

# Mortar Board Chapter Operations

## *Creating Buzz: Visibility, social media, and more*®



Making your campus aware of Mortar Board events and membership selection is vital to your success. How can you gain visibility? Your chapter will need to strategize ways to publicize your name in the campus community while also drawing significant interest in the membership selection process. A strong presence on campus is a great thing for a chapter!

### General strategies for public relations and outreach

- If you build it, they will come...right?
  - Better if you go where they are—find your audience and take your message to them
    - It's not enough to do just one thing — use a variety of methods
    - Engage your audience with social media — it's easy, it's free and everyone uses it
- Does your messaging pass the WIIF test?
  - Answer this question: What's in it for me?
  - Another good question: Who says?
  - Make sure your entire chapter knows your message. Mortar Board's ideals are scholarship, leadership and service — put those ideals at the center of your messaging
- Think about the ladder of effectiveness
  - Face to face: one on one or in a small group setting; chapter events or setting up tables at student activities fairs can fall in to this category
  - Other individual contact: personal email, phone call, text, social media
  - Semi-personal contact: large group emails or letters
  - Mass marketing: posters, ads, general media, sidewalk chalk
- Use your resources
  - Use your chapter's connections with well-known faculty or staff on campus
  - Does your institution have media resources you could use?
  - Find the talent in your chapter!

### Event strategies

- Think about the WIIF test again—what need does your event meet on your campus and who is your target audience?
- Planning is KEY. Make a calendar for publicizing your event and leave plenty of time to conduct your publicity campaign.
- Be sure to follow campus guidelines about the methods of advertising that are permitted on your campus. Work with your advisor to get help.
- Create a signature event for your chapter—something that you will do year after year and will be known for.
- Collaboration with other student or community groups = more planning resources and larger potential audience.
- Different campuses have various popular methods for marketing events. Take note of the techniques that are effective and employ them.

### Marketing your chapter

- Make it easy for people to find you. Do you have a website? Keep it up to date and put contact information on it! Put contact information on fliers or posters, too.
- Use social media—to repeat: it's easy, it's free and everyone uses it

*Continued on reverse*



- Wear Mortar Board t-shirts and other apparel to promote name recognition. The National Office has a variety of merchandise available for you to order or can assist with custom design for individual chapter attire.
- We have a week! Use Mortar Board Week (February 12-18, 2012) to promote your chapter.

### Recruitment and selection

- Start at the beginning of the year. **Recruitment is a continuous effort!!**
- Define your audience and go where they are (physically and in cyberspace).
- Remember your ladder of effectiveness. Personal attention counts!
- General awareness-building is also important—so use the mass marketing strategies, too.
- Make sure that faculty and staff know about your selection season. Do a selection publicity campaign with faculty and staff.
- Get well-known campus figures to be your spokespeople (remember the “who says” question).
- Make your tapping and initiation ceremonies very visible—this process should be a tremendous honor for your new members.
- Get creative! Use YouTube to create promotional videos or tap via video.

### Best practices for chapter communication and public relations

- Your chapter members need to know your message! Keep your members up to date with regular meetings. Send out the minutes so everyone stays on track.
- Be sure that the officers keep everyone informed about upcoming activities. Encourage attendance!
- Be professional when corresponding with media or outside sources. The *Officer & Advisor Handbook* outlines suggestions for effective public relations, whether or not your officers have any prior training.
- The National website has visibility resources for you; we are here to help you!
- Think big! Mortar Board chapters have appeared in newspapers, magazines, local TV news programs, and even national programs including NBC's *Today Show* and ESPN's *Sportscenter*.
- Share your stories, photos or event recaps with the National Office—we can share them with other chapters, our vast network of alumni and even national media outlets.

