

Itinerary and Agenda In-Class Assignment¹

Homecoming is a big deal at most college campuses, and UMPI is no different. Every fall UMPI hosts its Homecoming, a time when alums from across the street or across the world return to share news and memories and renew contact with their beloved alma mater. There are special events sprinkled throughout the week, culminating with a rich array Friday through Sunday. There's no time limit on being an alum and returning for Homecoming: you can be an alum of a few months or many decades—all are welcome. There is usually special recognition for alums who are marking graduation milestones: 10 years, 25 years, 50 years. So that needs to be incorporated into plans.

You've been put in charge of planning the itinerary (think schedule). Part of that will be an alumni business meeting. That meeting will include all alumni, but will have a special section for the significant anniversary groups. During a typical meeting, people review the minutes from the last meeting, approve them, approve the current agenda (with or without corrections for either). They often begin with announcements. They hear reports from committees (think about the types of committees). They discuss old business items and then new business. They might discuss support for scholarships, give input into programming to help students from afar feel comfortable (such as the host family program), etc. (This just gives you some starting ideas.)

Using the Internet for ideas and samples, draw up an itinerary and a meeting agenda. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS** (although for us they're certainly related). Be as creative as you would like—but also be realistic. The fact that people have been out of college for 25 or 50 years doesn't mean that they're dead. If they didn't have more than a mere pulse, they wouldn't be coming to Homecoming. They're going to want to socialize and catch up with old friends. So don't plan on their going to bed at 7 p.m. or playing a lot of Bingo. It's a good idea to give people more than one option from which to choose. So, for example, you could have more active and less active choices.

Having an itinerary for an event can really help it stay on track. People like to know what to expect and what their options are. You'll want to cover everything from transportation (who will meet and transport those who come by bus or plane?), to lodging, meals, activities. Some of the attendees will not have been back to campus in decades. So you'll want to give them time to explore the campus to see what's old and what's new, as well as ample time to renew old acquaintances and make new ones.

¹ You can get ideas for Homecoming by looking on the UMPI website and seeing what took place last year. You can also look at other examples. They can give you examples from other schools. But don't let this stifle your creativity.

Break things down day by day and hour by hour. BE DETAILED.

- Homecoming usually spans the last weekend in September/first weekend in October.
- Plan for four days: Thursday-Sunday.
- Don't have too much on Thursday—perhaps something for the evening.
- Many will arrive on Thursday.
- You may want to end events on Sunday in early afternoon to allow for travel.
- People will be coming from some distance, possibly. They may take mass transport. For Presque Isle, that would be bus or plane. Check out the arrival and departure times for the bus and planes. Plan on shuttles to pick people up and take them back to the terminals.
- Plan the hotels where people will stay.
- Provide shuttle service from the hotels to campus and back. You can do this either in blocks of time in the morning and evening or have the shuttles run regularly throughout the days and evenings.
- Be sure to provide for every meal.
- Give detailed locations for all events.
- Note any costs, including differences for age: often children and seniors are less than typical adults.
- Give choices: sometimes have more than one event at the same time. As we said above, you might want more active and less active options; things in particular for children, etc.

A Few Words About the Business Meeting Agenda: Throughout your life you're going to wind up in many meetings. The thing that separates the good ones from the bad is frequently a well-drawn-up agenda.

TYPICAL AGENDA ELEMENTS

I. Announcements.

II. Administrative Comments.

III. Approval of Agenda.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes From Previous Meeting.

V. Brief Committee Reports.

VI. Old Business.

VII. New Business.

VIII. Other.

IX. Adjourn.

For anything presented at the business meeting on which the group wants to take action, someone will make a motion, someone will second it, there will be discussion and then a vote. If the motion passes, it moves forward.

REMEMBER: One of the things that makes our class distinctive is that we don't do a lot of busywork: our assignments are intended for use and to make a difference. So when you complete this assignment, you'll draw up a memo (see separate handout) to accompany it. Then, after I proof your itinerary, agenda and memo, we will send them on to Debbie Roark, Executive Director of University Advancement, to share with the Homecoming Committee and the Alumni Board. This is yet another way to make a positive difference with your communication gifts.

HAVE FUN--REALLY!