



ΨΥ Alumni Association of Troy

P.O. Box 367

Troy, N.Y. 12180-0367



ALUMNI EVENTS

Event Planning

Chapter-alumni events are held to give your alumni an opportunity to renew friendships with other brother. They allow your association to create and keep alumni interest in the Fraternity, to develop interest on the part of some alumni for active participation in chapter operations and alumni organization affairs. They can also be used celebrate a special occasion within the Fraternity.

Many undergraduate chapters consider their homecoming activities and their spring formals alumni events, however, consider whether the event is actually being planned for alumni was it an afterthought. In planning alumni events, ask yourself these questions:

- Is the event primarily for alumni?
- What is the reason for alumni being there?
- Were the alumni notified in time to make arrangements to attend?
- As an alumnus, would the event be enjoyable?
- As an alumnus, why would I **not** attend?

These questions should tell you whether or not an event could qualify as an alumni event. The following are additional suggestions in planning alumni events.

Plan the event only for alumni!

Although an undergraduate event can coincide with an alumni event, the most successful events are those where alumni are the main focus and center of attention. Remember that the chapter can socialize any weekend, but an event for alumni may be the first time in years, they are able to enjoy fellowship and memories of their brothers. Undergraduates should serve as hosts for alumni by greeting them, talking with them, serving food, and otherwise assisting with the behind-the-scenes arrangements. If alumni can leave the event with a special feeling, you have done your job, and probably have helped to build future attendance at the next sponsored function.

The event must have a purpose for alumni to attend!

As an alumnus, if the reason for me to be at an event is to stand around and talk with people I don't know, I probably will not attend. Alumni will attend an event, however, if there is an organized program, and if they know other classmates will be in attendance. Overall, the event needs to be worth the alumnus' time before they will make the effort to attend. In publicizing an event, make sure the program is outlined and if possible, make sure alumni who have agreed to attend are listed.

Promote the event early!

Many events fail because the alumni were not notified in time to make plans to attend. If alumni are not notified within three weeks of the event(for small-scale events), there will be poor attendance at the event. For larger scale events, like homecoming or anniversaries, alumni need notification three months in advance of the event. If you are using a banquet hall or hotel, these places need to be reserved months in advance. Suggested time –frames for scheduling large and small scale events are outlined later in this section

The Alumni Corporation needs to plan the event!

Many alumni will not respond to invitations for alumni functions if the invitation comes from only the undergraduate chapter. The Alumni Corporation will lend credibility to the event by giving contact names, which are familiar. Additionally, the Alumni Corporation will probably have an easier time reserving facilities.

Make the event enjoyable for ALL alumni!

Too often, alumni events are focused on only the younger alumni because their interests are generally more closely related to the undergraduate members. In planning functions, make sure that all age groups of alumni will be comfortable. To do so, separate activities may need to be planned for younger and older alumni.

Combat the reasons why alumni would not attend!

When planning alumni events ask yourself, “Why would an alumnus not attend?” The most common answers include: “I was not notified far enough in advance;” “I can’t bring my wife and children;” “I won’t know anyone there;” and “It’s too far to travel.” Through proper planning and promotion, all of these objections can be addressed, except lengthy travel.

A word about alcohol at chapter and alumni events:

- **All Fraternity-related events, including alumni activities and functions, must follow Psi Upsilon Fraternity’s policies for alcoholic beverages.**
- **Individual alumni or alumni organization cannot provide alcohol for the general use at an event; this includes bulk quantities of alcohol (i.e., keg beer, cases of beer, party balls, punch bowls.)**
- **All alumni events must be either of “BYOB” or “cash bar” format. There should be no advertising of alcohol in promotional mailings. You will, however, need to let alumni know how alcohol will be handled at the event.**
- **When dealing with alumni concerning risk management and alcohol procedures, be up front. Explain the policy through your newsletter and other mailings. Indicate why the Alumni Corporation must follow the given procedures.**
- **Be prepared to confront any alumni members who violate the Fraternity’s policies for alcoholic beverages or hazing!**

Large Scale Events

It is more important to have a few “special” alumni events than to have a large number of alumni activities that are generally not well attended or appreciated.

Chapters with successful alumni programs usually hold two annual chapter-alumni events. Homecoming and Founders’ Day are customary times for alumni activities. A few chapters have developed other traditional functions for alumni. Major activities should be planned to celebrate a chapter anniversary, groundbreaking, or building of a new chapter house. The following list provides good examples of large-scale events, which should be planned, for alumni:

<u>EVENTS</u>	<u>TIME OF YEAR</u>
Homecoming Weekend	Fall
Founders’ Day Weekend	November
Chapter Anniversary	When appropriate
University Reunion Weekend	When appropriate
Golf outing and barbecue	Late spring/summer/early fall
Alumni Family Picnic	Late spring/summer
Pig Roast/Barbecue	Late spring/early fall
Holiday Dinner and Dance	Early December
Alumni Corporation Retreat	Late spring/early fall

Event Committee

Because of the advance planning and number of people involved, special responsibilities need to be delegated to chapter members when coordinating a large-scale event. Listed below is a suggested format and responsibilities for a large-scale events committee.

- Events Chair--Oversees the members with special responsibilities for the event, and the general membership. Responsible for registration and monitoring the event budget, and for arranging a guest speaker.
- Communications Chair--Coordinates all mailings, promotions, phone calls, bulk mailing permits, and obtaining mailing labels. Organizes the event program and schedule.
- Banquet Chair--Arranges the banquet meal, secures the needed facilities, supervises decorations, organizes the event set-up and head table seating, and arranges for any awards to be given out. In charge of the dance and entertainment.

- Hospitality Chair--Arranges the hotel accommodations for out of town guests, child care, photographers, check-in/welcome committee, name tags, and the pre-banquet reception.

Large Scale Event Scheduling and Promotion

Once you have delegated the major responsibilities to various members, it now becomes necessary to begin the scheduling and promotion of the event. For large-scale events, you will find that it is necessary to begin plans **at least four months** before the actual event. By following the planned time-line, you will find that the quality of the event and the attendance will both be enhanced.

16 Weeks Before

Prepare a tentative schedule. Agree on the date, location, possible speakers, promotional methods, and program of activities.

14 Weeks Before

Reserve the location of the event if other than the chapter house. All facilities included hotels, banquet halls, golf courses, parking facilities; picnic grounds, etc. should be reserved by this time.

13 Weeks Before

First General Mailing- contains event date, times, locations, registration fees and other costs, program details, return envelope and registration card/post card, wives program, child care and hotel information. Never have registration fees sent to the chapter house. Have them sent to a post office box, or preferably to a local alumnus.

12 Weeks Before

Arrange for the guest speaker. Offer to provide for his meals and lodging. An alumnus should be contacted to act as master of ceremonies of the event.

10 Weeks Before

Your newsletter should contain event details, biography on the guest speaker, any changes from the first mailing, and a list of alumni registered to date.

6-4 Weeks Before

Second General Mailing- contains a list of alumni registered to date, additional details and changes, return envelope and registration card, and a final push for attendance. Confirm all your reservations and program activities.

4 Weeks Before

Review the event, including an assessment of risk control.

2 Weeks Before

Telephone campaign, follow –up with local and key alumni as a final push for attendance.

1 Week Before

Confirm all arrangements and attendance, including the guest speaker.

1 Week After

Publicly and privately thank all alumni who helped and attended by sending out thank-you notes and listing alumni who attended in the next newsletter. Evaluations-conduct a thorough evaluation of the event, including strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for future events.

Small Scale Events

Small-scale evens allow for targeting certain alumni for a specific purpose, and can be planned with minimal effort and cost. Smaller alumni events can be coordinated at various times throughout the year and can compliment large-scale events.

<u>EVENTS</u>	<u>TIME OF YEAR</u>
Annual Alumni Corporation Meeting	Fall
Graduation Weekend	May
School Sporting Events	When scheduled
Parent’s Weekend	Fall
Holiday Reception	Early December
Pledging/Initiation	When scheduled
Scholarship Dinner	Late spring/early fall
Recruitment Function	When scheduled
Business Luncheon	When scheduled
Local Alumni Dinner	When Scheduled

Event Committee

You probably will find that the committee necessary to coordinate small-scale events is similar to the one needed for large-scale events. In planning small-scale events, start by using the same format for your committee, and then assign responsibilities needed for the event. Even though you will find that fewer responsibilities exist, it will still be necessary to delegate to your committee members.

Small Scale Event Scheduling and Promotion

Although an event may be smaller in nature, proper planning and promotion are still important. However, the smaller the event, the more personable the contact and promotion can be to alumni.

12 Weeks Before

Prepare a tentative schedule. Agree on the date, location, possible speakers, promotional methods, and program of activities. If it is largely a chapter event, like recruitment or initiation, decide the alumni's role and involvement. Also decide on which of the alumni will be invited.

10 Weeks Before

Reserve the location of the event if other than the chapter house.

8-6 Weeks Before

Invitations- contain event date, times, cost, location, program details, return envelope and registration card for RSVP, and the purpose of the program for the alumni. Your newsletter should contain event details and general invitation to all alumni.

4 Weeks Before

Review the event, including an assessment of risk control.

2 Weeks Before

Telephone campaign: follow-up with local and key alumni as a final push for attendance.

1 Week Before

Confirm all arrangements and attendance, including the guest speaker.

1 Week After

Publicly and privately thank all alumni who helped and attended by sending out thank-you notes and listing alumni who attended in the next newsletter. Evaluations-conduct a thorough evaluation of the event, including strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for future events.

Event Budgeting

Some of the most common mistakes made in event planning are undercharging and overspending. Financial problems result because organizers tend to overestimate how many alumni will attend a function. Mailings sent out well in advance would help to avoid overestimating alumni attendance, and careful, monitored spending will help to correct any overspending that may occur.

When determining cost, it is appropriate to obtain all estimates in writing. Take into account all costs, from mailings, room rental, and photographer and thank you notes. A safe formula for budgeting is to underestimate attendance by 15-20 percent, and overestimate expenses by 10-15 percent. The following is a sample budget, and the figures used are only examples. Your actual costs will vary depending on the specific event.

*Sample Event Budget*Expenses

Postage and mailings	
1 st mailing (postage)	\$56
2 nd mailing (postage)	\$56
Paper	\$30
Printing costs	\$70
<u>Total Postage and Mailing</u>	\$212
Banquet:	
Dinner (100 guests x \$15)	\$1,500
Entertainment	\$600
Tablecloths	\$80
Centerpieces	\$120
Alumni Awards Plaques	\$80
Programs/Menu	\$100
Room Rental	\$100
Miscellaneous	\$200
<u>Total Banquet Expense</u>	\$2,780
Miscellaneous Expenses:	
Photographer	\$100
Guest book	\$30
Guest Speaker Cost	\$200
Thank you notes	\$50
Child care	\$100
<u>Total Miscellaneous Expenses</u>	\$480
Total Expenses	\$3,472
Add 15% reserve	\$520
Total Alumni Event Expense	\$3,992

With a conservative estimate of 100 people in attendance, the minimum price charge to each person should be \$40.00. Figures used for the sample budget are just that –samples. Your actual cost will vary depending upon the nature of the event.

Adding the Extras

Whether your event is a large or small function, the following suggestions can be used to make your event a greater success. In reviewing these “extras,” first decide which points can be used as part of the event and delegate each responsibility to other member(s), and follow-up to see that the assignment is carried out on time.

- **Alcohol:** There should be no advertising of alcohol in any promotional mailings. You need to let alumni know how it will be handled; i.e., “BYOB” or a cash bar.
- **Contact Local Hotels:** Inquire about special rates, and list available hotels and their phone numbers in your mailing.
- **Wives and Older Alumni:** Plan a special program for wives and older alumni, such as a campus tour, shopping trip, or visit to a campus art exhibit. Put this information in the invitation and program.
- **Welcome Committee:** Arrange for alumni and actives to supervise registration, signing the guest book, name tags, handing out programs, football tickets etc..
- **Child Care:** Arrange with chapter members or a sorority to keep the younger children occupied.
- **Guest Book:** Provide a guest book at the welcome table for the alumni to sign. This will help update your addresses, and will allow you to recognize alumni who attended.
- **Photographer:** Arrange for informal and group pictures to be taken during the event for future newsletters or display at next year’s function.
- **Alumni Awards:** Arrange for selection and presentation of outstanding alumni awards, outgoing alumni organization officers, outstanding senior awards, outstanding scholarship award, oldest member present, etc. Make sure any gifts or plaques are engraved in advance.
- **International Fraternity Speakers:** For special occasions, Executive Council members, Foundation Directors or Fraternity staff members may be available, but should be invited at least two months in advance. Contact Executive Director for details.
- **Block off Seating:** If the event centers around an athletic event arrange for a block of seats to be reserved and announced in the promotional mailings. Orders should be placed using reservation cards, and the welcome committee should distribute tickets before the game.
- **Fraternity Songs:** It may be appropriate to open or close the program with a song or two. Printed words will help those who have forgotten the words. Songbooks are available from the International Office.
- **Decorations:** Decorate the main banquet area with Fraternity colors using flowers, flags and crepe paper.
- **Souvenirs:** If it is a special dedication or anniversary, arrange for souvenir mementos.

- **Display:** Arrange for a display during the event of historical pictures, chapter scrap books, publicity clippings, letters from alumni who could not attend, and a variety of Fraternity publication.
- **Follow Banquet Etiquette:** Plan for a head table and speakers. The following program is suggested for a banquet:
 - I. Introductory Remarks by Master of Ceremonies
 - II. Psi U Doxology
 - III. Dinner
 - IV. Welcome by Alumni President
 - V. Guest Speaker
 - VI. Brief remarks by Archon (if in attendance)
 - VII. Presentation of awards
 - VIII. Singing of “Shrine Song”
 - IX. Group Photo
- **School Official:** Contact your Greek Advisor to see if a school administrator would be available to attend the event and offer brief remarks on behalf of the school.
- **School Alumni Office:** Notify your school’s alumni relations’ office of your plan and see if they will provide additional publicity in the alumni magazine.
- **Alumni Representatives:** Ask past Archons, key regional alumni and members from various eras to promote the event by writing personal letters or by telephoning former classmates to urge attendance. Publish the names of alumni representatives in your promotional mailing.
- **Reception:** Arrange for a social hour prior to the evening banquet, including food and alternative beverages and entertainment.
- **Parents:** Consider inviting parents to certain events.
- **Open House:** Arrange for an open house to give alumni and their wives a tour of the chapter house.
- **Anniversary Recognition:** Present 25 and 50 year membership certificates or other recognition to older alumni who have reached those milestones.
- **Event Write: Up-**Arrange for a write-up of the event for the next newsletter and archives. Include the names of those who attended, thanks to those that helped, and promote the next event. Also send in the release to *The DIAMOND*, school and alumni magazines, and local newspapers.
- **Thank You’s:** Publicly and privately thank all alumni and members who have helped.
- **Evaluate for the Next time:** Document what went well, and what to improve for the next time. Include names and phone numbers of alumni and businesses who provided services or assistance, and outline all expenditures of the event.

Suggested Activities and Programs

- Brief noon luncheons with short programs. The main idea is to provide networking opportunities.
- Early morning breakfast meetings.
- After work receptions (5-6 p.m.) with short program.
- Weekend dinners or brunches at convenient locations and moderate prices with spouses.
- Annual banquet with spouses to coincide with local or regional attraction.
- Picnics.
- Pot Luck- covered dish dinners with spouses.
- Professional Association gatherings.
- Canoe trip, camping trip, lake outing.
- “Monday Night Football” parties.
- Costume parties.
- Fund raising drives to provide undergraduate scholarship.
- Golf, ski outings.
- BYOB tailgate parties.
- Ball games.
- Aid area chapters with recruitment activities.

Some Programming Do’s and Don’ts

- For every social or dinner meeting, there should be a social hour or reception along with a host responsible for meeting newcomers. Otherwise, the timid young alumnus, attending his first meeting, will sink into a lonesome corner, gulp his food in silence and sneak out during the applause -vowing never to return.
- A receiving line is important for formal gatherings of twenty or more where there is a feature speaker or guest of honor. Do not let one or two alumni buttonhole important guests all evening so no one else can say hello.
- Form a telephone committee to follow up written invitations with phone calls. Telephone calls typically double attendance.
- Do not keep the plans secret. Give at least three weeks notice for association events.
- Plan to take pictures (black and white if possible) at events and get names of those in the posed shots. Use them in the association’s newsletter and pass them along to the International Office for use in *The DIAMOND*.
- Association meetings should generally not be used to raise money. If this rule is broken, attendance will suffer thereafter. Never pass the hat to collect or to pay bills.
- Keep the association financially sound. Plan to have enough money in the treasury to cover at least the cost of the speaker’s meal. Structure the event pricing so that the association is able to cover related overhead.
- Do not expect miracles from the most recent graduates. In most cases, alumni have

be graduated five to ten years before the “bug” bites them and they begin to get involved again. On the other hand, always be on the lookout for the exception to this rule, a young alumnus might want to stay involved with the chapter.

- Include spouses and dates often- this usually improves attendance.
- HAVE FUN!!!!