



Reunions 2024

Sustainability Recommendations for Major Reunions Classes

The Greening Reunions Alumni Working Group (GRAWG)

Chartered by Princeton in 2020

Like many festivals, Reunions has a large environmental footprint. Here are ten steps your class can take to work toward a zero-waste, carbon-neutral event.

1) Purchase carbon offsets to make your class' Reunions travel carbon-neutral:

GRAWG recommends these high-quality, quantifiable, verifiable [carbon offsets supporting solar energy](#) from the non-profit [Gold Standard](#). GRAWG estimates that offsetting 100% of the carbon emissions from Reunions travel would cost ~\$6 per attendee. Major reunions can **go carbon-neutral by pledging a lump sum in the amount of \$6 per attendee** (classmates and guests). Classes may also opt to offer **voluntary individual contributions through ReunionsIQ**, with a suggested minimum contribution of \$10. After Reunions, major classes can send their contributions to Gold Standard.

2) Eliminate single-use plastic cups at your HQ site:

Reusable cups are the clear environmental winner compared to single-use plastic cups—including bioplastic compostable cups. After the successful pilot at P98's 25th reunion at Reunions 2023, major reunions may ask Princeton to have cups at their site provided by [TURN](#), a leader in supplying reusable cups at large venues. GRAWG estimates the increased cup cost will be ~1-2% of a typical major class' budget. Orange TURN cups are available in a range of sizes for all beverages (hot/cold) and will be collected in orange bins for washing after Reunions and reuse at other events. Classes may partner with Princeton's [Office of Sustainability](#) to hire student [EcoReps](#) to support this effort. Approval from the Reunions team is necessary.



TURN's reusable orange cups in action at P98's 25th reunion, [PAW July 2023](#)

3) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from menu choices:

Major reunions may opt in for any or all of the following:

- Thursday Vegetarian Dinner
- Friday or Saturday beef-free dinner
- All menus beef-free

4) Reduce food waste sent to landfill:

Major reunions may partner with Princeton's [Office of Sustainability](#) to hire student [EcoReps](#) to support [on-campus composting](#) of their HQ site's food scraps, used paper plates and napkins. Approval from the Reunions team is necessary.

5) Reduce other meal-related waste sent to landfill:

Major reunions may ask Campus Dining whether they can borrow silverware and/or rent china, glassware, or linens for one or more meals.

6) Reduce environmental impact of apparel, swag and furniture:

- Major reunions are encouraged to choose fewer, higher-quality, classic-design items that are responsibly made of sustainable natural materials. Reunions after the 25th can opt to revive the tradition of wearing their 25th jackets, adding one accessory.

Apparel and costumes

- Choose items made of 100% natural fibers (cotton, organic or recycled cotton, linen, silk, hemp). Avoid items made of synthetic fibers derived from virgin plastic (polyester, nylon, spandex, fleece, acrylics) which contribute to plastic and microplastic pollution.
- Offer all costume/apparel pieces as optional. Reduce accessories, encouraging classmates to bring their own from home.
- Choose brands that are made in the US or prioritize low-carbon shipping (ground or boat) vs. aviation
- Choose brands that are rated “good” or better on [Goodonyou.eco](https://www.goodonyou.eco/), such as [Patagonia](https://www.patagonia.com/), which offers repair services of their merchandise, [PACT](https://www.pactapparel.com/) and [Fair Indigo](https://www.fairindigo.com/).
- Certifications to ask/look for:
 - Materials – [Global Organic Textile Standard](https://www.globalorganictextilestandard.com/) (GOTS), [Oeko-Tex Made in Green](https://www.oeko-tex.com/), [bluesign](https://www.bluesign.com/) certified fabrics
 - Labor/supply chain – [Fair Trade USA](https://www.fairtradeusa.com/), [Fair Labor Association](https://www.fairlabor.org/), [Fashion Transparency Index](https://www.fashiontransparencyindex.com/)

Swag

- Eliminate disposable items, especially those made of plastic.
- Offer all swag as opt-in only.

Furniture

- Instead of buying furniture, rent it (for example, see [Party Rental Ltd](https://www.partyrental.com/) and [Cort Furniture Rental](https://www.cort.com/)) or arrange to inherit from a previous major reunion. If inheriting, an off-site storage unit may be needed.

7) Help your classmates and guests reduce their carbon emissions from travel:

Spread the word about taking the train to Reunions ([2023 train info](https://www.princeton.edu/sustainability/2023-train-info)). For attendees who are driving, encourage carpooling in a hybrid or electric vehicle, if possible. For those who are flying, taking fewer connecting flights will reduce emissions. Major classes can also partner with other classes and Princeton to organize and publicize chartered “party” buses from Northeast cities like Boston and Washington, DC. Early planning is key! In previous years, Princeton’s [Office of Sustainability](https://www.princeton.edu/sustainability) has offered to subsidize bus fares.

8) Ask Princeton for green infrastructure, e.g. electric (vs. gasoline-powered) golf carts, and whether your site can rent a water-bottle filling station.

9) Add a budget line item for sustainability:

Funds can be used to pay for carbon offsets, reusable cups and/or other sustainability initiatives (e.g., EcoReps support of food waste pick-up for composting or collectible stainless steel cups with class logos).

10) Consider signing GRAWG's [open letter](#) and sharing it with your classmates:

The petition urges Princeton to work with alumni to adopt a decisive Reunions Sustainability Action Plan so that voluntary best practices can be adopted across Reunions, year-to-year.