



INK: Important news for chapter officers and advisors

Welcome to the 2007-2008 INK

Important monthly news for chapter officers and advisors

The Mortar Board INK, distributed September through May, serves as a tremendous resource for officers and advisors of Mortar Board. It is your conduit to national Mortar Board, and features deadlines and reminders, important announcements, monthly ideas, chapter spotlights and more. Officers and advisors reported in the Officer Address Information Form receive this newsletter. Please forward this to others who you believe would benefit and ask them to subscribe here.

Overview of your model year in Mortar Board

Being a Mortar Board officer or advisor is great responsibility that will be both fun and challenging throughout the year. Below are things to help you get started along with the Mortar Board model year.

Getting started

- Plan for an official delegate to attend the national conference in July and report back to other officers and advisors with what they learned. Next year, the national conference will be held July 25-27, 2008.
- Download and read the Officer & Advisor Handbook (*Please note that each chapter's membership chairperson, advisor and president should download an additional guide, the Membership Selection Handbook*)
- Review the Chapter Minimum Standards online or as outlined in the Officer & Advisor Handbook to help you plan for the upcoming year
- Make a list of questions, concerns or ideas you have regarding the upcoming year. Get answers on the conference resource site, chapter resources page or by contacting a regional or national representative.
- Be sure to set up your chapter e-mail address using these instructions, update your local chapter Web site and consider creating a public calendar, such as a Google Calendar, to share events.
- Review chapter award opportunities here and set goals accordingly.
- Plan early for all scholarship, leadership, service and fundraising events that will occur throughout the year. These plans must be submitted to the National Office in the Chapter Planning Calendar by October 15.
- Bookmark the Mortar Board Calendar and report forms site - you need to be sure to meet all deadlines throughout the year.

First half of the year (August - December)

- Set all membership meeting times and choose a time and place that members and advisors can attend. You may have to change meeting times each semester to accommodate your group. General membership meetings should be monthly as soon as school starts.
- Participate in fall campus activities.
- Submit your chapter success stories and photos by the 15th of each month for a chance to be featured in the INK newsletter or by October 15 to be included in the national magazine, the Mortar Board Forum.
- Create a Membership Selection Plan (MSP) and submit by December 15. (*Note: this plan requires getting facts and figures from your university, so get started early!*)
- Have fun! Plan a social event or two, and have icebreakers at each meeting so chapter members can get to know each other.

Deadlines & Reminders

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

October 15

The Chapter Planning Calendar, Chapter Project Grant Application and Forum submissions are due.

December 15

The Membership Selection Plan (MSP) is due.

January 31

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

March 15

Excellence in Advising nominations, alumni award nominations, conference assistant applications and Forum submissions due; conference registration opens

May 15

Chapter Annual Report, Chapter Finance Report, final Official Membership Report (OMR), Advisor Annual Report, Officer Address Information Form, Chapter Project Grant applications, conference registration, annual chapter award nominations and all fees due.



Second half of the year (January - graduation)

- Use your MSP to begin the membership selection process.
- Celebrate national Mortar Board Week, held February 10 - 16, 2008.
- Participate in campus activities.
- Complete the Official Membership Report (OMR) for the National Office
- Tap new members in a memorable, public way.
- Hold a special, meaningful initiation ceremony for your new members
- Orient your new members with a fun retreat or orientation meeting.
- It is important to plan an effective transition process for outgoing/incoming officers.

Chapter spotlight: University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Black Masque chapter

It is sometimes difficult to transition between old and new members before all go their separate ways for summer. Betsy Miller, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln 2007-2008 chapter president, knows exactly how it feels. "After the excitement of our tappings subsided, the Black Masque chapter began to realize what we were getting ourselves into. We met with our preceding officers who gave us the low down on our duties and then went through initiation ceremonies. It all seemed to be a whirlwind of new friends and traditions and a newfound sense of pride. But just when we thought that we knew what we were doing, it was summer and everyone went their own ways."

For Betsy, everything started coming together when she attended the 2007 National Conference in July. "It wasn't until the national conference that I really felt how much of an honor it is to be a part of such an amazing organization."

Each year at the national conference, Mortar Board honors one exemplary chapter with the Ruth Weimer Mount Chapter Excellence Award. Based on the chapter's outstanding devotion to scholarship, leadership and service, it is the highest honor any chapter can receive. The recipient for the 2006-2007 academic year, honored in July, was the Black Masque chapter at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. But that isn't all – the chapter took home a few other awards.

Betsy explained, "Being recognized as the top chapter and also getting the Golden Torch, Project Excellence Award and having one of our advisors recognized as one of the best, really reflects the standards that our chapter upholds. At first, it felt strange accepting the awards that we (my class) didn't really earn. But then I realized that it doesn't just show the accomplishments of one year. I really think it was years in the making. Our excellence comes from tradition. Every year, the new class tries to be as strong or stronger than the class before them. We spend a lot of time with the incoming class, making sure that they will be well prepared for the year ahead."

In fact, a great orientation and officer transition are the keys to a chapter's success. When new members and officers are invested and know what is expected in the upcoming year, they bond together to achieve great things. The Black Masque chapter members, officers and advisors have worked for years to exemplify Mortar Board's ideals, and were rightfully awarded for these outstanding accomplishments.

With a perfect blend of tradition and creative new ideas, the new chapter is excited to get started. Just a few of their upcoming projects are reading at a local school, fundraising by selling bleacher seats at home volleyball games, distributing professor of the month awards, holding a "people who inspire" banquet and a tailgate/alumni banquet.

When asked about her responsibilities as chapter president, Betsy explained, "Serving as the president of such a dynamic group of individuals, within which any one of them could lead just as well if not better than myself, is both frightening and exciting. The bar is set so high for us, that it is daunting at times. But then I realize that we are all in it together - the load is not on my shoulders. We all have our outside activities, but when push comes to shove, I know that I can rely on every member to do their part. I have already met some amazing friends and I think that what I look forward to the most in the coming year is building on these relationships and creating some great memories!"

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.

Icebreaker of the month

Autograph Bingo

Let your chapter members get to know each other by learning interesting (and humorous) facts about other members.

First, create a table with 5 rows and 5 columns and fill it in with interesting facts or statements. These facts can be easy such as "has blond hair" or more out of the ordinary such as "knows a martial art." Remember, you want someone to actually win, so mix and match easy statements with more difficult ones.

Distribute writing utensils and the bingo cards you created to members. Be sure to let the group know that they should mingle and find other members to sign squares with facts that apply to them. Members can only sign each card once, and cannot sign their own card. The first member to get a complete row of 5 autographs (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) and shout "BINGO!" wins!

For an extra get-to-know you benefit, you can ask everyone to introduce themselves after the game. They can stand and say their name, major(s) or minor(s), chapter office (if they hold one) and one square they were able to sign on the bingo cards.

Consider giving a prize to the winner, such as a Mortar Board gift item or gift certificate to a local restaurant.

