ❑ Begin preparing memory album (optional, for assistance, contact the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator).
- ❑ Work with the Alumni Engagement to coordinate schedule with University photographer(s).
- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement to prepare announcement for alumni e-newsletter, events page, social media and University Calendar.
- ❑ Re-visit reunion budget to make sure all expenses are documented and accounted for.

3 months before the reunion

- ❑ Make updates to alumni class or group list.
- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement to prepare reunion online registration web page.
- ❑ Plan décor, special touches for reunion (table centerpieces, flowers, giveaways, etc.).
- ❑ Arrange for all reunion volunteer responsibilities and set meeting with volunteers.
- ❑ Make sure all reunion committee members are registered to attend the reunion.

1-2 months before the reunion

- ❑ Send reunion reminder notices to all reunion class or group members.
- ❑ Create a printed program.
- ❑ Prepare the “program” for the main event (include all spoken program notes).
- ❑ Prepare all reunion signage, collages, and special displays.
- ❑ Prepare a form to indicate the photo lineup for each photograph taken (for University photographer).
- ❑ Edit alumni information for memory album (optional).
- ❑ Develop a reunion day task list (provide each committee member and volunteer a list and inform everyone to bring with them the day your reunion begins).

3-4 weeks before the reunion

- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement to verify attendance, obtain a list of paid reunion guests.

- ❑ Verify attendance of special guests and make arrangements for special guests.
- ❑ Confirm attendance of entertainer(s), photographer, and videographer.
- ❑ Proof and finalize memory album to prepare for printing (optional).
- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement to mail all reunion confirmation letters, tickets, special notices.

1 week before the reunion

- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to obtain final list of paid reunion guests.
- ❑ Work with Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to prepare all reunion guest registration packets.
- ❑ Provide catering staff (on and off campus) final counts.
- ❑ Verify with banquet manager that all requested items will be present at event (i.e. registration table, easels, microphone(s), podium, etc.). If your event is on campus, work with the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to make these contacts for you.

Day(s) of reunion

- ❑ Bring all Reunion day task list.
- ❑ Have all volunteers accounted for and in designated roles/areas.
- ❑ Retrieve all supplies at the end of the reunion.

Post reunion

- ❑ Send all photo cards with alumni names and information to the Alumni Engagement reunion coordinator to be forwarded to the University's photographer(s).
- ❑ Send thank you notes to all reunion class or group members who attended (Alumni Engagement will take care of sending these out).
- ❑ Account for all final reunion expenses. Send in final budget form and account for any *original* receipts for any reimbursements from the Alumni Engagement office.

Reunion budget

Total reunion class or reunion group members _____
 Estimated turnout _____

Estimated Reunion Expenses

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Total#</u>	<u>Est. cost</u>
Dinner (including tax and tip)	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Entertainment	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Postage	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Printing	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Memory Album (optional)	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Decorations	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Misc. _____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Misc. _____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Misc. _____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Total expenses:			\$ _____

Estimated Reunion Revenue

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Total #</u>	<u>Estimated cost</u>
Ticket sales	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Memory album (optional)	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Misc. _____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Misc. _____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Total revenues:			\$ _____
Balance:			\$ _____

Reunion Coordinator/Committee Agreement Form

As a chairperson for a class/affinity reunion, please review the following guidelines established by the Alumni Association for reunion planners. Sign and date the document and return to:

Illinois State University-Alumni Engagement
ATTN: Alumni Reunions
Campus Box 3100
Normal, IL 61790-3100

Illinois State University Alumni Association Reunion Planning Guidelines

- If the Alumni Engagement staff provides reunion coordinator(s) with the contact information for any alumnus who may wish to attend the reunion, the reunion coordinator(s) understands and agrees that the information provided will be used for no other purposes other than contacting the individual(s) regarding the reunion, as this information may be protected from disclosure by Illinois State University.
- While the University will take care of the promotion of the reunion, the reunion coordinator(s), committee members and all reunion attendees will be responsible for paying for all reunion expenses (food, beverages, venue fee, parking, technology needs, etc.—both on and off campus). As long as original receipts are submitted to the Alumni Engagement office, you will receive a reimbursement for any expenses you will incur in planning the event.
- No legal documents (i.e. agreements, contracts, invoices, receipts, etc.) will be entered into by the reunion coordinator(s) or committee member(s) without prior approval from the Alumni Engagement staff. The Alumni Engagement must obtain copies of all legal documents.
- If the reunion venue is on campus, the University policies regarding appropriate use of alcohol and behavior must be followed.
- The Alumni Engagement Office will provide an assortment of alumni giveaways after the number of attendees has been determined.
- Because this is a University supported event, which is planned in conjunction with Alumni Engagement, Illinois State's insurance would cover any unexpected situations.

Please sign and date below indicating you, the reunion coordinator(s), agree to abide by all terms indicated above by the Illinois State University reunion planning guidelines.

I, _____ (please print name), Reunion Committee
Chairperson (s) for the _____ (name of reunion), have read and
agree to all of the reunion committee guidelines as described in this document. This is the _____ day
of _____, in year _____.

Reunion coordinator signature _____ **Date** _____

Alumni Engagement staff member _____

Date _____

Committee member #1

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone number _____ Evening phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Committee member #2 (optional)

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone number _____ Evening phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Committee member #3 (optional)

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone number _____ Evening phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Supplemental reunion information

Possible reunion event ideas:

- On-campus tours
- Off-campus excursions
- Receptions
- Brunches, lunches, or dinners
- Cocktail/Social hour
- Dances/talent show
- Picnic
- Sporting events
- City tour; concerts; key note speakers
- Golf outing

For campus venue options, please contact the Alumni Engagement staff concerning the following:

- The Alumni Center: visit http://maps.illinoisstate.edu/locations/alumni_center.shtml
 - The Alumni Center has spacious meeting rooms with state-of-the-art technology with free, easy assessable parking on site
- Bone Student Center: visit <http://bonestudentcenter.illinoisstate.edu/>
 - Bowling & Billiards Center Activity Room
 - Braden Auditorium
 - Brown Ballroom
 - Circus Room
 - Founder's Suite
 - Old Main Room
 - Prairie Room
 - Atrium
- Ewing Cultural Center, visit <http://www.ewingmanor.ilstu.edu/>
- Hancock Stadium Club and Horton Field house, University Golf Course or other Athletic facilities, visit <http://goredbirds.cstv.com/facilities/ilsu-facilities.html>
- University Galleries, visit <http://www.cfa.ilstu.edu/galleries/>

For off-campus venues, area hotel options check out the following:

- Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, visit <http://www.bloomingtonnormalcvb.org/>

Who would I work with in Alumni Engagement?

Stephanie Duquette, Senior Director

Alumni Engagement
Campus Box 3100
Normal, IL 61790-3100

Telephone: (309) 438-3815
Fax: (309) 438-8057
Email: saduque@ilstu.edu