



Mortar Board

Scholars...Chosen for Leadership...United to Serve

INK: Important news for chapter officers and advisors

Mortar Board membership: an overview

Membership selections is a time-honored tradition that has existed since the inception of Mortar Board. Selections may seem overwhelming, but it is important to follow the required steps in order to maintain the integrity of the process. If you are going to print out any copy of the INK to keep – this is the one! Please share or post for all to see.

Each chapter is charged with selecting a new class for the upcoming year. The Mortar Board National Office holds chapters individually responsible for this task and expects 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 future edition of the INK.

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

Jon Cook
Executive Director

Megan Stevens
Assistant Executive Director

Selections at-a-glance

What do I do first?

- Read the Membership Selection Handbook and visit www.mortarboard.org/membership to learn all about membership selections.
- See an example of the year that lies ahead by glancing at a sample membership selection timeline online or on page 8 of the Membership Selection Handbook.
- Talk to your advisor to find out how the selections process has worked on your campus in previous years and if improvement needs to be made.
- Meet with your chapter officers and members to plan your chapter's selections process.
- Complete the Membership Recruitment and Selection Plan (MRSP) and submit it to the Mortar Board National Office by December 15.

Who is eligible?

- Candidates 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. If they can not provide you with these names, they may be able to send out a message to these students on your behalf.
- Applicants should exemplify Mortar Board's three key ideals: scholarship, leadership and service.

How do I select new members?

- Chapters may develop and use a selection process that works well on their specific campus or use one of the sample processes outlined in the Membership Selection Handbook. The process each chapter chooses must adhere to the selections principles outlined on pages 3 - 5 of the handbook.
- The National Office must approve your chapter's Membership Recruitment and

Deadlines & Reminders

PAST DUE: October 15

- Chapter Planning Calendar due
- Chapter Project Grant Application due
- Forum submissions due
- Virtual Book Drive ended

December 15

- Membership Recruitment and Selection Plan (MRSP) due
- Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant application due
- YouTube Recruitment Video Contest entry due

January 31

- Applications for national Mortar Board post-graduate fellowships are due

Icebreaker of the month

Candybreaker

Purchase a variety bag of candy and bring it to your next meeting. Pass it around and instruct members to take as many pieces as they like but not to eat them yet. If your time (or candy supply) is limited, instruct members to take 1-3 pieces of candy.

After everyone has selected their candy, explain the following rules. Each member must first introduce themselves. Based on the candy they selected, they will have to answer different questions. You can write these on a board or pass a sheet around with the questions.

To introduce themselves, each member should state their:

- Name
- Major
- Any offices/positions they hold or committees they belong to in Mortar Board

Here are a few question ideas:

- Type 1 - What is the most recent movie you saw in a theatre?
- Type 2 - Name a place you would like to travel to that you have not yet visited.
- Type 3 - What is your favorite hobby?
- Type 4 - What is your favorite food?

Selection Plan (MRSP) before your selections process can begin. Use the National Office, section coordinators and other national leadership, as well as your chapter advisors, as resources for your recruitment and selection process.

- All chapter members must be involved in selecting the new class.

Then what happens?

- Report all candidates to the Mortar Board National Office via the 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 from the National Office.
- Hold an orientation session for new members and ensure that all dues are paid by end of March or prior to initiation.
- Initiate new members at the beginning of April (remember, according to the Bylaws Section 1.16, initiation should occur at least four weeks before the end of classes).
- By mid-April, confirm that all members have been reported, membership fees have been paid, and all national fees have been submitted (including the required \$200 conference fee).

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, who can assist in contacting the eligible candidate pool.
- **Make sure all eligible students are aware of Mortar Board.** Fliers, chalking, banners and information sessions are all important parts of publicizing Mortar Board to the general student body. Information regarding eligibility must be made available to each student in the top 35 percent of the junior class. *The easiest and most cost-effective way to contact prospective members is via e-mail.*
- **Provide the National Office with candidate information so they can be approved BEFORE formally tapped.** This means you must:
 1. Meet as an entire 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 candidates are approved.*
 3. Wait for approval from the National Office before tapping can be held
- **Ensure that membership fees are paid prior to initiation.** Students are not official members of Mortar Board until their information has been reported nationally 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 Bylaws Article III Section 1 regarding collegiate membership.
- **Complete your selections process** around the end of February (before you leave for spring break). This will give you adequate time to orient and initiate new members as well as transition and train your new members and officers. All outgoing officers must complete responsibilities before graduation so new officers are not left uninformed.

Valuable Resources

Reading the Membership Selection Handbook from cover-to-cover is essential for success. Here are some additional resources your chapter may need, all available at www.mortarboard.org/membership:

General Mortar Board resources:

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

- Type 5 - What is your dream job?

If a member selects multiple pieces of the same candy type, they can say anything about themselves for the remaining number of that candy they selected. For example, if someone took three pieces of Type 1, they would say the most recent movie they saw and two other facts about themselves.

Alternately, you may also instruct each member to say facts about themselves equaling the number of pieces of candy they selected.

About INK

The Mortar Board INK e-newsletter is distributed monthly throughout the academic year (September - May). All chapter officers and advisors reported on the Officer Address Information Form receive the newsletter. If you think an officer or advisor in your chapter is not receiving the newsletter, encourage them to sign up here.

To ensure that you promptly receive the newsletter each month, Mortar Board recommends adding enews@mortarboard.org to your address book or safe-senders list.

Archived editions of Mortar Board INK are available online.

Mortar Board e-mail change

As you may know, Mortar Board provides each chapter with a unique Mortar Board e-mail address to use throughout the year. This address is published on at www.mortarboard.org and can be checked in a variety of ways.

In October, a change took place to provide for easier e-mail access and increased capacity to fight junk mail. As a result, your action may be required to ensure that you continue to receive e-mails.

Please see the revised instructions available online for checking your chapter's Mortar Board e-mail address.

Apply for a Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant

Mortar Board is offering a special grant to chapters who hope to enhance their group's visibility during Mortar Board Week (February 15 - 21, 2009).



Membership/selections resources:

- Membership Selection Handbook
- Membership FAQ
- Membership Recruitment and Selection Plan (MRSP)
- 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

Tapping materials:

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

Initiation materials:

- Initiation Booklet (PDF)
- Initiation script (Microsoft Word)
- Sample initiation invitation for parents/friends
- Mortar Board music
 - Mortar Board Ode (Audio) (Print)
 - Thy Ideals (Audio) (Print)
- Mortar Board poem - The Torch

National Mortar Board fees

Mortar Board requires members to pay a nominal national membership fee of \$60 in exchange for valuable support, services and the honor of lifetime membership in one of the most prestigious national senior honor societies.

Additionally, chapters are required to submit a \$200 conference fee to the Mortar Board National Office to help defray the cost of the annual conference. Currently, the Mortar Board National Conference accounts for 28 percent of the total annual expenses of the organization. The perception by chapters has often been the chapter conference fee covers 100 percent of the cost of the official delegate to attend the annual conference, which is far from the truth. The national conference budget is nearly \$150,000, of which the chapter conference fees assist with only a portion of those expenses. The remaining costs are funded through generous donations from the Mortar Board National Foundation, partnerships and in-kind donations. Additionally, travel costs spiking dramatically this year (25 percent since January alone) and more projected increases on the horizon mean the conference budget will in turn have to increase.

Here are a few quick ways your chapter can raise \$200 to pay the conference fee:

- Ask your university's student activities department if they provide funding that would cover a portion (or all) of the \$200 national conference fee.
- Participate in a restaurant take-over, in which groups will come in a "take over" for an evening in exchange of a certain percentage of the profits and all of the tips. Have members work as servers, bussers, dishwashers, etc. for the cause. This works best in small restaurants. Similarly, some restaurants may share profits simply for directing business to their restaurant on a specific date. Members and friends will buy their meal and say they are there with "Mortar Board." Soon after, the business will provide a donation to the group.
- Ask members and their families to donate gently used items to be sold at a chapter garage sale.
- Call a local marketing research facility (a place that holds focus groups, taste tests, etc.), and see if they have any opportunities for members to participate in. These studies typically pay between \$20-\$60 for 1-2 hours.

This grant provides special funding to help increase awareness of the Mortar Board chapter on your campus. It can also help your recruitment efforts for the 2009-2010 year. The deadline to apply is December 15, so be sure to complete the grant application online this fall! Recipients will be notified in January.

Your National Council student representatives

Joseph Rodriguez serves as the chapter president at the University of Arizona. He was elected to one of the two student representative seats on the Mortar Board National Council at the 2008 Mortar Board National Conference held this July. His term will end in July 2010. Katie Schirmer, a recent graduate of Drury University, will serve as student representative through July 2009.

If you have any ideas or input that you would like shared with national leadership, please feel free to email them.

Mortar Board launches YouTube Recruitment Video Contest

Mortar Board has launched a new way for members and chapters to spread the word about Mortar Board and contribute to a national selection and recruitment video: the YouTube Recruitment Video Contest.

Chapters have complete creative control over their original recruitment video, which should highlight Mortar Board's activities, ideals and/or members. A committee will review the videos and select one grand price winner to receive a \$200 check and insignia for the winning chapter's Web site. Honorable mention chapters will also receive recognition.

To participate in the national Mortar Board YouTube Recruitment Video Contest, chapters must upload a video shorter than 10 minutes to www.YouTube.com by December 15. A link and CD or DVD of the video should also be sent to the National Office. All entries may gain recognition as a portion of a future national recruitment video!

Complete information on how to enter, rules and regulations are available online.

- Set up a group account to sell products, such as food items or magazine subscriptions, online. At www.efundraising.com, you can earn up to a 90 percent profit of your sales for certain items.
- Work with Better World Books to raise funds. Host a campus book drive with drop boxes near book stores, in coffee shops, in residence halls, etc. and Better World Books will pay you for qualifying books. Additionally, Better World Books provides everything you need for an effective book drive: collection bins, marketing materials, shipping supplies and full support from their regional directors.
- Sell flowers at an upcoming graduation ceremony while working with Blossom Express brings an average of more than a \$1,000 in profits and if you are new to the program, may receive an additional \$250 grant to help you get started.

Virtual Book Drive winners announced

The Mortar Board Virtual Book Drive, held July 26 - October 15, resulted in a whopping \$25,586.24 raised nationally - just shy of a very aggressive national goal of \$30,000. Funds raised will help support local literacy initiatives, providing children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books.

Thank you to all the chapters who participated in this national initiative! This amazing commitment to support Mortar Board's national project, Reading is Leading, is truly a reason to celebrate!

Congratulations to our top Virtual Book Drive chapters!

First place - \$500 prize

Hope College (\$4,716.65)

Second place - \$250 prize

Kansas State (\$3,402.86)

Third place - \$100 prize

Indiana University of Pennsylvania (\$3,163.75)

Honorable mention - \$100 prize

University of South Alabama (\$1,935)

The top producing chapters were awarded a Borders gift card to use at the chapters' discretion to buy books for a community organization of their choice.

Congratulations to our top regional section - OHIO!

In addition to individual chapters being honored for their contributions, the regional section with the highest total donation and participation rate was recognized. As a prize, the top section (Ohio) will be able to choose two programs to each receive 500 books from First Book.

Still have questions about your participation in the Virtual Book Drive?

Each chapter should have received an e-mail directly from First Book detailing how much money they raised and how to ensure their funds get properly credited to their recipient group. More information on the Virtual Book Drive is available in the Virtual Book Drive packet. Specific questions regarding how to use funds raised by individual chapters should be directed to Erin Tyler at First Book (etyler@firstbook.org).

Chapter spotlight: Hope College

The Alcor chapter at Hope College was recognized at the Mortar Board National Conference this summer as a finalist for the top national chapter award: the Ruth Weimer Mount Chapter Excellence Award. With numerous accomplishments, unmatched service events and practically countless activities, this group is undeniably dedicated.

Each year, the chapter devotes themselves to all of Mortar Board's three key ideals: scholarship, leadership and service. They have already kicked off the year with an enormous amount of service. Not only have they participated in the Hope College Relay for Life, but the chapter's recent annual homecoming alumni book drive coincided with the national Virtual Book Drive. As a result, the chapter was the top national donor with more than \$4,700 donated to a fund for a local Holland, Mich. elementary school.

Another chapter tradition exemplifying service is their annual involvement with Hope College's Children's After School Achievement (CASA) program. In the autumn, they carve pumpkins with CASA students and near the holiday season stuff stockings to present to the children. The chapter also spreads holiday cheer at local nursing homes by caroling, bringing gifts and visiting with residents.

New this year, the group is developing a "Last Lecture Series," a popular event among Mortar Board chapters, born for the Hope chapter at the national conference this summer. Traditionally, the series gives professors the opportunity to lecture as if it were their last - and sometimes it actually is. "We hope to have three lectures throughout the year given by professors at Hope students respect for their wisdom and perspective on life," Chapter President Alex Griffin explained. Professors will be allowed to speak on whatever they feel prompted to share when given the opportunity to share their 'last lecture.'"

When asked if he could give one piece of advice to other chapters, President Alex Griffin said he encourages chapters to set a true vision for the year. "This allows all members to feel involved in shaping the course of the Mortar Board year and keeps everyone motivated towards accomplishing the goals set out for the rest of the year. Having all members on the same page can go a long way towards keeping everyone excited and motivated."

Your chapter can be in the spotlight too! Nominate your group by sending your chapter name, university, e-mail address and what makes your chapter unique to enews@mortarboard.org.