Class Agent Handbook
2018-2019

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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 the Allegheny magazine and social media, 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 participation rate and overall giving to Allegheny.
- 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.

Why Serve as a Class Agent?

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.

Current Class Agents

Visit http://sites.allegheny.edu/annualgiving/our-volunteers-2/ to meet our current Class Agents. Please login to Gator Connect to update your profile and communicate directly with fellow agents in the Class Agent Chatter group. As a new agent you will be automatically added to the group. You will also receive the Class Agent badge on your profile so that alumni, students, and staff can identify you as an ambassador for your class.
Term of Service

Class Agents are asked to serve for one fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). With the exception of reunion celebrants, Agents will receive an annual invitation to renew their role for another year. Those celebrating landmark reunions (5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th or 50th) will be encouraged to participate in reunion planning and class gift fundraising as member of their Reunion Committees. If for any reason you cannot continue your role as a Class Agent, the College will always accept your resignation.

What Is My Role as a Class Agent?

Alumni give treasure and time to Allegheny because they believe in its mission, see that mission being actualized, and know that their assistance makes a difference and is deeply appreciated – and they give because somebody reaches out to them and asks them to become involved. With this in mind, within the limits of their available time, Agents are asked to serve as:

• **Leaders.** Class Agents partner with the College in class fundraising efforts. To make these efforts successful, 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. We request that Agents:
  - Give to the Annual Fund early in the fiscal year to position themselves as effective and inspiring volunteer solicitors.
  - Select classmates to individually solicit for gifts to the Annual Fund on behalf of Allegheny College, using various forms of communication (email, phone calls, letter writing). Note: Allegheny provides Agents with contact information for classmates, in addition to limited giving histories. This information must be kept strictly confidential.

• **Liaisons.** Class Agents inform classmates about current issues at the College and provide feedback to Allegheny staff on classmates’ interests, concerns, and news. Class Agents will also be asked to:
- Help promote volunteer opportunities and encourage classmates to support the College through initiatives in student recruitment, career mentoring, academic advisory boards, and more.
- Stay well informed about the College through review of the Allegheny magazine, the monthly 13th Plank Newsletter, and checking allegheny.edu/news.
- Send updates or changes for your classmates when you receive them, including addresses, email, telephone numbers, and occupational information.
- Encourage classmates to register and use the new Allegheny Online Community, Gator Connect. Gator Connect is the place for student and alumni engagement.

- **Stewards.** Class Agents 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 and additional are available on request - we will provide you with names and contact information for alumni donors).

**Class Agent Program Impact**

- From FY2016 to FY2017 classes with active Class Agents had an overall donor count increase of 4%, compared to classes without volunteers who decreased in donor count by 5%. Classes with Class Agent volunteers showed an 8% increase in the number of donors from FY2014 to FY2016, compared to a 2% decrease for those without volunteers.
- During FY2017, those with no giving history since FY14 were four times more likely to make a gift when personally solicited by a Class Agent.
- **Gator Give Day 2018** was dependent on Class Agent involvement. 20% of alumni that were assigned to and solicited by Class Agents made gifts on Gator Give Day versus only 9.5% who were unassigned. Individuals that were contacted by agents were twice as likely to make a gift in comparison to those that simply received general solicitations from the College. Agents were able to bring in twice as many donors with no giving history and over twice as many lapsed donors in comparison to those that simply received general solicitations from the College.
• **60% of the classes that were represented by agents experienced an increase in cash in FY18**, while 65% of the classes not represented by agents experienced a decrease in cash. Classes that were not represented by agents from 1985-present all had participation rates of 20% or less while classes within that year range with agents stayed consistent with the average 25% participation rate.

**Talking Points**

Allegheny offers more than 95 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 has always ranked Allegheny as one of the nation’s Top 100 National Liberal Arts Colleges — identified Allegheny as one of the top six most innovative liberal arts colleges in the nation. As President Mullen explains, “Chief among these recent innovations is the Allegheny Gateway, our new learning model that provides a central location for study and collaboration in areas, including internships that prepare students for successful careers, international study and civic engagement. Our students can expand, integrate and apply their learning through the Gateway and access the resources they need to thrive at Allegheny and in their lives after college.”

In addition, Allegheny was ranked in the Top 25 colleges who are contributing to the public good by *Washington Monthly* because of work in research, service and recruiting and graduating low-income students; The National Council on Undergraduate Research voted the College #1 in the nation for its undergraduate research program; and Allegheny was one of only 24 schools to receive a score of 99, the highest possible score, in the guidebook’s
Green Honor Roll, which celebrates the most environmentally friendly colleges in the nation. Plus, the College has the 4th best environmental science program in the country, according to EnvironmentalScience.org.

There’s more – Allegheny is one of 200 schools that The Princeton Review profiles in “Colleges That Pay You Back: The 200 Schools That Give You the Best Bang for Your Tuition Buck - 2018 Edition” which bases its ratings on data points such as academics, cost, financial aid, student debt, graduation rates, alumni salaries and job satisfaction. In 2017, Allegheny was nationally ranked #48 among all colleges and universities by the New York Times on its College Access Index for its commitment to economic diversity. (You can see the rankings here.) This is especially impressive when you consider the financial resources of most of the other institutions. Forbes places Allegheny among America’s top colleges in rankings prepared by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity. Forbes’ annual rankings focus on quality of teaching, graduation rates, low levels of debt and graduates’ career prospects.

And the College is 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. The 2018 Prize was awarded to Texas Congressmen Will Hurd (R) and Beto O’Rourke (D) for their “bipartisan road trip” last year, when the two congressmen from opposing parties livestreamed collegial discussions on the divisive issues of the day over a 1,600-mile drive from Texas to the Capitol. “The Bipartisan Road trip gives us all hope that civility is not dead,” shared President Mullen. “To the contrary, the torch of championing civility in public life is being passed on – from great Americans like Gov. Ridge and previous winners of our Prize such as Joe Biden and John McCain to a new generation of leaders represented so powerfully by Will Hurd and Beto O’Rourke.”

Allegheny ranks in the top 5 percent of schools in the country for graduates who go on to earn a Ph.D. and in the top 4 percent in the sciences. Because of the reputation behind an Allegheny degree, our students are accepted to graduate schools (including medical and law schools) at rates twice the national average. And 95 percent of Allegheny students who
begin their careers following graduation are employed within six months. It is this preparation for the global marketplace, and for life, that Allegheny is nationally known for providing.

For more details of distinction and talking points, please click here.

Please review our Case for Support document. It is a helpful resource for developing an understanding of the difference between Annual Fund and endowment as well as how alumni participation affects the big picture.

**Allegheny’s Commitment to You**

- Provide information and easy instructions to ensure Class Agents are equipped to represent Allegheny College.
- Communicate with all Class Agents at least quarterly with action plans, updates from the College and other tips.
- Provide “Agent Pack” to new Class Agents that includes the Class Agent Manual, Thank You Notes and more information.
- Keep agents updated on the giving history of their assignments.
- Frequent communication and prompt responses to Agent 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 increase 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