Class Agent Handbook

2015–2016
Welcome to Allegheny’s Class Agent Program

Thanks to the broad use of technology, the College can stay connected to alumni in more ways than ever – from Allegheny magazine and email updates, to periodic letters from the Annual Fund. However, we know that this communication can’t replace the personal touch from a fellow class member who has reached out by writing a letter, building interest in the next class reunion, or encouraging classmates to volunteer or support the College financially. It is that personal nature of Class Agents that makes them a powerful, positive force.

Program Goals

- Increase alumni giving and participation to Allegheny.
- Obtain accurate alumni contact information with an emphasis on reconnecting with “lost” alumni.
- Improve communication between alumni and the College.
- Educate alumni about opportunities to partner with Allegheny and carry out the College’s strategic initiatives through volunteerism, philanthropy and other forms of engagement.

Current Class Agents

Want to meet our current Class Agents? Visit sites.allegheny.edu/annualgiving/class-agents-list.

Contact

Sara Pineo
Director of Annual Giving
(814)332-4392 or classagents@allegheny.edu
Why Serve as a Class Agent?

The real question is, why not? Class Agents support the mission and vision of Allegheny by partnering in the College’s fundraising efforts. Through their volunteer work, Class Agents impact the lives of students on a daily basis, help build the Allegheny Alumni community, and ensure the longevity of Allegheny through contribution of their time, talent and treasure.

Term of Service

We recommend that all Class Agents serve for one fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). They will have the opportunity to renew for another year. If for some reason you feel that you cannot continue your role as a Class Agent, the College will always accept your resignation.

Required Responsibilities

- Make an early Annual Fund gift to Allegheny in order to position Class Agents as effective and inspiring volunteer solicitors.
- Serve as a liaison between classmates and Allegheny.
- Solicit class members for gifts to the Annual Fund in many different forms of communication (e-mail, phone calls, letter writing).
- Maintain confidential information about classmates and/or information from the College.
- Stay informed about Allegheny through review of the Alumni magazine, the 13th Plank e-newsletter and checking allegheny.edu/news.

Encouraged Responsibilities

- Send thank you notes or make phone calls to classmates who have given, adding a personal touch to the process (Thank You Notes are included in the Agent Pack).
- Follow Allegheny College on all social media sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) to receive up-to-date information on your own.
- Disseminate information to classmates regarding news from Allegheny, keeping classmates current on news and events.
- Select 10-20 classmates to individually solicit on behalf of Allegheny College.
What Is My Role as a Class Agent?

As a Class Agent, you would serve your class during non-reunion years. Your role would include being a:

- **Steward** for class fundraising efforts. Class Agents should believe in philanthropy and have a positive track record of giving to the College, or have a desire to begin giving to the College.
- **Liaison** between Allegheny staff and your classmates. You would inform your classmates about current issues at the College and provide feedback to the College on classmates’ interests, concerns, and news.
- **Communicator.** You would participate in outreach efforts to classmates to help them reconnect to the College and invest in Allegheny.
- **Motivator.** You would work with your fellow classmates to identify ways for alumni to help support the College through volunteer initiatives in student recruitment, career mentoring, academic advisory boards, and more.
- **Supporter.** You would make an annual gift to the College and share your Allegheny pride with your classmates and others!

Your Impact as a Class Agent

- During the 2014-15 fiscal year, classes represented by volunteers experienced a 25 percent growth in the number of donors over the prior year, compared to a 1 percent growth for those without volunteers.
- Letters sent from the College written by a Class Agent had double the response rate compared to a more generic, less class-specific letter.
- Classes with Class Agents increased their total giving to the Annual Fund by $70,000 from the prior year. Without those gifts, the Annual Fund goal would not have been met.
- Graduates of the last decade are almost twice as likely to make a gift when solicited by a classmate.
Talking Points

Allegheny offers more than 90 percent of its students some form of financial aid, which is made possible by the generosity of alumni, in combination with the generosity of Trustees, parents, and friends of the College. The percentage of alumni who give back to Allegheny is a factor in many of the national rankings that influence the decisions of prospective students and foundations.

Allegheny has moved from hidden jewel to respected national leader. Alumni who once had to explain where they went to college, now see nods of respectful recognition when they say, “I went to Allegheny College.” U.S. News & World Report – which always has ranked Allegheny as one of the nation’s Top 100 National Liberal Arts Colleges – now identifies Allegheny as the USA’s No. 6 Most Innovative Liberal Arts College in the nation because of the College’s innovations in curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology and facilities. Newsweek ranks us No. 20 in the nation for academic rigor – just behind Harvard and just ahead of Duke.

Allegheny remains one of the colleges featured in every edition of Loren Pope’s Colleges that Change Lives – the seminal book on the nation’s greatest liberal arts colleges. For three years in a row, Allegheny has been in the top 25 in Washington Monthly’s Best College Rankings for its contribution to the public good, alongside institutions such as Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore, and Carleton.

Forty-five percent of our graduates immediately go to graduate school; within five years, 80 percent of Allegheny graduates are continuing to pursue their education.

We are an acknowledged U.S. environmental leader. And we are the nation’s No. 1 leader in the quest to make political debate more civil through the annual awarding of the Allegheny College Prize for Civility in Public Life at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Allegheny’s Commitment to You

- Provide quick and easy training sessions to ensure Class Agents are properly equipped to represent Allegheny College.
- Communicate with Class Agents quarterly to coordinate with Allegheny’s mailing schedule providing agents with the themes coming from the College.
- Provide “Agent Pack” to Class Agents that includes Class Agent Manual, Thank You Notes and more information.
- Keep agents updated on the giving history of their assignments.
- Frequent communication and prompt response to your questions or concerns.
Tips for Outreach

- **Suggest a specific gift amount.** The direct approach, such as “Would you consider making a gift of $__ amount?” may work best for you.

- **Encourage participation.** Allegheny needs everyone to help reach its goal through their continuing support. *Every gift is important and deeply appreciated by the College.*

- **Ask Classmates if their home or business information has changed.** If there has been a change, take down the appropriate information including phone numbers, zip codes and preferred email addresses and then forward to the Annual Giving office. This helps to ensure an accurate database for Allegheny.

Overcoming Objections

- **I’m not interested.** “Even though you’re not interested, I’d still like to tell you about some of the exciting initiatives taking place on campus, in case you’re able to help in the future.”

- **I already gave.** Check to make sure the gift was in the current fiscal year. If it was not, explain “You may not be aware that Allegheny operates on a fiscal year calendar from July 1 to June 30. We are securing gifts for the current year and would encourage your participation in this year’s Annual Fund by renewing your gift today.”

- **I gave last year.** “Thank you! That’s all the more reason why we’re counting on you this year. Your contributions are important to current and future Gators. Would you consider continuing your support with a gift of $__?”

- **I can’t afford to give because of (new baby, retirement, new house).** “Alumni participation is critical to Allegheny’s ranking and success. It also increases the value of our degrees. Any amount you would be able to contribute will help us in increasing the number of alumni who participate, regardless of gift size. May we count on you for a pledge of $__?”

- **I’m still paying off my student loans.** “I understand your situation. The cost of an education today is expensive. Would you considering helping current students to have the same opportunities at Allegheny as you with a gift of $__?”

- **The amount I can give is so small it won’t help much.** “Every contribution to Allegheny is critical. It is not the size of the gift but participating with your fellow Gators that is crucial.”
Social Media

- https://www.facebook.com/alleghenycollege
- https://twitter.com/alleghenycol
- https://www.youtube.com/user/AlleghenyCollege
- https://instagram.com/alleghenycollege/
- https://www.flickr.com/photos/alleghenycollege

The only owners of Allegheny College are the alumni.

There is no city, state or profession to worry about us.

We are all there is.

If we don’t do it, no one else will.

David Hoag ’60