

To: President Mitchell Reiss

From: Peter Shafer '86 and Heather Spurrier '00, Co-Chairs, Task Force on Separation of Reunion and Commencement

Re: Executive Summary of Final Report

Attached for your review is the full report of our findings on the separation of Reunion and Commencement. All Alumni, Faculty and Staff were offered the opportunity to respond. The response was very high with 837 respondents or 13% of the total alumni, faculty and staff base.

Executive Summary:

General Nature of the Task Force: The 16 members of the Task Force included decade representatives, alumni members of the Board of Visitors & Governors and essential staff involved in Reunion and Commencement. The primary purpose was to investigate and analyze the suggestion that Reunion and Commencement be separate events and to make recommendations based on our findings.

Points of Controversy/Interest:

- Nearly 70% of all those surveyed are open to considering the separation (50% want the events separated; 21% are open to the idea of separation). The 29% who are not in favor are passionate and vocal, about not separating the two events.
- Of all the class decades, it is the 2000 decade alumni who most strongly disagree with the separation.
- Lodging or lack of lodging is not as important in the decision to return to Reunion as assumed.
- Based on results, 76% of all respondents agree that it is important to have Reunion at a time when faculty and staff can attend.
- Results indicate that Commencement or early to mid-June are the winning options for Reunion dates and will produce the highest attendance rate among Alumni in general.

Action Alternatives:

- Separating Reunion and Commencement will require a significant increase (\$50,000 +) in the budget for the Campus Events Office.
- Revenue to Alumni Relations budget will be significantly decreased by the loss of parent lodging in dorm rooms. However, it will increase revenue in the Campus Events budget.
- Student/temporary workers will be difficult, not impossible, to hire for two separate weekend events once school ends.

Recommendations:

- **Separate Reunion and Commencement with Caution.** 50% are in favor of the separation, 21% are open to the option of separation and 29% are adamantly opposed to the idea.

- **Hold Reunion in the spring.** Even with the re-institution of a homecoming in the fall on campus, the majority of alumni still want Reunion in the spring.
- **Refer to Reunion as “Alumni Weekend”.** This change has already occurred in our publications to be more inclusive of all alumni, not just those celebrating a five year reunion.
- **Further Investigation.** The Tasks Force recommends further investigation to obtain a more specific date for Reunion/Alumni Weekend.
- **Market specific opportunities for alumni** to re-connect with their classmates is especially important if Alumni Weekend becomes a stand-alone event