



## Carleton College Alumni Annual Fund Letter Tips & Samples

A key factor in the success of the Alumni Annual Fund is that it is driven by alumni volunteers – not just in name, but in reality. One of the most important tasks you will complete each year is the creation of a fall solicitation letter to send to your class. This is generally the first and most in-depth appeal your classmates will receive.

This booklet includes samples of letters written by volunteers, both in Reunion and Non-Reunion years. The letters are as varied as the individuals who write them, but there are some things they have in common. Listed below are suggested elements to include and general letter-writing tips to help you get started on your letter writing this year.

### ELEMENTS

- Make the case for giving to the Alumni Annual Fund. Why do *you* give?
- Evoke memories of campus, college life and classmates by sharing your Carleton experiences.
- Include current Carleton news or items of interest. Volunteers find that attending CAVE provides inspiration for writing, including quotes from the president, updates, and alumni connections. The Carleton web site is a great resource.
- Incorporate items that elicit pride in the institution, such as meeting the financial aid need of all admitted students or our #1 ranking in alumni giving participation in *U.S. News and World Report*.
- Give last year's class results as well as goals for this year.
- Thank those who gave last year and/or for considering a gift this year.
- Include individual ask amounts to give classmates a specific level to consider.
- Refer to the ways to give to the AAF, including the online giving link: [go.carleton.edu/givenow](http://go.carleton.edu/givenow).
- Encourage your classmates to set up automatic installment payments.

### GENERAL TIPS

- Just Do It! Like those college papers, it only gets more difficult if you procrastinate.
- Let your own personal style come through. Using humor or a light-hearted approach can be effective in making the case for support (and keep your classmates reading).
- Begin with a catchy first paragraph to make it clear this is not a canned solicitation appeal.
- Keep the letter to one page, if possible.

Don't hesitate to ask your AAF staff contact for help, whether it be for information, tips, specific types of letters samples, or feedback.

**Alumni Annual Fund \* 205 East Second Street \* Northfield, MN 55057  
800-745-2275 \* [aaf@carleton.edu](mailto:aaf@carleton.edu)**

## Generic Letter Example

September 2010

Mr. John Doe  
123 Any Street  
Anytown, MN 55555

Dear John,

When thinking about all the reasons we do what we do to help Carleton, it's really about helping students. And when we think about all the reasons we help students, it's really about access. To bring it down to the most basic level, that one word is what it's all about. Access.

Access to a world of learning beyond Northfield and their hometowns. Access to knowledgeable professors providing an education they may have only dreamt of. Access to friends they'll have for a lifetime. Access to their full potential and future successes. From the arts to athletics and everything in between, your gift allows students who might not have had the chance to otherwise attend have access to the Carleton experience.

We were fortunate to be able to attend an outstanding institution and receive a world-class education. Without our help, there are qualified and curious students that may not get the same opportunity. Our gifts...**your gift**...to the Alumni Annual Fund not only helps make possible so many wonderful experiences while at Carleton, but it also provides access to financial aid to get many students to Carleton in the first place.

We hope you'll join us in helping to provide access to all that is Carleton, but most importantly, to Carleton itself, for deserving students. Your gift of **\$250** is critical to ensuring a strong financial aid budget and all of the opportunities needed to provide students with the unparalleled education that Carleton provides. It's easy to give, so please do it today!

- Donate online with a one-time gift or installments: [go.carleton.edu/givenow](http://go.carleton.edu/givenow)
- Mail in a check with the envelope provided with this letter
- Call the Alumni Annual Fund with your credit card information at 800-745-2275

It's about access. Let's make sure we provide the AAF with the funds it needs to support financial aid and all aspects of a Carleton education.

Sincerely,

Class Volunteers

## Last Year's Class of 1985 Fall Letter 25th Reunion

September 2009

Dear Joe,

How often do you appreciate your Carleton experience?

Imagine for a moment your life without Carleton. Consider your world lacking all the ways Carleton impacts your daily existence – maybe you have Carleton to thank for a profession you enjoy, or for helping you get into grad school. Perhaps you discovered your spouse or best friend in Northfield. Maybe a Carleton professor helped you recognize your academic and intellectual calling. Or maybe it's nothing as precise as these examples, but there's no denying that Carleton challenges and engages, and creates life-long learners – a way of thinking about ideas. As you reflect on the ways Carleton shaped you, and the ways it continues to enhance your life, please consider what you can do for Carleton now, nearly 25 years later.

You may have heard that about 30 members of the Class of 1985 gathered on campus in August to begin planning our reunion. Ambitiously, we agreed to raise **at least \$485,000** in unrestricted support for Carleton **from 65% of our class**. The dollar amount and participation goals are more than previous 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion classes have achieved, but the Class of 1985 is a loyal and supportive group, and we hope that you understand the idea of stretching to make a special gift this year in honor of our reunion.

We adopted a reunion theme of “The Bald Spot Comb-Over.” Most people understood right away that this was not only a reference to Carleton's beloved bald spot (think Ultimate and Broomball), but a comment, too, on the toll time has taken on our hairlines since we graduated, and other ways our lives have unfolded that we didn't anticipate, and maybe that we didn't want. You'll see references to “The Bald Spot Comb-Over” on future correspondence, and we hope you recognize not only the humor, but also the sense that we want you to come as you are to Reunion, and know that we will be glad you're there, despite any figurative or literal bald spots.

Part of reunion planning weekend involved creatively presenting the fruits of our planning efforts to an audience of other Carleton volunteers and staff. Special thanks to Kirk Weidner '85 and Porter Loomis '85 who proudly shouted out the Class of 1985 reunion goals on their bald spots.

Please know that participation in the Alumni Annual Fund continues to be a primary goal for our class, especially in light of our hope of 65% participation. Please see the reverse side of this letter for ways to give. We appreciate your gift, and can't wait to see you on campus, June 17-20, 2010!

Sincerely,

*Kari Felien Andrade \* Bill Dewey \* Loren Henning \* Tunie Howland \* Terry Lee \* Porter Loomis  
Sarah Ladner Maris \* Kaarin Marx-Smith \* Julia Scatliff O'Grady \* Maggie Dean Rapp  
Nancy Schneider \* Patrick Sullivan \* Jim Thompson \* Byron Tierney \* Kirk Weidner*

The Class of 1985 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion Gift Committee

## Last Year's Class of 2003 Fall Letter

September 2009

Dear Wendy,

As autumn arrives at Carleton, your mind wanders to Septembers of yore -- gyro pizza, soccer on Bell Field, snowfall on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the cinnamony waft of Malt-O-Meal rolling through the valley, the faint pitter-patter of Oles, streaking marching bands, and Screw your Roommate. What this also means for us as alums and Alumni Annual Fund volunteers is a new round of fundraising.

To recap the last fiscal year, our class achieved 55% donor participation and \$29,745 in donations. This is the largest amount we've raised since graduating seven years ago, a remarkable feat given the economy around us. This also came right after we set the national record for reunion attendance barely fifteen months ago. We, and the College, are grateful for your efforts and thoughtfulness.

We are extremely proud of our class's support for Carleton because it helps sustain, among other things, the need-based financial aid we value so much. Financial aid at most colleges is 50-100% endowed, but Carleton's aid is only 25% endowed; the remainder is provided by annual giving. The College remains committed to need-based aid, and we are particularly proud that our class's generosity helps meet that need.

As we move into this fiscal year, we are looking to build upon the successes of last year. We don't need to remind you of the awesomeness of our class. It's awesome. Obviously, we have something special here. We hope you continue to demonstrate your commitment to Carleton by making a gift of \$200 to the Alumni Annual Fund.

To make a donation, you can use the enclosed envelope, or go to [go.carleton.edu/givenow](http://go.carleton.edu/givenow). The website also lets you set up installment giving, allowing you to spread out your donation over a series of months. Finally, many employers offer matching programs, which is a wonderful way to increase your impact.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support!

On behalf of the 2003 Volunteers,

Ryan Navratil  
Class Agent

## Last Year's Class of 1994 Fall Letter 15th Reunion

September 2009

Dear Katie,

What a great celebration! The Class of 1994 had a strong showing for our 15<sup>th</sup> Reunion this past June. We are keeping our fall letter short this year so you can see the group photo taken in the Chapel. For those of you who weren't able to attend the festivities, we won't go on and on about how much fun it was, how much Gyro pizza we consumed, or how many times our keg was "borrowed" by the class of 2004. Instead, we'll save the details for when we see all of you at our 20<sup>th</sup>!

Fall is the traditional kick-off to the Alumni Annual Fund's fiscal year which ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. This letter is your annual reminder to keep Carleton in your thoughts as you plan your charitable giving over the coming months. Many of you prefer to make gifts or pledges right away in the fall – this has the added benefit of removing you from our solicitation lists for the remainder of the fiscal year. That's right! Giving to Carleton early is good for the environment. We won't send paper mailings and you'll also get a reprieve from emails, student callers, and your friendly 1994 AAF Volunteers.

We hope you'll consider a gift of \$1,500 this fiscal year. Please consider donating or pledging early this year, Carleton has made it easier than ever to donate to the Alumni Annual Fund:

- Donate via the website with a one-time gift or spread payment of your gift across several installments: [go.carleton.edu/givenow](http://go.carleton.edu/givenow)
- Mail in a check with the self addressed envelope provided with this letter
- Call the Alumni Annual Fund office with your credit card information at 800-745-2275
- Maximize your tax benefit by donating appreciated stock: call Carleton's gift accounting office at 800-758-9441 for details.

Here's to looking forward to our 20<sup>th</sup> Reunion in 4 years and 8 months!

Sincerely,

*Jordi Comas, Becca Bloomfield Davis, Brent Griffith,  
Christian Hakala, Becky Roy Lien, and Gary Nicholas*

Class of 1994 Alumni Annual Fund Volunteers

## Last Year's Class of 1973 Fall Letter

“You are a part of Carleton and Carleton is a part of you.”

*Larry Gould*

Dear Lisa,

It's the Carleton mantra. We first heard it at our freshman Convo. By graduation we knew what it meant. When we were at a scant fifth and even tenth reunion, it was still obvious. But now the years are stretching and we're at the mantra stage of alumni-hood...

Carleton has seen a lot of changes in the past 36 years, with two very visible ones coming in recent weeks. Alums arriving on campus in August for the annual CAVE (Carleton Alumni Volunteer Experience) had a startling moment of wondering where Nourse went. Then, last week we learned that Rob Oden, who seemed to have arrived only yesterday, is retiring after eight years in Northfield. So, is this still *our* Carleton?!

Of course, it is. The truth is, changes have been Carleton's constant, and our *alma mater* has an impressive ability to anticipate students' needs and to build a future that honors the past. Take Nourse – it isn't gone, of course. It is embraced by new dorms that echo Nourse's architectural grace while featuring all sorts of green building standards. Students had been migrating to off campus housing, and the new Cassat and Memorial Halls will reverse the trend by bringing 230 of them back.

Or take the search for a new President. A committee co-chaired by Cathy James Paglia (one year behind us) is already hard at work and knows well how to identify distinguished candidates. Carleton has had an amazing run of fine leaders.

Each Carleton generation builds on, and is funded by, its predecessors. Whether Carleton is building dorms, hiring presidents or teaching a new generation, its budget depends on a healthy Alumni Annual Fund.

Carleton, though not spared, came through the economic turmoil of 2008-09 surprisingly well. Last year 53% of its alums donated to the AAF, placing us once again at #1 in alumni giving. 54% of the class of '73 made gifts totaling \$116,416. That was funding urgently needed and well deployed in a time when the endowment could contribute less.

The same pressing need exists this year, and we need you to be as participatory and generous as ever.

**Our Class goal this year is \$125,000.**

**Please consider a gift of \$500 to help us get there.**

The Carls who came before us made our education possible. Let's be there for today's Carleton. Please join us in building The Alumni Annual Fund!

Thank you,



Lynda Dolgin-Duda and Linda Neuman  
Class Agents

P.S. There are several ways to give to The Alumni Annual Fund. Send your gift in the enclosed envelope, give online (you can set up recurring payments too) at [go.carleton.edu/givenow](http://go.carleton.edu/givenow), or call the AAF office at 800-745-2275.

## Last Year's Class of 1959 Fall Letter

September 2009

Dear Michelle,

The fall season reminds us that students are back at Carleton. Do you remember your arrival as a freshman? Your room, your roommate, the mixture of terror and freedom?

We are saddened by the announced resignation of one great teacher – President Rob Oden. His leadership moved Carleton forward in every direction.

Fall also brings the start of a new Alumni Annual Fund gift opportunity. This year, following the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion, all gifts should be given directly to the AAF. Please note that every gift will also be recognized as a gift to The Campaign for Carleton, the capital campaign.

Your class agents met in Chicago recently, and we felt that we could build on our accomplishments – setting a record for attendance at the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion, and celebrating our outstanding 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion gift. So this year we set an ambitious goal of \$100,000 for our gift total and agreed to challenge ourselves to achieve 75% participation.

While the economy is still uncertain, most of us, as retirees, have been sheltered from catastrophic losses in income. We'd like to match the leaders at Carleton who have increased the budget for financial aid while making significant reductions in costs wherever possible.

We again offer an “early decision” option. If you make your gift before December 1, Carleton has agreed to eliminate any further phone calls or mailings in reference to AAF gifts. Giving early gives us momentum, saves you time, and helps your class agents – a true win / win situation.

We know you will give as generously as possible. We set a high standard at our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion, and we hope to continue our splendid class record of support for Carleton.

Your Class Agents,

Ingrid Haymaker Becher

Nancy Kiggins Goell

Lance Herrick

Glen Sizemore

John Wilder

P.S. John Wilder is “retiring” as class agent this next year. Lance Herrick has agreed to direct our Class Fund and brings an excellent background of concern, a passion for Carleton, and extensive experience in gifting.