Step 1: Preparing to make the ask...

As an Alumni Fund volunteer, the goal is to ask a classmate for a gift that acknowledges past contributions, recognizes present budgetary demands, and is compelling.

Try to discern what reasons to give will best resonate and emphasize these. You may find it helpful to establish social dialog with each of your assignments before you begin soliciting. We are committed to achieving superior participation, and this should be the focus of your message.

Please contact your staff liaison in the Annual Giving office if you encounter any problems when soliciting. Remember, regardless of the outcome, every call that you make to your classmates strengthens their connections to Bowdoin!

1. **Make a gift of which you are proud.**
   - You’ll be more confident on the phone and in your writing.
   - You don’t have to share the size of your gift, just that you made the best gift you could.

2. **Be enthusiastic about Bowdoin!**
   - Be ready to share why you support Bowdoin.
   - Have a few talking points handy (see below).

3. **Do your homework.**
   - Use A.G. Web for some history on your assignments, including what and when they typically give. 1794 Society should be contacted earlier, as a larger gift often requires more thought on the donor’s part, and more time for him/her to secure.
   - Learn more about what Bowdoin is like today at www.bowdoin.edu or through the Office of Annual Giving.
   - Subscribe to the *Bowdoin Daily Sun* at bowdoindailysun.com.

4. **Don’t be apologetic.**
   - Philanthropy has a strong tradition at Bowdoin and alumni have been reaching out to each other to encourage support for the College for more than 200 years.
   - Every Bowdoin student, past and present, has benefitted from alumni generosity.
   - Remember that you’re asking others to support Bowdoin, not yourself.
   - Many people have a budget for philanthropy each year; we’re asking for Bowdoin to be one of their beneficiaries.

5. **Be yourself.**
   - You’ve received these calls, so you know what it’s like—sometimes a little awkward, but in the end, it’s all for a good cause.

6. **Unless it’s June, there is no need to rush.**
   - If a person is not ready to commit, offer to call back in a couple of weeks.
   - Stress participation.

7. **Don’t take it personally.**
   - It’s okay for people to say “no.”
   - If they decline to participate, please note the reason on A.G Web. Let your Annual Giving staff liaison know.

8. **Get support.**
   - Part of each conference call with the committee will be dedicated to sharing advice on fundraising - if you have a question, odds are that someone else does, too.
   - If you’re having trouble connecting with someone, pass them on to another volunteer.
Step 2: Making the ask…

1. **Send an introductory email and keep the ball moving.** Let them know you’ll be contacting them in the near future.

   “Hi Sue,

   I hope you’re doing well! I’m volunteering for Bowdoin’s Alumni Fund and I’m helping our class put together an annual gift for the College. I would like to touch base with you to discuss how Bowdoin might fit in with your philanthropic giving this year. Please let me know a good time to call. If I don’t hear from you, I’ll try you this Monday at 8:00 PM.

   Sincerely,
   John”

2. **Make the call. The first one is the hardest.**

   “Hi this is John, you might remember me from Bowdoin, I’m calling on behalf of the Alumni Fund…”

3. **Ask if they have time to talk.**

   “Is this a good time to talk, or would you like me to call back?”

4. **If it feels natural, ask them how they’ve been.**

5. **Give them an update on Bowdoin and the Alumni Fund.**

   Find a current story on the Bowdoin Daily Sun or from the website and bring it up on the call.

   “The Alumni Fund had great success last year and we’re aiming to reach $XXX and XX% participation this year. We’re working to keep Bowdoin in the top tier for annual fund participation.”

   Share your reason for supporting Bowdoin.

6. **They received the ask amount in a letter from Bowdoin. But urge them to make the best gift they can.**

   **Sample language:**

   IF THEY GAVE LAST YEAR: “Thank you so much for your support last year, it really made a difference to have you included in the totals.”

   “Have you thought about what you would like to give to Bowdoin this year?”

   “We’re asking people to make the best gift they can, participation, as always, really is a priority.”

   “Would you like to make a gift this year?”

7. **Listen.**

   Listen to any of your classmate’s concerns. Either address those concerns or direct him/her to the appropriate person at the College. If you have any questions, give the Annual Giving Office or your Staff Liaison a call.

8. **If they sound interested in making a leadership gift, explain the 1794 levels.**

   “The 1794 Society levels start at [see chart for your class’ threshold]. With a gift of that amount you would get an invitation to the 1794 Society reception in New York City hosted by the President and Trustees of the College in early February, and a special acknowledgement.”
9. If they would like to make a gift via:
   a. Credit Card – Tell them to go to www.bowdoin.edu/makeagift. At Bowdoin’s website they can use a credit card, or give via PayPal or Amazon.
   b. Check – Mail checks to Bowdoin College, 4100 College Station, Brunswick, ME 04011.
   c. Phone – Call the Toll Free Gift Line at (888) 385-2254
   d. Stocks and securities – please call the College for transfer information at (207) 725-3094.
   e. Other – Contact the Controller’s Office at (207) 725-3426.

10. Thank them and verify their contact information.
    “Thank you for your gift. It means a lot to the College and our Class Gift Campaign.”
    “Before I let you go, can I verify your address, phone and email to make sure that we’re up-to-date?”

**Talking Points.**
- “Tuition only pays for about two-thirds the true cost of a Bowdoin education. The rest comes from the endowment and annual contributions. Without that support Bowdoin would have to cut many programs to keep its tuition costs competitive.”
- “Alumni giving helps support the current needs of the school. It helps fill in the gaps between tuition and the real cost.”
- “You’re investing in the Bowdoin students of today and the future.”
- “The Alumni Fund is critical to the everyday functioning of Bowdoin. The money we give supports core programs at the school, such as financial aid, student life, arts and culture.”
- “Bowdoin has always been a private institution that relies on the continuing generosity of alumni.”
- “Bowdoin is a need-blind institution that serves some of the best students in the country regardless of their financial status.”
- “Giving to Bowdoin is one way of expressing how you feel about your Bowdoin experience.”
- “While it may seem like Bowdoin is a wealthy institution, the reality is that all private colleges need consistent alumni support.”
- “Participation is important. The school is often evaluated by foundations and media organizations according to the level of alumni participation in fundraising.”
- “We’re asking people to make the best gift they can.”

**Suggestions for Success.**
- **Please stay informed on Bowdoin news.** The Bowdoin Daily Sun is a great source of College information and other interesting content. Subscribe to this daily e-list at bowdoindailysun.com/.
- **Lead by example** and make your gift or pledge early in the Fund year.
- **Thank your classmates** for choosing to support Bowdoin. Every gift is important and deserves personal recognition!
- **Stay in touch** with your Annual Giving Staff Liaison; he/she is your best resource for information!
- **Have fun** talking with your classmates and catching up on their lives.
Step 3: After the ask is made...

**REPORT:**
Report back to the Office of Annual Giving by phone or e-mail. Tell us your classmate’s name, the pledge or intended gift amount.

**GREAT JOB AND THANK YOU:**
Many thanks from the Office of Annual Giving for your dedication and support of Bowdoin. Your efforts make a difference every day in the lives of students and contributes to the success of Bowdoin now and in the future.

**How can we help?**
As always, the Office of Annual Giving is here to support you and to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Together, we will ensure that the Alumni Fund has another successful year. You can reach us at:

- **Office of Annual Giving Direct Line:** (207) 725-3437
- **Toll Free Gift Line:** 1-888-385-2254
- **Web Access:** [http://Agweb.bowdoin.edu/agweb](http://Agweb.bowdoin.edu/agweb)
## Some common objections...

*What if your classmate is hesitant to give? Here are some typical negative responses and how you can address them to turn a “no” into a “yes.”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Alumnus might say...</th>
<th>You can respond by...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I already support other non-profit organizations.</td>
<td>Mentioning that you would not want your classmate to stop supporting ______, but that you hope that he/she will also consider adding Bowdoin to his/her list of charitable contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I already gave to the Polar Bear Athletic Fund.</td>
<td>Thanking your classmate for his/her gift to the Polar Bear Athletic Fund, but emphasize that even though their gift to the PBAF will count towards participation in the class's annual gift, it will be used solely for the purpose of supporting athletics. They will continue to be solicited for an Alumni Fund gift until they have indicated that their athletic gift is their only current use gift for the year or they make a second, annual gift.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am retired/on a fixed income/still paying student loans.</td>
<td>Emphasizing the importance of participation. Forty-two percent of the donors to the Alumni Fund last year gave $100 or less. Tell your classmate about the Sundial Circle, which allows alumni to make gifts in automatic monthly installments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am currently paying for my children’s education.</td>
<td>Recognizing that education is important to your classmate. Note that many of your classmates may have a similar issue, but any small amount that your classmate could contribute would be appreciated by current students and faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I gave last year.</td>
<td>Remind them that like all institutions, annual support is critical to keep Bowdoin competitive. Urge them to continue their support with a renewed gift to the Alumni Fund.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I support Bowdoin in other ways.</td>
<td>Bowdoin values all kinds of support, but gifts are a tangible way to measure alumni loyalty. When more alumni participate, it improves the perception of lead donors, prospective students, and ranking organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount I can give is so small it probably wouldn’t help much.</td>
<td>Remind them that every gift is important and appreciated. Their pride in the school shows by the fact that they are participating at any level. They can designate their gift to an area of the College that matters to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My son/daughter was refused admission at Bowdoin. I don’t want to give anymore.</td>
<td>Expressing your hope that their child had a fulfilling experience wherever they enrolled. Note that Bowdoin has far more qualified applicants than spots available in each class. Each application is carefully evaluated by at least two readers, and most often deliberated by the committee. They have to make difficult choices that can, unfortunately, be disappointing to loyal members of the Bowdoin community. Convey that you hope that your classmate’s disappointment dissipates over time, and that they distinguish between their own Bowdoin experience and their child’s admission experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition increases have outpaced inflation for decades. I won’t give until Bowdoin gets the cost under control.</td>
<td>Acknowledging that the residential college model is expensive, but that it is still a good investment. Cost increases are driven largely by the cost of healthcare and technology—both of which have become dramatically more expensive recently. Also, reminding them that tuition is considerably subsidized for all students (even those who pay full tuition). The endowment’s disbursement and annual gifts make the Bowdoin experience possible, so Bowdoin is actually controlling tuition cost through smart investment and annual fundraising to support operations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...and how you can respond.