

## CLASSMATE CONTACTS AND YOUR REUNION CLASS GIFT

### **Engage Your Classmate**

1. Be honest.
2. Be sincere and let your commitment show.
3. Be prompt. Reply as quickly as you can to any requests or questions from classmates.
4. Communicate regularly. Regular planned communication keeps classmates in touch, informed, and involved.
5. Be interesting and impressive.
6. Be involving. Do not let donors take a passive role. Ask for their opinions, contributions, and even complaints. Encourage feedback. Invite them to events.
7. Be cheerful and helpful.
8. Be faithful. Stand by your promises. Let donors see that you are trustworthy.

### **After the Call**

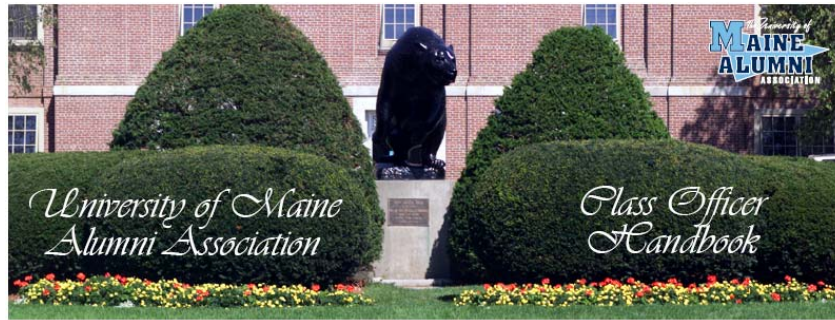
Whether you've received address updates or details regarding the designation of a gift or pledge, be certain to record this information on your contact report and return it to the alumni office. The staff counts on you to share this information so that alumni records can be kept up-to-date. The sooner you return this information, the more efficiently UMaine can adjust its communication strategies with alumni.

### **Overcoming Objections**

Depending on the response, you may need to negotiate a new gift amount with the classmate in order to reach the level that is comfortable for him/her.

If the contact objects to the reunion class fund gift, explore the reason for this reluctance. Objections are opportunities to learn what UMaine could be doing better to serve its alumni.

By listening to your classmates and by working through the objections, you may be able to address the source of resistance. Or, in some cases, merely through your good listening skills, the contact may decide that the reason for not giving to UMaine is less significant than the reason for giving.



If you're unable to overcome the objections outlined by your contact (and it seems the door is still open for future discussion about the matter), ask if your contact is willing to give a gift some additional thought, and if you may get back to him or her after providing additional time to consider your proposal.

If you encounter a situation where you are uncertain of appropriate next steps, contact your class giving staff representative for assistance.

### **Best Practices**

1. Listen carefully. The classmate's objection may be based on a misunderstanding, which you may be able to clarify.
2. Don't judge the classmate. Respect his/her points of view, even if they run counter to yours. Your task is to offer that person a way to support UMaine that is aligned with his/her interest and priorities. An impartial and pleasant tone conveys professionalism and leaves the proverbial door open for future contact.
3. Thank your classmate for his/her time, ideas, suggestions, financial support, honesty, or any element of the conversation which merits an expression of gratitude.
4. Maintain your composure. Careful listening and a positive demeanor can turn a good contact into a great one, and a potentially unpleasant call is an opportunity for you or the University to re-engage a disgruntled or unwilling classmate. The outcome of the call is not always the gift itself, but rather the relationship that is created.

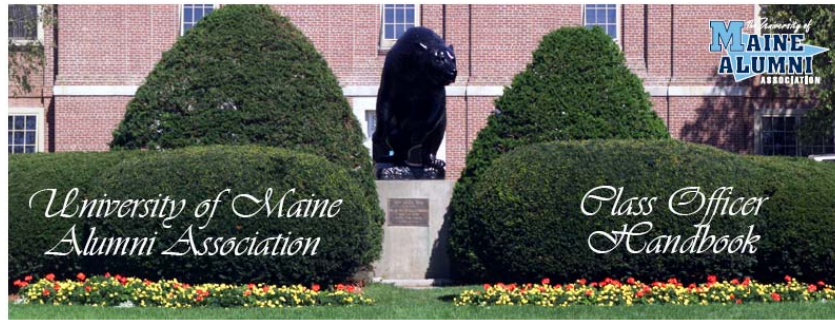
### **The Dual Purpose of the Reunion Gift Campaign**

#### **1. Encourage Leadership Giving**

The Reunion Gift Committee focuses on generating gift upgrades and encouraging fellow classmates to consider a leadership-level gift or pledge to commemorate the reunion.

#### **2. Increase Class Participation**

Through a variety of marketing outreach efforts including direct mail, email, personal solicitations, and the Phonathon Callers (paid student callers), reunion giving is promoted to the entire class population.



## **Preparing for the Contact**

Preparing for each classmate contact or visit is particularly important. You should be familiar with things like the class project and the reunion gift crediting period for your reunion. Remember, if you have any question or uncertainties, your class giving staff representative will be available to assist you to ensure that you are ready to make the contact.

### **The Golden Rules of Fundraising**

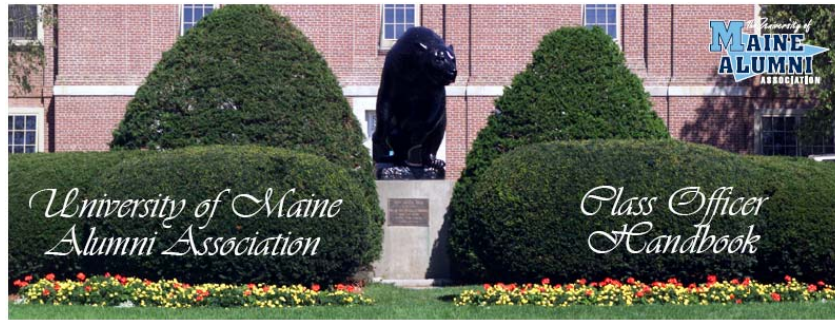
- Learn everything you can about the classmate you'll be contacting, including their giving history.
- Give some thought as to how you'll express the amount of your request. Say it out loud several times before your conversation.
- Practice: write out what you plan to say during the call.
- Write down all the reasons your classmates may try to put you off, and practice your responses.
- Call on your best contact first.
- Remember to enter your discussion with empathy, energy and enthusiasm.

## **Fundraising Sub Committee Assignments & Preparing for Solicitations**

Personal solicitation is vital to a successful reunion gift campaign, especially because goals are most effective when communicated in person, and peer-to-peer solicitation is more personal and productive than solicitation from a stranger. Each committee member is responsible for personally soliciting approximately 8-12 classmates. Contact assignments are often based upon the overall goals of the committee, which may vary from class to class.

### **Criteria used for segmenting and assigning contacts**

- Athletic teams or student activity groups
- Living groups or other affinity groups
- Course of study
- Geographic region
- Giving history
- Personal friendships



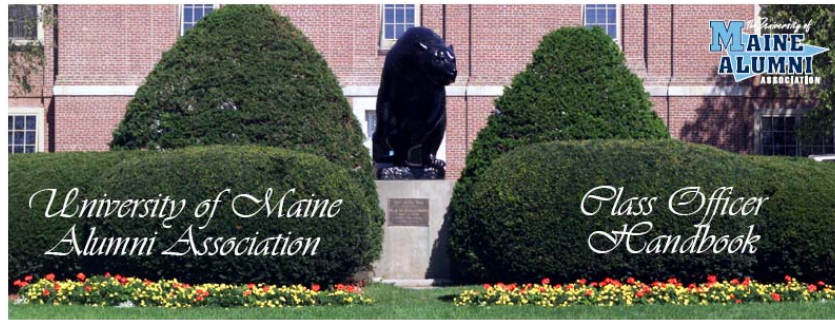
## **A Note on Contact Assignments**

Each committee member will have the opportunity to indicate which classmates he/she would prefer to contact. Inevitably, multiple members of the committee will request to contact the same classmate. In this case, the Association staff member will evaluate the feedback, and may have a discussion with you to determine which committee member would be better suited to make that contact. Additionally, you may be assigned to some classmates whom you do not know personally. View this as an opportunity to connect with new people and generate excitement about the reunion.

## **Making the Ask**

As a Reunion Fundraising Committee member, you are an ambassador to your class on behalf of the committee and UMaine. While face-to-face solicitations are generally the most productive, you will likely be assigned a geographically diverse group of prospects. Therefore, telephone contact is usually recommended, and can be very effective in engaging and soliciting your prospects.

The process of making the ask can be as both an art and a science-there are certain tactics that will improve your success in closing a gift, but you must also use your institution to help affect the outcome.



## **The Art of Solicitation**

Once you have reviewed your contact assignments, including research and background information, you're ready to make your calls. This call is generally regarded as a multi-step interaction.

Below is an overview of the process. Note that the sequence of these steps is fluid and can differ from one call to the next. Generally, however, these steps represent the typical flow that a call follows.

1. **IDENTIFY YOURSELF** as a classmate participating in fundraising for the class reunion.
2. **ESTABLISH RAPPORT.** This step is the most important. Through reconnecting with your classmate, you can learn more about his/her current state of mind, significant life events, and overall impressions he/she has of UMaine. You may want to use a discussion about friends, careers, or activities at UMaine that you shared in common, as a lead into the conversation. You may suggest that your classmate submit news to Class Notes. Ask your class member to mark his/her calendar with the dates for the reunion.
3. **STATE YOUR PURPOSE.** Share your enthusiasm. Explore your classmate's interest in making a gift to the reunion campaign, determine if this is something that he/she has considered, and what his/her charitable priorities are - at UMaine or elsewhere.
4. **SUGGEST A SPECIFIC AMOUNT.** Recommended target amounts are provided by the class giving staff. In asking for a gift or pledge, the ask amount will often exceed past annual giving levels. Because the reunion gift campaign is a vehicle for building broad-based support, as well for upgrading donors to higher levels, the suggested ask amount is likely to be one that will encourage the prospect to consider a higher level of support than in the past.
5. **LISTEN.** Once the solicitation is presented, allow your prospect some time to mull it over and to respond. Remember, while you've had time to prepare for the call, this may be the first time your prospect has considered his/her own reunion gift. If the classmate agrees to the ask amount, discuss the appropriate gift designation and terms of the gift.
6. **THANK THE DONOR.** When you reach an agreement on the gift, restate to the contact what it is you've agreed to. Express gratitude, and, if possible, explain again how the gift will have impact in the area to which it will be directed. Thank your classmate for taking the time to speak with you and for helping the class and UMaine by participating in the reunion gift.