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Communication between a chapter and its alumni is the foundation of a strong chapter-alumni program. Since only a very small percentage of alumni are involved as chapter volunteers, and because a majority of alumni unable to regularly attend alumni events, the communications program with alumni is the primary means to keep alumni in touch and interested in Psi Upsilon.

In every chapter situation where alumni involvement is limited and interest appears to be lacking, an inconsistent and poor quality communications program is the primary cause of the problem. And where the chapter-alumni communications are sub-standard, two other characteristics also exist:

- Proper priority has not be given to alumni relations.
- Scheduling and planning has been inadequate.

"Selling" chapter-alumni program and recruiting alumni volunteers has been addressed elsewhere in this manual. The importance of scheduling and planning, however, cannot be underestimated because it involves a wide variety of members and purveyors. In short, one person cannot put a quality mailing or newsletter together in one sitting.

Begin your scheduling and planning by preparing a chapter-alumni program master calendar. List all the alumni events, newsletters, invitations, and other publications that are planned for the entire year. Use the following checklist as a starting point, and then integrate this with other chapter-alumni programs into your master calendar:

Event/Publication	Recommended Completion Dates
Invitations to Homecoming	August 15
Homecoming	October
Fall Newsletter	October 21
Alumni Directory	November 1
Invitations to Holiday Reception	November 7
Holiday Reception	December 14
Invitations to Founders Day	January 14
Founders Day	March 14
Spring Newsletter	April 1
Invitations to Golf Outing	April 14
Summer Golf Outing	June 7

It is important to set realistic deadlines and production schedules. At least two chapter-alumni newsletters should be published and distributed per year; three to four is ideal. Newsletters should be mailed out well in advance of any chapter-alumni event (at least 6 weeks before). If this is not possible, send invitation or reminder cards to announce upcoming activities. Production schedules should take into account one week for printing (with advanced notice) and three weeks for delivery of 3rd Class Bulk Mail.

Alumni Record Keeping

Because one of the major goals of the alumni organization is to keep all of the chapter and/or regional alumni informed and in touch with Psi Upsilon, record keeping becomes an important responsibility. Maintaining good records also serves useful when attempting to recruit new alumni volunteers.

Master Alumni List

A master listing of all of the chapter's alumni should be maintained at all times. This list will be amended on a regular basis as brothers graduate, change addresses, or become deceased. Provide these changes to the International Office that, in turn, will provide you with regularly updated listings. Undergraduates and involved alumni volunteers should continuously be attempting to locate those alumni whose addresses are unknown. Keep in mind that updating your address file is an ongoing process, one that you should have committee member responsible for. The following section, "Locating Lost Alumni, " provides suggestions for updating the chapter's alumni list.

Program Files

A file box or cabinet should be purchased in which all past newsletters can be maintained. A complete set of newsletters will provide a good history, as well as being an excellent guide for future publications. Also include in this file completed alumni profile forms, alumni contribution

lists, evaluations of events and publications, and contracts signed with various vendors and purveyors.

Guest Book

A guest book is a standard tool for all good undergraduate chapters and alumni organizations. It should be used for all functions and whenever an alumnus stops by to visit the chapter house. It can be invaluable when publicizing events in newsletters, writing thank-you notes, and targeting a core group of alumni.

Locating Lost Alumni

When correspondence or publications are returned because of wrong addresses, or alumni addresses are otherwise declare "lost," use the following means to secure corrections:

1. Work closely with your school's alumni office. They often have extensive files on alumni, and have the personnel to help locate lost graduates.
2. Contact the International Office. Computer printouts of all members of your chapter with addresses can be ordered.
3. Publish the names of all lost alumni in your newsletters. Request that any information be forwarded to the undergraduate alumni relations officer or the alumni secretary.
4. Use the telephone book or directory assistance in the town where you might suspect the lost brother currently resides. Search the Internet.
5. If the lost brother has a "last known address," check with that local post office to see if he left a forwarding address.
6. Contact alumni of the lost brother's graduation class or pledge class to inquire if they can be of assistance in locating the lost alumnus.
7. Print "Address Service Requested" below the return address on all newsletters and other mailings. This will inform the post office that the undergraduate chapter or alumni organization will pay a nominal fee to receive any address changes.
8. Consider sending one piece of information each year using First Class Mail or Third Class Postage Paid Mail. If an address is unknown, the piece will be returned without added charge.

Overall, the best way to avoid losing addresses is to mail your chapter-alumni newsletters frequently.

Alumni Directories

Each undergraduate chapter and/or chapter alumni association should publish an alumni membership directory on a regular basis. An alumni directory is important because it provides alumni brothers with the means to stay in contact with their fellow brothers.

Before beginning the alumni directory, chapters should investigate the use of computer programs available for such projects. The International Office stands ready to assist in the endeavor.

The following is a suggested outline for the publishing of an alumni membership directory:

1. Get a copy of your alumni mailing list from the International Office, school alumni office, chapter alumni organization, or a list that has been maintained by your chapter.
2. Make a concentrated effort to update the list and locate lost alumni by using the methods in this manual under "Locating Lost Alumni." Above all, the directory should be as complete and accurate as possible.
3. Once your alumni listing has been updated, arrange the addresses into two ways: alphabetical and by class year. The alphabetical listing should include the full name, class year, address, and phone number of each alumnus. The class year listing can just include full name and class year.
4. Funding for the directory can come from a variety of sources, including the chapter and alumni organization. Another suggestion is to sell advertisements to be printed in the directory. Solicit \$25, for example, to alumni to have their business cards placed in the directory.
5. Next is the printing process. Once you have decided on your format and the approximate size of the publication, contact several printers to get estimates. A typeset directory will probably be the most expensive alternative. The International Office able to provide inexpensive, functional spiral bound or saddle-stapled directories in a number of formats.
6. Directories should not be distributed to all alumni unless funds are guaranteed in advance to cover all costs. If you will be printing directories, and then taking orders from alumni, print no more than for 20% of your alumni membership. Let alumni know that only a limited supply is available. Overall, avoid overprinting.
7. In your next newsletter or special mailing, run an article announcing that the directory is available. The chapter should give directories to their alumni volunteers.

An alumni membership directory can be a simple listing; however, a few extra features can be added to increase the quality of the publication.

- In addition to alphabetical and class year listings, alumni can be listed geographically by region.
- Include a separate listing of "lost" and deceased members in alphabetical order.
- Make your cover design appealing and eye-catching.
- Include a letter of welcome from the alumni president.
- Include a return envelope with the directory for contributions and address updates.

A word about businesses that publish directories:

A number of firms are in the business of publishing alumni directories and promoting them to alumni. This service can be valuable, but can also be misleading. Such businesses are concerned foremost with making profits, even at a chapter's expense. Generally, a firm will print the directories at no cost to the chapter and will sell them to alumni. The chapter is ultimately responsible for the quality of the directories and assuring that alumni are not alienated by having to purchase the directories. Ensure that the firm is not soliciting "voluntary contributions" in the name of Psi Upsilon if those funds will not be returned to the chapter. Also, be sure to sign a contract, which limits the company from releasing your alumni listing to junk mail houses. Read the contract carefully and review it with your alumni.

Chapter-Alumni Newsletters

Although the chapter-alumni newsletter is not the only responsibility of the undergraduate alumni relations officer or the Chapter Alumni Association, it can, however, become the backbone of the alumni program by serving as the main communication link between the chapter and the alumni brothers. The newsletters keep alumni, who can not be actively involved, informed of the chapter's operations and in touch with other alumni members.

The types and content of chapter-alumni newsletters published vary with each chapter. While some are professionally printed, other newsletters may be photocopied. With the increasing availability of personal computers and desktop publishing, many newsletters are developing a professional image with the cost of an "in-house" publication. Whatever the price range or procedure used to publish a chapter-alumni newsletter, there are several basic principles and practices that should be followed. By working through this section, you should find that the outlined practices will improve your newsletter.

Editorial and Content Objectives

Why is your newsletter being published? Who are your readers?

The answers to these questions are important to keep in mind throughout the entire editorial and design process of your chapter-alumni newsletter. By doing so, you are helping to ensure that your readers will be pleased with your publication.

In most cases, the answers to these questions are simple. Your chapter-alumni newsletter is published to keep alumni interested in Psi Upsilon, aware of the chapter's operations, and in contact with their fellow brothers. Most readers of your newsletter will be alumni. It is important to remember, however, that your alumni are from a variety of age groups and have different fraternity memories. In short, your chapter-alumni newsletter should contain information that is of primary interest to the wide range of the chapter's alumni.

The content of your chapter-alumni newsletter should be about 80% alumni-related news and only 20% chapter news. The reasoning is that alumni want to read about other alumni. The typical alumnus does not care who the current pledges are as much he does about one of his friends from his undergraduate days. Remember not to burden the alumni with details. Each story should be concise, yet interesting. A good rule of thumb is that if the undergraduates find a newsletter very interesting, the alumni will probably not like it.

The majority of your newsletter should contain material about alumni, historical features, and other stories that would be of primary interest to alumni. The only chapter-related information to include would be about a campus happening, a traditional chapter event, or an update of the chapter's condition. A report from each chapter officer is not necessary!

In keeping with the balance of 80 percent alumni news and 20 percent chapter news, the following are suggestions for content in the chapter-alumni newsletter:

- Feature story from an interview with a notable alumnus.
- Feature about a major chapter or campus happening.
- News, notes, and profiles about chapter alumni (include alumni from different age groups).
- Chapter-alumni event promotion (before).
- Chapter-alumni event review with a list of attendees (after).
- Articles written by alumni.
- Articles written by members, i.e., "What it means to be a Psi U."
- Engagements, marriages, birth announcements, birthdays, deaths, etc.
- Historical article about chapter, school, or International Fraternity.
- List of contributors or attendees at alumni events (honor roll).
- Graduating brothers with their career interests.
- Traditional fraternity songs (only tasteful ones).
- Minutes from past business meetings.
- Recruitment recommendation forms.
- "State of the chapter" or Archon letter directed to the alumni.
- Article from the Chapter Advisor.
- Listing of alumni association/house corporation officers.
- Listing of year's upcoming chapter-alumni events.
- Schedule for school basketball, football, or other sports.
- "Lost" brothers listing.
- Feature on alumni faculty members.
- Feature about a legacy and his relative in the chapter.
- Feature about alumni, chapter, and campus happenings from a certain class year(anniversary issue).
- Feature about traditional chapter activities like Greek Week, Greek Sing, philanthropies, Ritual, etc.
- Chapter scholarship success.
- Chapter involvement on campus and athletics.
- As many good black and white photos as room will allow C use only photos of alumni or chapter historical pictures.
- Re-print a relative story from the school newspaper or alumni magazine.
- Interview with the university president or Greek advisor.
- "Alumni on the move" C listing of new addresses for alumni.
- Holiday greetings.
- Feature on campus or International Fraternity awards received by chapter.

- Article on chapter's participation at Convention and Leadership Institute.
- News from within the International Fraternity.
- Alumni profile form.

This extensive list of content suggestions, the majority of which is alumni-related information, demonstrates the extensive possibilities for chapter-alumni newsletters.

Production Scheduling

Maintaining a realistic production schedule can mean the difference between a newsletter that is timely and one that never gets produced.

Every chapter should publish two chapter-alumni newsletters per year, although three to four newsletters each year is ideal. If a purpose of a newsletter is to publicize an event, it should be mailed out well in advance. By taking into account the time needed for writing, editing, printing and mailing, newsletter production should take place over a number of weeks.

The first step is to structure a production schedule worksheet that contains all of the stages involved in planning and producing the newsletter. Write down all the stages, big and small, and order them chronologically.

Committee members and outside vendors should be consulted to determine how many days each stage will take. Remember that typesetters and printers, in particular, can provide time estimates based only on their average workload. Since many variables can alter schedules, plan for extra time overall.

Once you have formulated a production schedule, stick to it as best you can. Do not expect outside services to make up for your delays without increases in costs. If you stray from the schedule significantly, it may be impossible for others to absorb the lost time. Therefore, make sure your internal planning and production runs as smoothly as possible. Reassess your schedule target dates as you proceed, and make the necessary changes when you plan your next newsletter.

For each issue of your publication, start with the date on which distribution should be completed. Use a calendar, count backwards from that date for each stage. (Remember to count only working days, not weekends or holidays.)

Newsletter Financing

The question of financing is probably a major obstacle hindering a chapter in achieving its goal in terms of quality and frequency of its newsletters. True, it does cost money to print and mail a newsletter, but it is not unreasonable to request that money be spent to help maintain a healthy relationship between alumni and undergraduate members.

Financing for the chapter-alumni newsletter can come from essentially two sources:

1. A fund donated by the chapter's alumni organization.
2. Contributions received from alumni for the specific purpose of financing chapter-alumni newsletters.

The budget for your newsletter will depend on the number being mailed, size, use of pictures, typesetting, duplicating, color, etc. You should look into whether any alumni work for or own a printing company, or have connections with other services that may help in the newsletter's production.

On one hand, an issue may only require a good typist, writer, and use of a copy shop. Beyond that point, the variables can lead to more costs, but not necessarily excessive costs. Make a few phone calls or meet with printers and typesetters who can advise you on the most economical design and production features. Whatever your budget, aim for the best value for your dollars invested.

News Gathering and Sources

The undergraduate alumni relations officer and/or the alumni president should not try to write everything for the newsletter. They should enlist other undergraduates, alumni, and even school officials to help in writing articles.

The first step in gathering news is to decide on what information, stories, and features you would like to have in the newsletter. A correspondent should be assigned to each department or article. Keep in mind that gathering information for your newsletter will not be a high priority for most of your correspondents. Therefore, try to make their jobs as easy and rewarding as possible. Clearly spell out for each correspondent what needs to be written, and exactly when material is due. Give each instruction on how to submit copy, provide a copy of the publication schedule, and inform the correspondent of newsletter deadlines. Request that all information be submitted to you in typewritten or neatly handwritten form. Throughout the process, you should also remind your correspondents of when information is due.

If you have correspondents who can write well, then you can ask them to write their own stories. For correspondents who have difficulty writing for newsletters, ask them to submit only the facts for an article. Make it clear that you, as editor, will fit their facts into an appropriate article.

Give recognition in each issue to your correspondents. The best method is to include their names in a credit line at the end of each article they submit.

There are many sources that can be used to obtain information for your newsletter. In most cases, material will be obtained from chapter members and alumni. The following suggestions for possible sources:

- **Chapter Advisor and Alumni Volunteers** - Your chapter advisor and other alumni volunteers should be able to provide you with a few good ideas. These

alumni can also direct you to other alumni who may be interesting sources of information.

- **Chapter Members** - Not only will chapter members serve as correspondents, they can also write stories about their own fraternal experiences.
- **Alumni** - As a standard practice, many newsletters run short profiles about alumni from various age groups. Alumni profile forms can be included in a newsletter issue requesting that alumni send in information for publication. Also, use chapter-alumni events as a chance to network and get information for future newsletters.
- **School Alumni Office and Other Officials** - Sources from your college or university may have information that would be of particular interest to your chapter's alumni. Your Greek advisor, for example, could provide his perspective on the school's Greek system, or you could interview the new university president.
- **Chapter Historical Files** - Historical Files may contain interesting photographs, letters, business meeting minutes, which would be of special interest to your alumni.
- **Other Publications** - You may decide to publish a summary or excerpts of an article from your school's alumni magazine, school newspaper, or *The DIAMOND*. When doing so, be sure to mention the article in a brief news note by including the title of the article, author, name of publication, and the issue. Always obtain permission before borrowing an article.

Conducting Interviews

Much of the gathering of news for your chapter-alumni newsletter will be through interviews, both in person and over the phone. This is the preferred method in obtaining interesting information for the alumni profile section of your newsletter.

To conduct a successful interview, prepare for it in advance, develop rapport with our subject, and take good notes. The following are some additional points to help your interviews go well:

- Call or write the alumnus ahead of time to schedule a convenient time for an interview.
- Let the person know the type of information you will be asking about.
- Make sure you have a notebook and pencils or pen with you.
- Jot down some questions in your notebook ahead of time.
- If possible, conduct the interview in your subject's office or home.
- Use the telephone for shorter interviews, especially for brief alumni profiles and long-distance interviews. Let the alumnus know that you would like only 5 minutes of his time to talk about what he has been up to since he graduated. If you need more time to talk, politely ask if he can talk for a few more minutes. You may want to call first to set up an agreeable time for a phone interview.
- When you start an interview, do not take out your notebook right away. Take a few minutes to build rapport with your subject.
- If your subject talks faster than you can take notes, politely ask him to stop while you catch up.
- Use abbreviations in your notes. Immediately after your interview, fill in your notes.

When writing a story based on an interview, remember to be brief. Make the main points and cut out the trivia. Do not quote the person out of context or misrepresent his position.

Writing and Editing

Your newsletter should be clear and concise. Your stories are not meant to stand as grandiose literature; they are meant to convey information to your readers quickly, informatively, and accurately.

Although there are various styles of writing, the best approach for newsletters is to be plain. The meaning of the article must be clear in every word; it should be easy to read and easy to understand. The following are additional suggestions of style to consider when writing and editing.

- Avoid needless words, needless information, and repetition.
- Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.
- Use active voice where the subject performs or causes the action expressed by the verb - "Lightning struck the house" is better than "The house was struck by lightning."
- Use definite, specific, concrete language.
- Don't be too formal. Write in easy, conversational language.
- Write positive statements.
- Construct each paragraph around one central idea.
- Begin each article with a "lead" which tells the reader what the story is about, makes the reader want to read on, and puts the story into focus.
- Answer the traditional "five W's" - who, what, when, where, and why. They need not be in the lead, but should be answered early in the story.
- Always take a second look at your writing and ask another person to proofread for you. Repetitions, needless words, and grammatical errors will usually be found and must be edited.
- Do not use the word "successful"—instead use facts to demonstrate the success of an event.

If you are unfamiliar with straight news writing, take time to study daily newspapers. You will quickly see consistency of the patterns and how well the stories flow.

Photography

Good photographs add visual excitement and appeal to newsletters. Photos should be black and white for best reproduction, although color photographs can work. Never use photos that are in poor taste are of poor quality have subjects that are too small to be seen, or which picture alcohol in any form.

All photographs should only depict alumni or historical scenes. Most alumni would rather see their classmates than current undergraduates. Plan to have a group picture taken at all alumni events, and use black and white film. Include the names of those pictured in the photo captions. When conducting interviews, ask for a current photo of the subject that will appear with the article.

Historical photographs of the chapter house, campus, or members can be interesting additions to any newsletter. For group historical photos, have a contest for who can name the most persons on the photo. Publish the photo again in the next newsletter giving the answers and the winner's name.

Layout, Proofreading, and Printing

The layout of a newsletter begins with an awareness of the space in which the action takes place. With help of your printer, select the format, type size, and style. Also select the 4, 3, or 2 column approach. Try to use 55 or 60 pound offset paper, and white stock is suggested if you are using photographs. You may wish to find a newsletter sample you like and take the sample to the printer as a format to follow. Your printer has published newsletters before; don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you are creating the newsletter on your computer, clarify in advance the type of electronic file the printer can accept. When you save the document, be sure to include any graphic files and the fonts used in your publication.

If you have not scanned your own photos and graphic images, indicate where the printer will add them. Label photo areas to correspond with notations on the back of each photograph. Photos must be scanned at a minimum resolution of 300dpi for use in print publications. Files with a lower resolution (such as those scanned at a lower resolution for web sites) will look blurred and grainy.

Proof all copies carefully. Eliminate misspelled words and be especially careful of grammar and punctuation. Do not rely on the printer to catch mistakes. Instead, ask a reliable person to proofread.

Labels and Mailing

You can order alumni mailing labels, free of charge, from the International Office. Labels may be ordered by zip code, class year, alphabetically, or by chapter, or any combination thereof.

Unless your scheduled mailing is extremely time sensitive, (standard) non-profit bulk mail is the most economical way to send out a large mailing. It will cost you approximately 11 cents (2000 rates) per piece, versus 33 cents per piece for First Class Mail. The International Office will provide bulk mailing services to chapters.

In July 1997 the U.S. Postal Service made major changes to its non-profit bulk requirements. All mail submitted for these discounted rates must be CASS certified, bar coded, presorted, and packaged according to specific criteria. The International Office maintains a bulk rate permit that can be used for any chapter or alumni group. We also have the materials and software necessary to get the job done.

For standard mail, a minimum of 200 identical pieces to U.S. addresses is necessary and postage must be paid 3 (three) days prior to the mailing. Most pieces can be mailed for 11 cents each (2000 rates). The downside is that delivery is slower (average delivery time is 2-3 weeks) and it is less reliable (8-10 percent does not get delivered).

For larger mailings of 500 pieces or more, we maintain a first class presort permit. Using presort methods similar to standard mail, pieces mailed to U.S. addresses can receive discounts of up to 6 cents each (26 cents rather than 33 cents). Delivery time is the same as first class. Postage must be prepaid three days in advance of the mailing.

The staff is most willing to assist you with your mailing needs. Advance notice of your intention to use these services is greatly appreciated.

Other Correspondence

Invitations and Event Announcements

In too many cases, chapters rely on their newsletters to inform the alumni of upcoming events. However, newsletters are often sent out late and with the time needed for bulk mailings, alumni may not receive notice about an event until after it has occurred. The best way to give alumni plenty of notice for activities, such as homecoming and Founders' Day, is to send out special invitations at least 6 weeks before the event. Event announcements can be in the form of flyers, post cards, brochures, or elaborate invitations.

Try to keep invitations short so that essential details are prominent. The invitations should include the chapter name, date, time, occasion or purpose, location, and contact person with phone number. If the event is away from campus, it will be necessary to include a map or directions. It should also be noted if wives, guests, and family members are invited.

If you will need to reserve meals or hotel rooms, you must include a stamped response card or envelope and indicate a deadline for replies. Telephone replies should not be used; however, you may want to telephone local and important alumni two weeks before the event to confirm attendance.

Thank-You's and Acknowledgements

Thank-you notes should be a common part of every alumni program. They should be sent to alumni who make contributions (financially or otherwise) to the chapter or association, attend events, or otherwise support the Fraternity. Send out thank-you notes to your alumni volunteers when they help with a chapter project. In many cases, when alumni make a contribution, they want and expect acknowledgement and recognition. Failing to do so loses future support in most cases.

Ideally, thank-you notes should be sent out within a day after the donation or occasion for thanks. If this is not possible, such as after a large-scale event, you must try to send them out as soon as possible. Overall, when thanking someone, try to mention exactly what you are thanking him or her for. Hand-written notes are the most personable and best approach.

When a large amount of notes need to be mailed, ask other members to write to one or two alumni. Provide member with paper, envelopes, and a sample letter format. Notes can also be sent out to congratulate alumni for various achievements such as marriages, births, and business promotions.

Holiday Cards

Season's greetings cards can be sent out in early December. If it is not possible to send cards to all alumni, only send them to volunteers. You may want to design your own chapter card, or obtain cards from companies that print holiday cards for fraternities.

Birthday Cards

Birthday cards can be another excellent public relations move with alumni. Birth dates for some members can be obtained from the International Office. Again, cards can be sent to all alumni or only volunteers. To send birthday cards, a listing of alumni birthdays arranged by month should be prepared. On the first week of each month, birthday cards should be sent to alumni having birthdays in that month. The procedure is repeated in each succeeding month.

Personal

You may decide to write personal letters to certain alumni. It may be a special invitation to a notable alumnus or a request for assistance on a special project. In either case, the proper format for business-type letters should be used.

Another idea is to leave space open on the newsletter for personal notes from member to the alumni. Before mailing the newsletter, a bundling and packaging session could be held with the entire chapter and members could add personal greetings on each newsletter.