



Mortar Board

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

INK: Important news for chapter officers and advisors

Mortar Board Officer Guide: Director of Communications, Public Relations, Publicity or Visibility

As the manager of your chapter's communications and public image, you have the responsibility of making sure your chapter's activities are publicized both locally and nationally.

In order to fully understand your position and responsibilities, you should download and read the director of communications portion on page 20 of the Officer & Advisor Handbook.

Why do you want to increase your publicity?

Do you want to increase participation in chapter-sponsored events? Is your goal to increase the prestige of Mortar Board on campus? Do you strive to generate administrative support and recognition? Think about why you want to increase your visibility efforts and then make a plan to gain that visibility.

Strategize by incorporating ideas into a visibility and publicity plan

Make Mortar Board's activities stand out by being creative and planning in advance. Prepare a public relations strategy that incorporates all of your chapter's planned publicity and visibility efforts for the year, such as:

- A chapter Web site - most people learn about organizations by visiting their Web site so make use of this by creating and maintaining one for your chapter
- Public relations efforts with your university's media relations department, school and local newspapers
- Submissions to your university's undergraduate or honors student newsletters
- Placement of chapter events in campus and community calendars
- Sending news releases to members' hometowns following initiation
- Submissions to the *Mortar Board Forum* magazine
- Creating events or maintaining groups on social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace
- Attending meetings of other student organizations to promote your chapter's upcoming events or membership process
- Sending e-mail announcements to campus groups or organizations you know of, or to listservs to which chapter members belong
- A weekly or monthly "Mortar Board Day" when members wear Mortar Board t-shirts on campus to promote the organization
- Posting fliers around campus or your student center
- Distributing ready-made national Mortar Board brochures that you can request from the National Office.
- "Chalking" your campus (if permitted) by writing promotional messages about your chapter's selections process or programming on the ground in sidewalk chalk
- Host a table with a display and fliers about Mortar Board at involvement fairs
- Participate in high-visibility charitable events such as Relay for Life or Race for the Cure as a Mortar Board team
- Placement of ads on your university's Web site, Facebook or in your student newspaper to promote your chapter's events or selections
- Placement of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on the campus radio station promoting awareness of chapter projects, such as Reading is Leading literacy programs or food drives

Review your chapter responsibilities

- Establish good relations with campus/community media
- Submit newsworthy items about chapter activities to campus/community media
- Keep a notebook of activities, deadlines and resources

Download the Officer & Advisor Handbook



Deadlines & Reminders

Check your files and with the National Office to see that all reports from last year have been submitted to reports@mortarboard.org!

October 15

- *Forum* submissions due

December 15

- Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant application due

March 15

- *Forum* submissions due

May 15

- Historian Annual Report due

Tips

Keep copies, in chronological order, of any communications or marketing pieces you develop to help you keep track of what you have done and serve as a great example for future chapters.

Always follow the Associated Press (A.P.) Stylebook for anything you send to the media. You can buy one at a local bookstore or online at www.apstylebook.com.

Spread the word to the right people. Send press releases to local radio stations, television stations, magazines, newspapers, free publications and even news organizations like the Associated Press.

- Orient successor and turns over all material to same
- Maintain content on the chapter Web site or oversees its production

Know your national responsibilities

- Submit contributions for publication in the *Mortar Board Forum* by October 15 for the fall/winter edition and March 15 for the spring/summer edition. Details and submission guidelines are available in the Officer & Advisor Handbook.

Get recognition by submitting reports

Report form	Due date	Details
Forum submissions	October 15	Share your chapter's events and photos with the Mortar Board National Office for publication in the <i>Mortar Board Forum</i> magazine.
Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant	December 15	Get additional funding for your Mortar Board Week visibility efforts by applying for this grant.
Forum submissions	March 15	Share your chapter's events and photos with the Mortar Board National Office for publication in the <i>Mortar Board Forum</i> magazine.
Historian Annual Report	May 15	If your chapter does not have a historian, you may be responsible for ensuring that this annual chapter summary for the national Historical Publication Committee is submitted.

Sample timeline for alumni chair

This timeline is meant to serve as a guideline only and does not incorporate all necessary responsibilities, such as those required by individual colleges and universities.

Summer (May - August)

- Prior to the end of the academic year, meet with the outgoing chapter director of communications to obtain notes (saved in a binder/folder, data CD or flash drive) and get any tips for the coming year
- Meet with your chapter's president after he or she returns from the annual national conference in Chicago to discuss plans for the year
- Set up a template for a chapter letterhead, press releases, notes and more
- Designate a binder or folder on your computer to keep chapter minutes and notes throughout the year. Back up information onto a data CD or USB flash drive regularly.

Fall (September - November)

- Attend all officer and general chapter meetings (held at least monthly throughout the academic year)
- Work with the secretary to plan any chapter newsletters around the minutes distributed following meetings
- Participate and assist in publicizing any fall campus and chapter activities, events and service initiatives
- Submit chapter updates, photos and articles for publication in the *Mortar Board Forum* magazine by October 15
- Regularly back up files to a data CD or USB flash drive
- Determine whether or not you are responsible for updating your chapter's Web site. If this is your responsibility, plan content and make a timeline of information you would like to share throughout the year. Additionally Web site tips are available in the Officer & Advisor Handbook or on this help page.

Winter (December - February)

- Plan early for national Mortar Board Week (February 14-20, 2010) and the applicable publicity and visibility efforts. A folder of helpful resources, including e-postcard templates and poster artwork, is available online at www.mortarboard.org/mbweek. If your chapter has any major visibility efforts planned for Mortar Board Week, you may wish to apply for a Mortar Board Week Visibility Grant (optional) by December 15



Proofread your work, or have someone else take a look at it. Making a mistake on your work is very serious. It makes you, and the organization, look unprofessional.

Use all available publicity outlets. No technique is too big or small. Post events on campus calendars, have members "donate" their Facebook or Twitter status to promoting Mortar Board, and send news releases to all area media.

Tell the National Office about events. The National Office can help promote your local chapter events by updating its Twitter or Facebook status. E-mail mbforum@mortarboard.org for help.

Share your news with the *Mortar Board Forum*. E-mail articles to mbforum@mortarboard.org in a Microsoft Word document. Be sure to include the name of the writer and/or person submitting the article, chapter position, school name, chapter name, your address and telephone number and the date. High-resolution pictures should be sent as a separate attachment.

Read the monthly Mortar Board INK

The Mortar Board INK, distributed September through May from e-mail address enews@mortarboard.org, serves as a resource for officers and advisors of Mortar Board. This important newsletter includes:

- National deadlines
- Important reminders
- Chapter highlights
- Important announcements
- Ideas for projects, fundraisers and more

Officers and advisors reported in the Officer Address Information Form receive this newsletter. Please make sure all officers are reported on this form and subscribe.



- Help the membership chair or committee create any applications, fliers and/or membership materials (if necessary)
- Assist the membership chair or committee with publicizing the recruitment and application process
- Participate and assist in publicizing in winter campus activities
- Regularly back up files to a data CD or USB flash drive

Spring (March - May)

- Submit chapter updates, photos and articles for publication in the *Mortar Board Forum* magazine by March 15
- Continue to attend all meetings, take notes and distribute minutes or newsletters to chapter members
- Regularly back up files to a data CD or USB flash drive
- Participate in a chapter and officer transition; be sure to meet one-on-one with the new chapter director of communications to pass on your binder and files from the academic year, provide helpful tips on things that did and did not work, and exchange contact information so the new officer can contact you for assistance if needed

This is not intended to be a complete officer guide, but is a condensed version to give specific officers an idea of what to expect throughout the year. All officers and advisors should download and thoroughly read the Officer & Advisor Handbook for a complete guide of responsibilities.