



## **INK: Important news for chapter officers and advisors**

### ***Mortar Board membership: an overview***

As you begin the very important process of membership selections, remember this tradition has existed since the inception of Mortar Board. The process has many steps, but it is important to follow these steps in order to secure the integrity of the selections process. If you are going to print out any copy of the INK to keep – this is the one! Please post for all to see.

Each chapter is charged with selecting a new class for the upcoming year. We hold chapters individually responsible for this task and expect each chapter to complete it accordingly.

In this issue, you will find tips for success with your selections process, a detailed list of membership resources, ideas on where to start, basic guidelines, and requirements for the process. After reading this issue and its supplemental resources, we hope that you will feel confident in selecting and tapping your new members. More detailed information about orientation, initiation and chapter transition will be included in a later edition of the INK.

Your section coordinator, as well as the National Office, is here to answer questions and help guide you through the process. We look forward to your help in welcoming more than 6,000 new members to Mortar Board this year!

Jon Cook  
Executive Director

Megan McGough  
Assistant Executive Director

### ***Selections at-a-glance***

#### **What do I do first?**

- Read the Membership Selection Handbook to learn all about membership selections. The membership selection timeline on page 3, as well as this sample, gives an idea of how to plan your selections process.
- Talk to your advisor to find out how the selections process has worked on your campus in previous years.
- Meet with your officers and chapter members to plan selections. Complete the Membership Selection Plan (MSP) and submit it by December 15.

#### **Who is eligible?**

- Students must be in the top 35 percent of their class and have at least junior standing (they must have at least one semester/term to serve as an active member prior to graduation). By December 15, ask your school's registrar to provide you with names of eligible students.
- Candidates must exemplify the qualities of leadership and service.

#### **How do I select new members?**

- All chapter members should be involved in selecting the new class, a process detailed in the Membership Selection Handbook.
- Selection by Consensus (outlined on p. 4 of the Membership Selection Handbook) is the preferred method of selecting new Mortar Board members.
- At the 2007 national conference, it was resolved that delegates are concerned about making Mortar Board the strongest possible body of lifelong members. Therefore, it was decided that each active chapter should make a sincere effort to increase their chapter by two members during the upcoming year.

#### **Then what happens?**

- Aim for reporting all candidates to the Mortar Board National Office via the

### **Deadlines & Reminders**

#### **December 1**

- Want new members to know what Mortar Board means to you? Submit your personal testimonial by December 1 for possible inclusion in the 2008-2009 Official Membership Booklet, available at [www.mortarboard.org/forms](http://www.mortarboard.org/forms)

#### **December 15**

- Membership Selection Plan (MSP) due
- Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant application due

#### **January 1**

- Price of graduation cords and medallions will raise from \$15 to \$17

#### **January 31**

- Applications for post-graduate Mortar Board fellowships are due

### **Mortar Board lingo Tapping**

Some of the most vivid memories Mortar Board alumni have are how they were tapped. This rich tradition began as long ago as 1892, years before Mortar Board's official founding. The phrase "tapping" comes from the tradition that members were (and many still are) literally "tapped" by the mortarboard of a current member to signify that they have been selected for membership. Today, tapping ceremonies vary greatly on each campus, but continue to create lasting memories for new members. It is an important custom to make these ceremonies meaningful and welcome new members into Mortar Board with pride.

Official Membership Report (OMR) by the end of February.

- Receive approval for candidates from the National Office.
- Tap new members around mid-March, after you have received approval.
- Hold an orientation session for new members and collect dues at the end of March, prior to initiation.
- Initiate new members at the beginning of April (remember, according to the Standing Rules, Section 1, part C, initiation should occur at least four weeks before the end of classes).
- By mid-April, file the final OMR with National Office to report all paid and initiated members. At this time, you must additionally submit all fees.

### ***Tips/best practices for a successful selections process:***

- Start early! It is important for each chapter, in conjunction with the chapter advisor, to plan early for selections. Set deadlines and begin communicating with the university registrar's office. The registrar can provide information about student grades and eligibility for Mortar Board. In some cases, this office can assist with sending e-mail messages to the entire pool of eligible students.
- Make sure all eligible students are aware of Mortar Board! Fliers, chalking, banners, and information sessions are all an important part of publicizing Mortar Board to the general student body. It is vital to make direct contact with each student in the top 35 percent of the junior class regarding their eligibility. *The easiest and most cost-effective way to do this is via e-mail.*
- Candidates must be approved by national Mortar Board BEFORE they can officially be selected for membership. This means you must
  1. Meet as a group to select your new members
  2. Submit the information for all candidates you hope to tap for membership via the Official Membership Report (OMR) *Allow for 1-2 weeks between reporting these candidates on the OMR and your tapping date to ensure there are no problems. An e-mail approval message will be sent to the chapter president and advisors as soon as possible.*
  3. Wait for approval from the National Office before tapping can be held
- Collect membership fees prior to initiation. Students are not official members of Mortar Board until their information has been reported and fees have been received.
- Remember that all chapters are held to the policies dictated in the governing documents of the organization. Specifically, it is vital to read the Standing Rules of Mortar Board, Section 1, parts A through K.
- Complete your selections process around the end of February (before you leave for spring break). This ensures that you have adequate time to orient and initiate new members as well as transition and train your new members and officers. *Don't forget to make sure all outgoing officers complete responsibilities before graduation so new officers are not left uninformed.*

### ***Valuable Resources***

Reading the Membership Selection Handbook from cover-to-cover is a wonderful resource. However, we love to provide samples and information for numerous items your chapter may need. Some resources you may find useful are listed below. They can all be easily accessed by visiting [www.mortarboard.org/membership/resources.html](http://www.mortarboard.org/membership/resources.html).

#### **General Mortar Board resources:**

- Sample letterhead template
- Downloadable logo
- Business card request form
- Press release template

#### **Tapping materials:**

- Sample tapping ideas/script
- What to include in your "tapping packet"

#### **Initiation materials:**

- Initiation Booklet
- Initiation script
- Sample initiation invitation for parents/friends
- Mortar Board music (available in both print and MP3 formats)
- Mortar Board poem - The Torch



### **What are you doing for Mortar Board week?**

Mortar Board Week, held Feb. 10-16, 2008, is a great time to celebrate Mortar Board on your campus. What is your chapter doing? Even if you didn't submit it on your Chapter Planning Calendar, let Mortar Board know! We would like to share this information with your university and local media to get the word out about Mortar Board. All information, big or small, can be sent to [mbforum@mortarboard.org](mailto:mbforum@mortarboard.org).

**Need money to increase campus visibility during Mortar Board Week?** Whether you are buying t-shirts for your group, making banners or buying advertising – the Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant is here to help. Apply at [www.mortarboard.org/forms](http://www.mortarboard.org/forms) by December 15.



### Membership/selections resources:

- Membership Selection Handbook
- Membership FAQ
- Membership Selection Plan (MSP)
- Sample Membership Selection Timeline
- Selection by Consensus practice page
- New Member Orientation Guide
- Membership Presentation (from the national conference)
- Officer and Advisor Handbook
- National letter requesting grades info
- Sample promotional e-mail/call for applications
- Sample application/nomination needs
- Sample press release
- Sample flier/handbill
- Sample congratulatory letter for selected applicants
- Sample congratulatory letter to families of selected applicants
- Sample letter for non-selected applicants

### Lead a Book Drive with Better Word Books!

Would you like to make a tangible social and environmental impact using resources already on campus, while raising funds for your Mortar Board chapter? Better World Books can provide everything you need for an effective book drive, including collection bins, marketing materials, shipping supplies and full support from their regional directors. By leading a book drive this semester, you can save hundreds of books that might otherwise get thrown away, which Better World Books will put up for sale to raise much-needed funding for local and international literacy organizations. For more information, visit [www.betterworldbooks.com](http://www.betterworldbooks.com) or e-mail [campus@betterworldbooks.com](mailto:campus@betterworldbooks.com) to get started today!



### Chapter Spotlight: University of Colorado Virginia Patterson Chapter

At this summer's annual national conference, the Virginia Patterson chapter was awarded with a high Mortar Board honor: the title of Most Improved Chapter. This award is given to one chapter each year that achieved success while re-establishing and re-invigorating programming and membership.

A great feature of the University of Colorado chapter is the diversity of its membership, their interests, and the projects they complete. The chapter participates in several projects throughout the year. For example, they put elbow grease into the "Garden of the Gods" in Colorado, will volunteer at a local soup kitchen to set up for Thanksgiving, plan to hold a blanket drive for an area homeless shelter, will spread holiday cheer at a retirement community in December, and much more! When the 2007-2008 Chapter President Stephanie Roepke asked the chapter members which project they were looking forward to most, each had a different response! She explained, "That's what is great about our group; everyone has such diverse interests, so we were able to have assorted projects that different members can be excited about!"

It takes a lot of hard work to become the Most Improved Chapter, and the group knows there are obstacles. As for the largest, Roepke believes the challenge lies in keeping members motivated. At the beginning of the year, chapters are typically excited and willing to give plenty of time. However, as the year progresses, members have more obligations and less time. In her opinion, a sensible solution is planning activities that everyone is able to do and wants to participate in.

Roepke says her best advice is to put ideas into action and see them through. She explains, "Lots of great ideas are brought up at meetings, but it's important to take an active role and put those ideas into action after the meetings."



### Icebreaker of the month My Story

*Works best with at least 12-15 people*

Step 1: Send three people out of the room. The three people must decide on a story of something that has happened to one of them. This works best with a funny story that has plenty of details. The person it actually happened to must tell the full story to the other two, in order to prep them.

Step 2: The three then come out in front of everyone else. One at a time, they each stand up and tell the story as if it happened to them. At this time, the rest of the chapter can quiz each of them about the event. The two who are lying will inevitably be asked questions that they don't know the answer to - they have to make up an answer-and sell it!

Step 3: The chapter members vote on who they think the story really happened to.

Tips: Pick three people that have the "gift of gab" and tell them to say anything that will make the story believable!

*Submitted by: Dan Smith*

### New member selections: national MB can help

Are you already getting students interested in joining Mortar Board for next year? The Mortar Board National Office provides information and resources to these potential members by way of e-newsletters. Encourage potential members to sign up at [www.mortarboard.org](http://www.mortarboard.org) or send the National Office their e-mail addresses.