

Dartmouth Class of '99 25th Reunion Planning



Alumni Relations Vox Session
May 2, 2025



Class of '99 25th Reunion • June 2024



330

classmates

425

adults

650

total

Largest reunion on campus post-pandemic and since 2017



KEYS TO SUCCESS



Great Committee

Effective
Communications

Organized &
Early Planning

Right Priorities at
Reunion



GREAT COMMITTEE



Behind every unforgettable reunion is a committee that made it happen!

A great Reunion Committee will:

- 1) assist with planning
- 2) act as a sounding board
- 3) bring the perspective of their Dartmouth networks
- 4) recruit those networks to attend Reunion
- 5) help put out fires Reunion weekend.

How to build a great committee!



Assembling the Committee:

- Start about 15-18 months out with personal asks and outreach via FB, emails, newsletter,
- Diversity is key- hit an array of class networks (e.g. Greek houses, sports teams, affinity groups, geographic mix)
- Match skill sets with committee assignments and be upfront with the time commitment and expectations for each role. A mix of seasoned volunteers and newbies brings experience and new perspectives and builds the volunteer pipeline for future reunions.

Building Cohesiveness, Enthusiasm and Productivity:

- Plan a standing committee call. Set the agenda. Use the initial calls for the big picture and getting to know each other.
- Set up separate calls for committee planning. Pad timelines-people are busy! Get comfortable giving frequent but gentle reminders.
- Pivot! You'll see who is engaged and on track- adjust assignments or step in when things aren't working
- Be positive and supportive! Always be gracious, thankful, and ask for feedback!

Reunion Weekend:

- Set expectations for arrival and tasks throughout the weekend. Committee text chain is key.
- Celebrate/thank your committee members in any remarks and treat them if your budget allows.
- Designate a *few* committee members as point people for student workers (Treasurer, Alcohol Chair, etc)



ORGANIZED AND EARLY PLANNING

Keys To Success



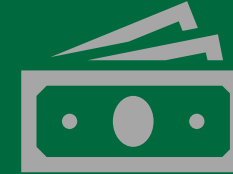
Start early

- Momentum takes time
- Best vendors book early
- Don't want to feel rushed.
- Big decisions 6 months out so you can nail registration.



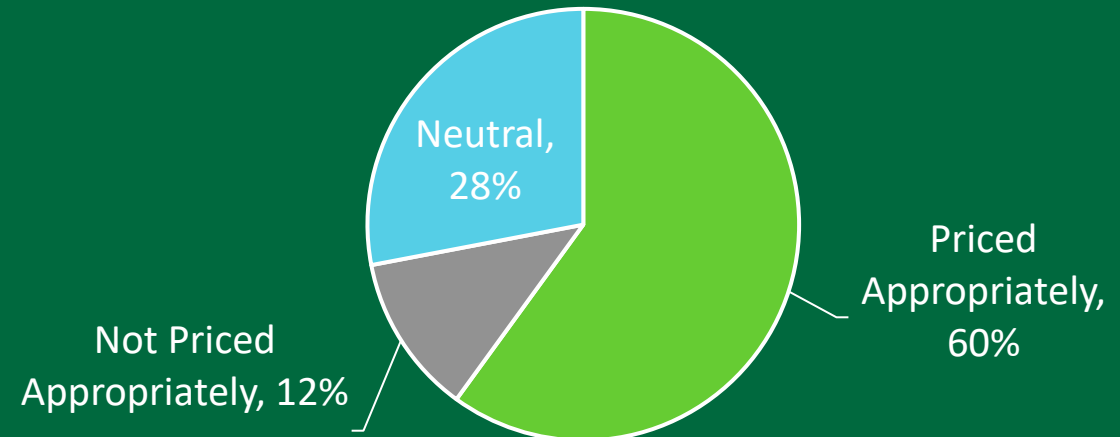
Be organized

- Use online shared docs (google docs/ google drive)
- Agendas and recaps for calls
- You will think of everything and still get curveballs



Budget Conservatively

- Anticipate the unexpected
- Use Class Funds for Financial Aid
- Classmates are less price sensitive than you think. *



* Data from class post-reunion survey.

Finances/Registration

Events/Meals

Communications

Committee Calls (monthly) 15months out







REUNION

Bank Acct Open
!!!Caterers Booked!!!

Draft Budget
Draft Schedule
Band Booked

Menus
Chosen

Souvenir
Orders

Registration
Opened

Coffee &
Pastries

Price
Increase

Price Increase
Final Counts
Schedule Locked

June

July

Aug

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan














Feb










Mar

Apr

May

June





logo &
theme set














Save the Date

website
live

Likely
Form

newsletter

peer 2 peer



Kickoff

Planning &
Big Decisions

Publicity

Registration

The Details

Working with Dartmouth



It is your reunion, not anyone else's

- Leverage Dartmouth staff's expertise, but challenge for out of the box ideas
- Focus on what matters

One Reunion: Class & Dartmouth Together

- Classmates see one reunion – do not make distinctions
- **ESPECIALLY WITH HOUSING & KIDS!!!!**
- You will get ?s
- Manage Expectations
- **Overcommunicate**

Help Dartmouth help you

- Send ?s in advance of calls.
- Minimize surprises
- Flag challenges EARLY: AR can help if they know!
- Work with DCF!

OVERCOMMUNICATE

or where we would do things differently



Kids at Reunion: Clear Expectations

- **Overcommunicate what events are (or not) for kids**
- Classmates (sometimes) do what they want with their kids at reunion.
- We weren't prepared for kids at our \$100 per plate dinner!

Too Many People was a real problem

- At times we literally had too many people
- Stay on top of #s
- Don't close registration
- Be aggressive with late pricing (\$50 increases)

Details Matter

- Little mistakes can sour a classmate's experience
- Wrong names (e.g Maiden names) on nametags
- Be vigilant about food allergies
- Inconsistent Messaging
- Weak & late Housing Comms



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Strategy & Timeline

**Are we sending too many emails?
NO!**

We learned that what feels like too much communication is the right amount of communication.

Quality, quantity, and frequency of messaging is key!!!

- Schedule communications so classmates are getting consistent reminders about Reunion, and are up to date on pertinent information.
- Move from save-the-date, to slowly revealing more details about the weekend. Once registration starts focus on getting people to register.
- Use all possible communication channels.
- In the final weeks, pivot to communicating details about the weekend to registrants.

Use a variety of Communications Channels



- ✓ **SAVE-THE-DATE:** Generate excitement a year out with a postcard, message in DAM, post on FB, blurb in the Class Newsletter, the class website, and in an email blast. Encourage classmates to update their email w/Dartmouth.



- ✓ **Create a “Likely” list:** Use a Google form and encourage classmates to indicate if they are likely to come to Reunion. Share the list to generate buzz. Target communications to those on the list who haven’t registered.



- ✓ **Peer to Peer Participation Network:** Created a network of volunteers who emailed 15-20 classmates, covering the 50% of our class who had attended a prior Reunion. Personal emails generated the most feedback and questions.

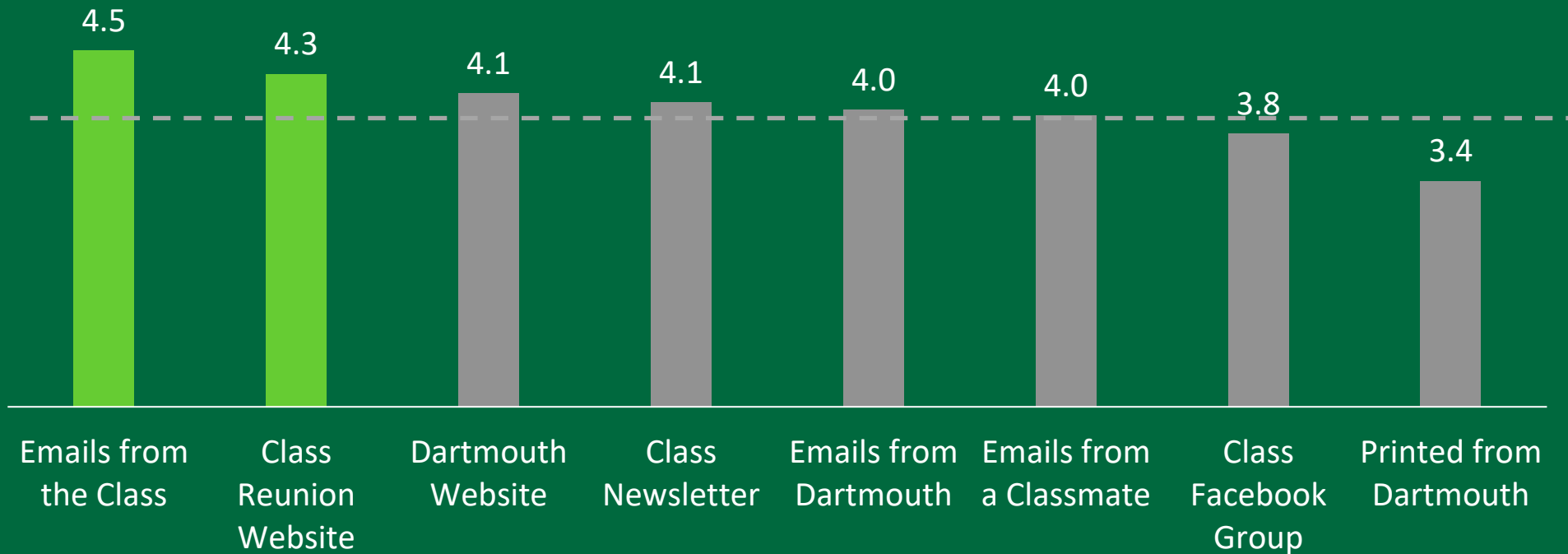


- ✓ **“Why I’m Coming to Reunion:** Recruited a diverse group of classmates to write a personal email of why they were coming to Reunion. Feedback was that people who didn’t feel accomplished or successful were hesitant to attend. These emails showed that coming back was for as many reasons as we had classmates, and none were to brag about accomplishments.

All Communications were highly rated



Class Emails and Class Website were rated as most effective



4.0
out of 5

* Data from class post-reunion survey.



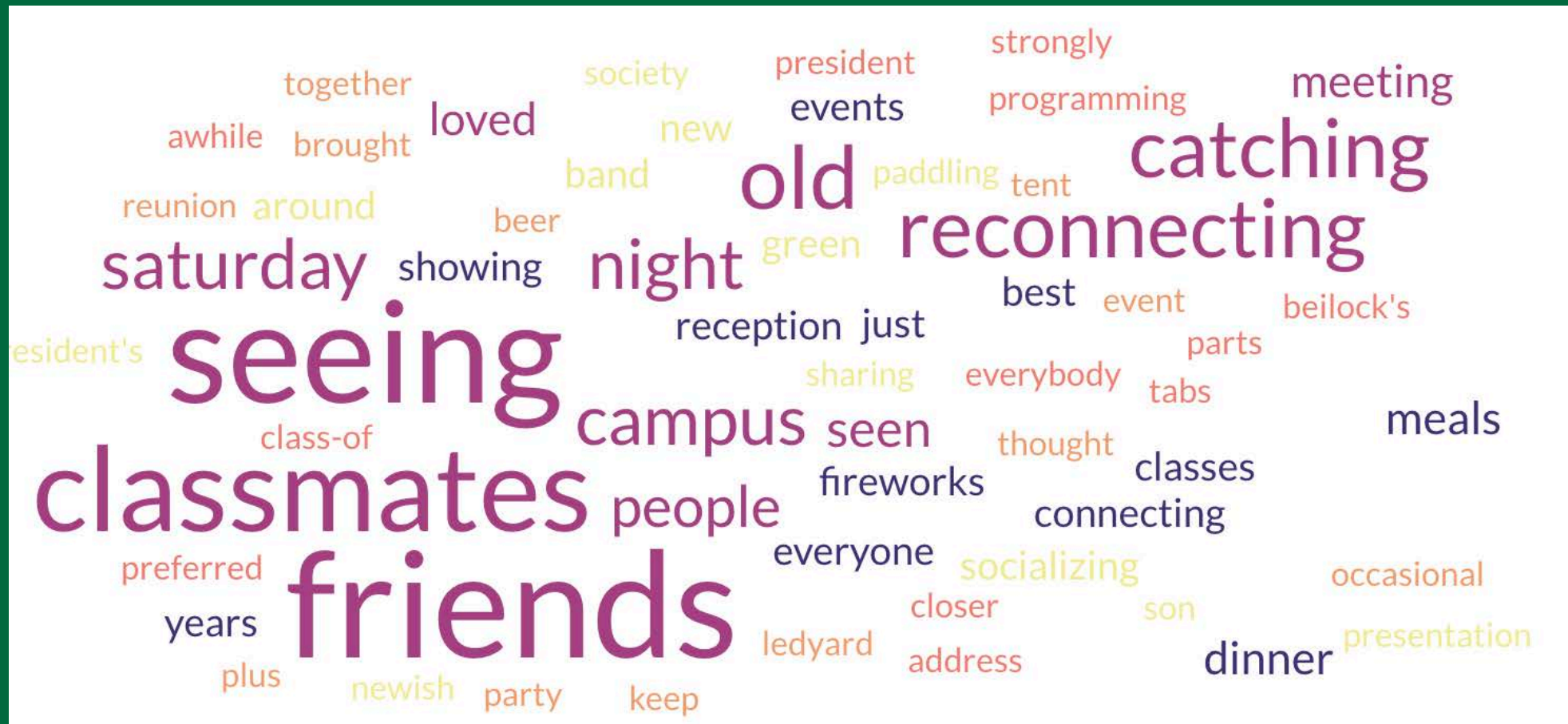
RIGHT PRIORITIES

Reunion is about the people!
Focus on what matters.

Reunion is about seeing and reconnecting with classmates and friends on campus.



When asked about the highlights of reunion, our classmates answered:



Focus on what matters



FOOD

- **Dinners are key – spend \$\$**
- Chairs manage dinners
- Other meals add to experience at low cost including coffee at tent, late night, snacks, NA beverages

SCHEDULE

- **Leverage College's schedule! – don't overprogram**
- We only add only 2 panels + Memorial to schedule
- 80% of class thought we had right amt of programming

Keep it Simple

- Fewer options at the bar
- Don't overcomplicate tent
- Focus on max impact/low cost things (coffee at tent)
- Keep student workers focused with clear direction

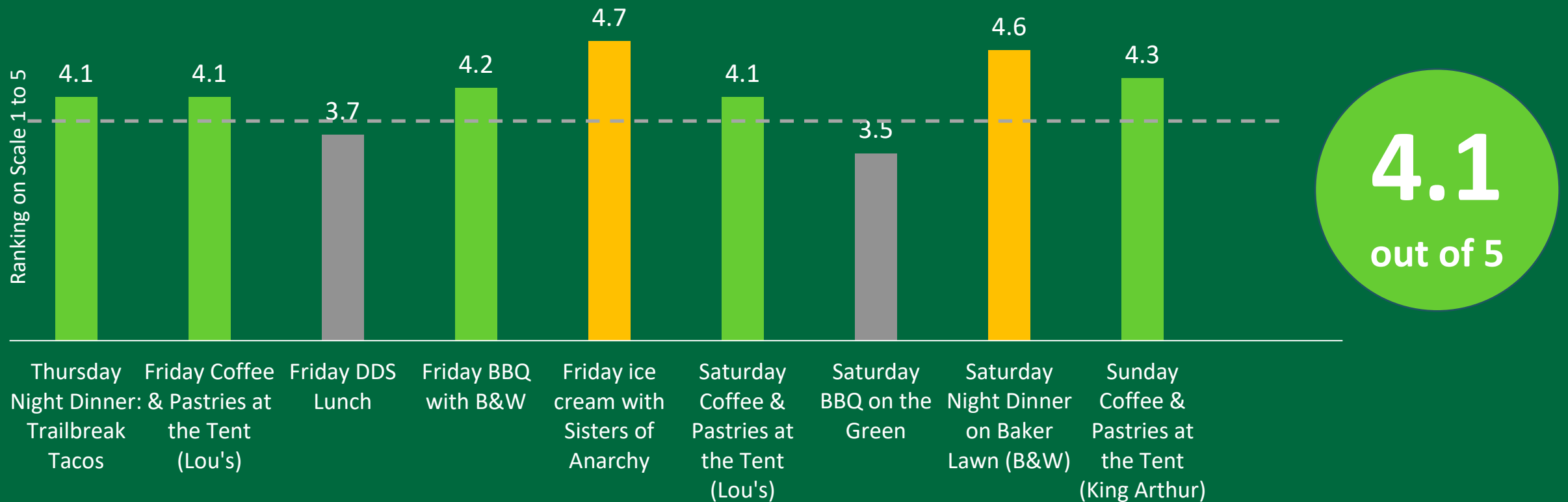
Class meals were outstanding!



7 of 9 class meals scored 4 or higher with our class dinner a 4.6!

Classmates generally felt we did a good job of meeting dietary restrictions

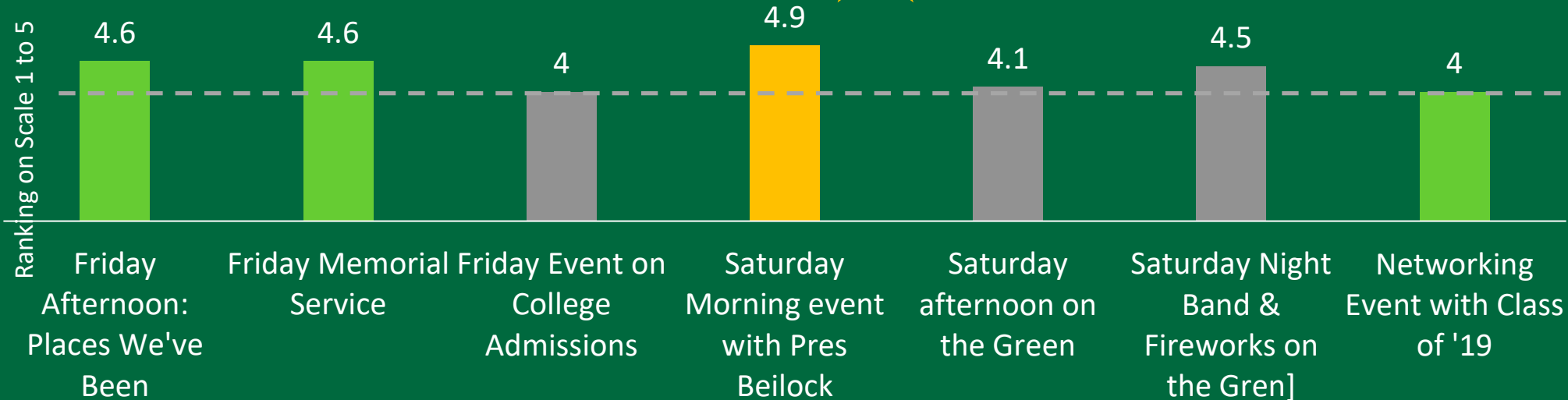
double check all allergies with caterers!



Strong events on balanced schedule



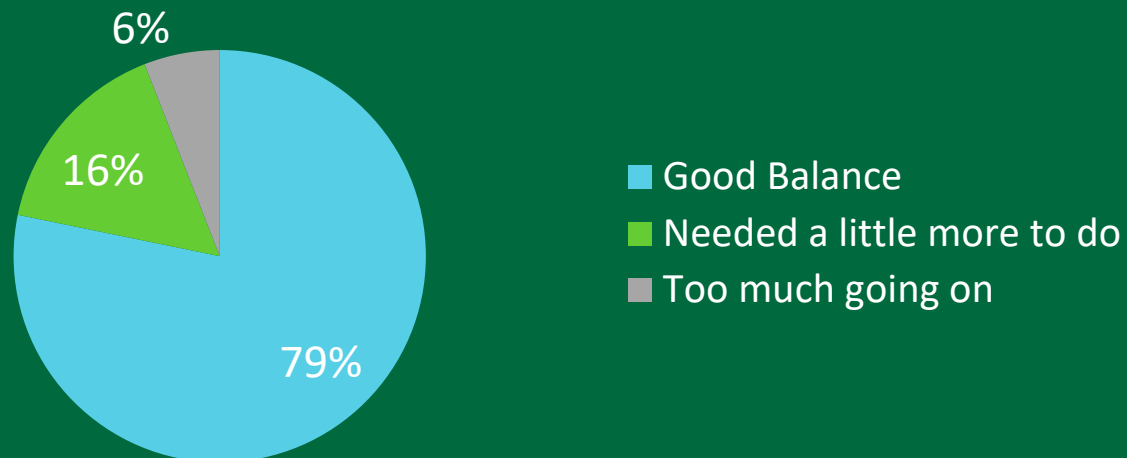
All events scored 4.0 or higher



class events
College Planned

4.4
out of 5

Did we have the right amount of programming ?





THANK YOU!

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APPENDIX

Post Reunion Surveys

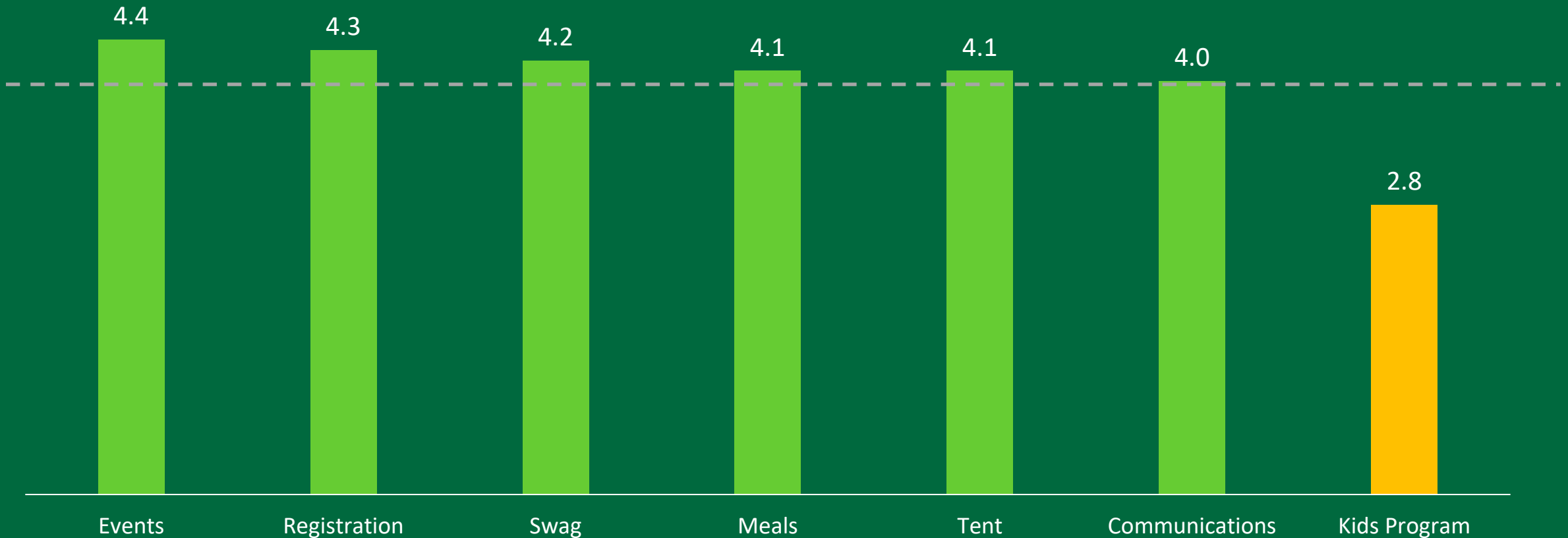


- A comprehensive survey was sent to 330 classmates who attended with 74 responses for a 22% response rate.
 - Most questions were on a 5 point scale: 1(poor) to 5(outstanding)
 - All close ended questions received between 70 and 74 responses except souvenirs which received responses in low 60s and kids programming which received responses in mid 20s.
- A brief survey was sent to the ~700 classmates who did not attend to identify the reasons they did not attend. 95 classmates (14%) responded.

Summary: Lots of High Scores!



Questions Scored on 5 point Scale: 1 (poor) to 5 (Outstanding)



Highlights – we did a lot of things well!



- ★ • **The Food!!** Rave reviews of the meals, especially dinners from B&W and Trailbreak. 7 of 8 class meals ranked 4.0 or higher (out of 5)
 - Also rave reviews for late night ice cream and coffee and pastries at the tent
- ★ • **Souvenir Store was a success.** Classmates loved their swag especially **Willy's design**. The majority of classmates ordered multiple items and/or upgraded their hoodie. People liked the choice and receiving items before reunion.
 - 80% felt **schedule was balanced**. Interest in Moosilauke Hike on Thurs. and yoga.
 - **Events were great**. 4.4/5. Highlight was Saturday Night on Green & Pres. Beilock.
 - People loved the **tent!** 4.1/5. People liked the band .
 - Our **Communications** were great! Especially the emails and class website. 4.0/5
 - Only 12% felt the reunion was not appropriately priced.
 - The dorms are convenient but basic.

Opportunities – we had a few misses



- ★ • Need to better message what meals/events are not appropriate for kids.
- ★ • Registration scored high but there were a few snags:
 - Don't close registration! Larger price increases for regular/late
 - Better publicize financial aid is available.
 - Conflicting messaging around registration location.
 - Housing communications were slow. Better message dorm amenities.
 - Better address how maiden names appear on nametags.
- DDS and College meals received low score – class should revisit using DDS and perhaps doing smaller breakfasts at tent.
- Lower marks for kids programming and kids meals. 2.8/5
- Double check allergies with caterers!