

Class Secretary Handbook

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Contact your class liaison in the alumni office for an updated class list or visit the alumni directory online at www.amherst.edu/alumni

The Purpose and Importance of Class Notes

You have volunteered for the important task of keeping the college and your fellow alumni up to date on the lives of your classmates. The notes allow alumni classes to retain a feeling of unity in the years following graduation from Amherst; as a result, the notes help contribute to high attendance at reunions, strong annual fund participation and general support for class and college programs. We rely on well written and in-depth class notes to foster and sustain the relationship between Amherst and our alumni.

We look to the notes to accomplish the following: to help classmates connect with one another, to make every member of the class feel included and to promote goodwill toward Amherst. Doing this in the limited space available and with an eye toward a broad reading audience necessitates certain guidelines. We have set limits on content and use of space while trying not to limit the number of classmates mentioned or the personal touches only a class secretary can provide.

Your contribution is indispensable, and we are extremely grateful for your willingness to assist in this way. The role of class secretary is highly visible and important to the class and the college, and you should not hesitate to call if you encounter a situation that requires clarification. Thank you for your efforts and, most importantly, your time spent writing the notes.

Your Responsibilities

1. Regularly collect news and prepare columns four times per year

The job of class secretary requires that you take a proactive, investigative approach to collecting news about your classmates. Personal news of *every* classmate should appear at least once between reunions (every five years). Your column should appear in *every* issue of the magazine.

2. Write In Memory Remembrances

As secretary, you are responsible for writing timely In Memory remembrances for deceased classmates or for finding the appropriate person to prepare the remembrance. (See page 7 for details.) *Print In Memory remembrances are limited to 300 words.* Longer versions can be posted online at amherst.edu/alumni/inmemory.

Guidelines

Subject Matter

Notes should be limited to news of classmates or other alumni associated with your class. Secretaries should not include their own (or other's) editorials, essays, lengthy poems or personal opinions. We do not include address changes (including email addresses) or telephone numbers for classmates. (Your column can reference that new contact info is available from the alumni office or via amherst.edu/alumni.)

News should be of reasonable length and of an informative nature and should appeal to your entire class. Please avoid innuendos, slurs, inside jokes or personal messages. Please do not cut and paste entire letters, articles or news releases; instead, digest or summarize them. Use the Class Notes section of your class Web page for longer documents and for posting photos. Remember that your column will be read by a broad audience—classmates, parents, grandparents, siblings, Williams alumni, perhaps even patients in an Amherst doctor's waiting room.

Your classmates will appreciate a secretary who knows the "personality" of the class. But do not be ashamed of class notes that sound like class notes. Providing news is your primary goal. Your classmates want to hear about each other.

Confirmation of News

Occasionally, a secretary will hear from a classmate who is upset about news he or she did not want published or information that was reported inaccurately. The one sure way to avoid this situation is to confirm questionable or personal news with your classmates. This will make the news more engaging—you can find out, for example, exactly *why* he/she moved to Boston. Think about your sources and the classmate being mentioned. When in doubt, reconfirm. Remember that some of your classmates work in fields in which information about their whereabouts/doings should not be publicized. If you run across such a mention, please contact that person to determine whether or not they would like it to appear in the magazine. Please also confirm with classmates before reprinting information from Facebook or other social networking sites.

Reunion Years

Your efforts should dovetail with those of your reunion chair and other class officers. You should publish the dates of reunion in the issues leading up to the grand event. News about an upcoming reunion should be in your notes by the December 1 and March 1 deadlines.

The Definition of a “Mention”

A “mention” in your class notes is the news of any classmate, whether a detailed paragraph or a brief update. A name in a list (attendees at a wedding or dinner, for example) without substantive news attached will not count as a mention. Classmates mentioned as reunion attendees and with no news attached (e.g., “We haven’t heard from **John Jones** lately. Does anyone know where he is?”) will *not* count as mentions.

We hope your column will include detailed, personal news of each classmate: job changes, places of residence, marriages, births, new educational plans or other specific events.

You should be aware not only of classmates who remain unmentioned but also of those who send news frequently, such as: “Finished first semester law school,” “Finished second semester law school,” etc. We leave it to each secretary to decide when and how often a classmate’s news should be printed. The percentage of classmates mentioned should increase as you approach reunion.

Word Counts

Each secretary has a base of 250 words per column for an introduction, conclusion and/or between-mention commentary. In addition, you have an average of 70 words per classmate you mention. A mention must include both a name and at least one bit of news. A list of 12 wedding attendees, for example, will *not* count as 12 individual mentions, unless there is news about each person.

Remember that the 70-word rule is an average: You are free to include longer reports about some classmates as long as they are balanced out with shorter mentions. (For those of you who work on a computer, word counts are easily available through the “Tools” or “Review” menu in MS Word, and classmate mentions are bolded and thus easy to count.) One easy way to cut down on space is to digest news rather than quoting it directly. If your notes do not fit within the guidelines, your alumni office liaison will ask you to edit them until they are short enough. See the table on page 5 for word count guidelines.

Proofing

The notes are proofread by a professional editor. We try to avoid substantial changes to your text. We follow AP style and will edit for consistency and accuracy.

Photographs

In an effort to control the costs of printing *Amherst*, the magazine does not include photographs in the Class Notes. We receive numerous photographs documenting the lives and accomplishments of our alumni—selecting and publishing from that group would be difficult and costly. Instead, we encourage alumni to post photographs on the Class News section of your class Web page (amherst.edu/alumni/classpages).

Guest Secretaries

The notes section is usually the first in the magazine to be read. Your class *must* be represented in every issue. In the rare instance that you may not be able to prepare notes for an upcoming issue, you should designate a classmate or class officer to cover for you. Please notify your alumni office liaison in advance.

Posting Class Notes Online

Given the lag time between when you submit your notes and when the magazine is mailed, we encourage you to post class notes online to the Class Notes section of your class Web page and to notify the class whenever a new batch of notes is posted. If you'd like to learn how to post your notes, please contact your alumni office liaison.

AMHERST COLLEGE

Class Secretary Word Count Guidelines

<u>No. of Classmates Mentioned</u>	<u>Total Words Per Column</u>
5	600
10	950
15	1,300
20	1,650
25	2,000
30	2,350
35	2,700
40	3,050
45	3,400
50	3,750
55	4,100
60	4,450
65	4,800
70	5,150
75	5,500
80	5,850
85	6,200
90	6,550
95	6,900
100	7,250

The guidelines include 70 words per classmate mention plus 250 words to use as you see fit.

HOW TO GATHER NEWS

By Telephone

Your alumni office liaison can give you an updated contact list for your classmates. Check contact information at amherst.edu/alumni if you need a phone number or feel free to call our office anytime. There are three ways to pay for your Amherst telephone calls:

1. Expend your own funds and absorb these expenses personally.
2. Submit documentation of your expenses and request the college to issue a certification of expenses incurred for tax purposes.
3. Keep a record of your calls and request reimbursement.

Address/Information Updates

We depend on your help to keep our database current. You will learn of new email addresses and phone numbers as you contact your classmates, and it is enormously helpful if you report these changes to our office. Please fax (413-542-2042), email (alumni@amherst.edu) or call us (413-542-2313) with these updates.

News Releases

The alumni office receives news release information from many companies and alumni. We'll forward relevant articles and notes to you each quarter.

Email/Web

At your request, we can send an email each quarter requesting news to all members of your class whose email addresses we have in our database. Please notify us at least two weeks ahead of the quarterly deadline if you would like us to send out an email. We can also send postcards to those classmates without email. You will need to supply the text.

Classmates may post their own news directly to your Class News page. You should check your Class News page (www.amherst.edu/alumni/classpages) regularly for postings.

Class Letters, Postcards and Surveys

Many secretaries use an annual letter to the class with a reply postcard as an effective way to gather news. Not everyone will respond, so you should not rely on this method alone. Mailings are coordinated through your alumni office liaison and paid for by the alumni office.

Some secretaries produce an occasional survey of their class. Surveys often turn up news of individual classmates. This news can be shared in the notes, but the overall survey results should be presented to your class in a letter or email, not in the magazine.

In Memory Remembrances

We encourage you to delegate the preparation of obituaries to classmates who were close to the deceased or to family members of the deceased. Please tell these writers to send remembrances directly to your alumni office liaison by the stated deadline. Be sure that they are aware of the 300 word limit before they begin writing.

When we learn of the death of a classmate, we will send information to you and to other class officers. If the classmate is survived by a spouse, the college will also send a condolence note inviting him or her to remain on the college's mailing list.

An In Memory piece for *Amherst* should include the full name of the deceased, the date of death, a brief statement (if appropriate) of the cause of death and survivors. If any Amherst alumni are among the survivors, please include class years after names. Briefly list educational, business and professional accomplishments, as well as some details of the deceased's Amherst years.

Donations for an Amherst scholarship or other Amherst college fund may be noted at the end of the remembrance. However, the college's nonprofit status prohibits it from including solicitations for other charitable organizations. Only one remembrance will be printed for the deceased. Therefore, the class secretary should ensure that only one remembrance is submitted.

There will be cases in which the deceased person was not well known. In such cases, the *Amherst College Biographical Record* (published in 1973, 1983, 1993) or the alumni directory will be the best—perhaps the only—source of information. Your *Olio* might also be helpful. Try to avoid a “nothing much is known about this person” tone in obituaries.

Secretaries should strive to submit an In Memory piece for the issue closest to the date of the classmate's death.

The In Memory piece **may not exceed 300 words**. We encourage you to post longer remembrances online at www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/magazine/in_memory.

Classmates can add comments and recollections to those posts.

Formatting

Classmate vs. Non-Classmate Names

<i>Classmate, full name</i>	bold first and last names	John Smith
<i>Classmate, first name only</i>	no bold	John
<i>Alumni in other classes</i>	no bold; identify class	Paul Jones '99
<i>Spouse</i>	no bold	Jane Smith
<i>Widows</i>	bold first and last names	Mary Anderson
<i>Friends</i>	no bold	Cindy Martin
<i>Students</i>	no bold; identify class	Julie Adams '16
<i>Parents of Students</i>	no bold; identify class with P'	James and Linda Adams P'16

- Every instance of the mention of the full name is bolded.

Married Names

<i>Name while at Amherst</i>	Elizabeth Moore
<i>Classmate retains birth name</i>	Elizabeth Moore
<i>Classmate uses married name</i>	Elizabeth (Moore) Taylor
<i>Classmate uses both names</i>	Elizabeth Moore Taylor

- For classes from 1976 to the present, secretaries should indicate whether or not married couples are alums: **John** and **Mary Smith** assumes Mary is an alumna.

Other Formatting Rules

- Use only one space between sentences.
- Don't use a serial comma. (*Correct*: Mary, Bob and Pete met for dinner. *Incorrect*: Mary, Bob, and Pete met for dinner.)
- The words "reunion" and "commencement" should always be lowercase, except, obviously, when they appear as the first word of a sentence.
- Use email (no hyphen)
- In general, spell out whole numbers below 10, and use figures for 10 and above. For ordinal numbers, spell out *first* through *ninth* and use figures for everything else.
- Lowercase the military branch, unless it's preceded by country. "He served in the army." "He served in the U.S. Army."
- Ages: Always use figures (i.e., a 5-year-old boy).
- Baby stats: "The baby weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces, and he was 20 inches long."
- Uppercase the "c" in "Class of 1970" but lowercase the "c" when a class is mentioned without a year attached. ("Members of the class met in San Francisco" or "class notes.")

- Lowercase the first letter in degrees: master's degree, doctorate.
- Lowercase the first letter in job titles when they appear after a name or separate from a name: professor, director, president, but uppercase when the title precedes the name, such as Professor Baird.
- Apostrophes for shortened class years should face the correct way: '71. (To do this, hold down the Ctrl key and type the apostrophe twice.)
- Abbreviate states as follows: *Alaska, Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla.; Ga., Hawaii, Idaho, Ill., Ind., Iowa, Kan., Ky., La., Maine, Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Ohio, Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Texas, Utah, Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.* Memory aid: Spell out Alaska, Hawaii and the continental states that are five letters or fewer.
- In most cases, the name of a city or town should be followed by the state name (Worcester, Mass., Portland, Ore.) Here is a full list of domestic city names that do not require a state: *Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York City, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington.* Also: *Amherst, Northampton, Hadley* (unless you're referring to an Amherst that is not in Massachusetts).
- Use New York City instead of New York, N.Y.
- When a state is mentioned without a city attached, please spell out the state name.
- Treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces. Use an ellipsis to indicate the deletion of words in condensing quotes. ("We weren't looking forward to the snowstorm ... but we ended up having a great time sledding with the kids." If the words that precede an ellipsis constitute a complete sentence, use this style: "We went to the store. ... Later, we came home.")
- Nothing should be underlined. Words placed in *emphasis* should be in *italics*.
- *Italicize* titles of newspapers, magazines, books, plays, boat names, newsletters, TV programs and movies.
- Change two hyphens (--) to an em dash (—). No blank space before or after the dash.
- Do not include addresses, phone numbers or email addresses.

Secretary's Name and Email Address

We include the name of each secretary at the end of each column. Please print or type your name as you would like it to appear in the magazine at the bottom of each submission of your class notes.

Deadlines and Publication

Deadlines

Class notes are published four times a year in *Amherst*. It is vital that you adhere to the quarterly deadlines below for submitting your notes.

December 1	Winter (February) Issue
March 1	Spring (May) Issue
June 1	Summer (August) Issue
September 1	Fall (November) Issue

After you have submitted your quarterly notes, we encourage you to post them on the Class Notes section of your class Web page. For classes who prefer it, we will post them for you. For assistance, please contact your alumni office liaison.

Publication Dates vs. Submission Deadlines

Because of the time it takes to type, proof, design and print the notes, we urge you *not* to date your copy with seasonal references (“I hope everybody is enjoying this lovely spring”) or use of the future tense. If John Jones is moving to Seattle in June and your column will appear in the summer issue in August, you should say, “John Jones *moved* to Seattle in June.”

Getting Notes to Amherst

EMAIL

- Email your notes to your alumni office liaison or to alumni@amherst.edu, preferably as an attached Word document.

TYPED OR HANDWRITTEN

- If you type your notes, please use white paper and double spacing.
- If you hand write your notes, please print legibly on lined paper.

FAX

- Fax your column to 413-542-2042.

Your Contribution is Indispensable

Again, thank you for your efforts.