

Handbook for Public Relations



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Handbook for Public Relations

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Introduction

Today, more people are members of Greek organizations than ever before. From undergraduates shaping activities on campus to alumni making a difference in communities and nations, Greek organizations and their members have a tremendous impact.

Consider these statistics:

- 48% of all U.S. Presidents have been Greek
- 30% of U.S. Congressmen/women are Greek.
- 42% of U.S. Senators are Greek
- 40% of all U.S. Supreme Court Justices have been Greek
- 30% of Fortune 500 Executives are Greek
- 10% of all listed in "Who's Who" are Greeks.
... Greeks make up only 3% of the U.S. Population

However, in recent years, Greek organizations have been connected to such negative issues as alcohol abuse, sexual assault, racism, sexism, and anti-intellectualism-to name just a few. Stories of fraternity chapters and members involved in unacceptable behavior fill the media.

These headlines may sound familiar to you; they appeared in publications across the continent.

- "SWT Police Investigate Fight at Fraternity Gathering"
- "Two Colleges Drop Recognition of Fraternities, Sororities Amid Continuing Concern Over Groups' Behavior"
- "Members' Abusive Sexual Conduct Seen Jeopardizing Fraternities"
- "Waging War on the Greeks: Fraternities and Sororities are Being Forced to Clean Up Their Acts"
- "Family's Settlement is \$400,000 in Son's Fraternity Hazing Death"
- "UK orders Fraternity to Close, Cites Hazing"
- "U-MD Students Say Keg Ban Hasn't Curbed Drinking"

Because the images created by individual Chapter members are more persuasive than a national campaign can be, society has defined Greeks by the behavior it views daily. Greek organizations and members are not always judged by their good works and intentions, including philanthropic work, educational programming and platforms against illegal and immoral behavior. Rather the fraternal system often is defined by negative behavior of some Greek members. In other words, the positive aspects of Fraternity membership do not effectively neutralize negative behavior.

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This handbook addresses this issue by adopting a 90/10 view of public relations. Because most "relations" with "publics" are based upon the behavior of individual members and chapters, these activities comprise 90 percent of public relations! Traditional public relations activities, which "talk" about behavior (press releases, promotions, speeches), constitute only 10 percent of the entire realm of PR. In terms we all understand, "Actions speak louder than words."

To affect the issue surrounding the Greek community, proactive public relations must be implemented and explained to individual Greek members and chapters. Instead of waiting for the next negative trend to develop, Greeks can shape a positive fraternal future by using proactive public relations.

You, as chapter leaders, can enhance the future of the Fraternity by utilizing the material in this handbook to shape public relations activities on campus. You will plan and implement a public relations program and tackle the issue of individual member behavior. This will lay the groundwork for improved collegiate behavior and better relationships with campus and community organizations.

To further this all-important mission, this handbook provides you with the tools to make a difference. Chapter One introduces the terminology and background information needed to implement a proactive public relations campaign. Chapter Two simplifies public relations through a step by step guide for Greek leaders. Here you will learn to develop a public relations team, plan public relations activities for the year and maintain a balance between promotional activities and public relations programming. The text and examples in Chapter Three describe traditional public relations tools that create the 10 percent portion of your endeavor.

Perhaps the most progressive material is presented in Chapter Four. This chapter provides a resource base and examples to help you get your program started.

You have the chance to make a fundamental difference in the future of the Fraternity world.

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Public Relations: Getting Started

A working knowledge of public relations terms will enhance your ability to improve communication between Psi Upsilon and others. You can increase understanding by focusing on the basics involved in developing a public relations campaign.

What is Public Relations?

Public relations involves all relationships among people, from how a letter is written, to the manner a guest is greeted, to how a social event is hosted. Everything an individual or group is, does and says is public relations. **If an individual is a member of a Greek organization, his or her behavior affects the image of all Greeks. Thus, each member has a role in Greek public relations.**

Publicity and Advertising

While many people believe that public relations is no more than writing press releases, conducting media interviews and promoting the good deeds of others, these functions only represent the small portion of public relations referred to as publicity and advertising. Public relations is a 90/10 concept. Ten percent of Greek public relations is "talk" about activities through publicity; 90 percent occurs through Greek member behavior. In other words, actions speak louder than words. While some people consider messages to be only those items that are written or formally spoken, any action or behavior that is viewed by another can be construed as a message.

Images and Issues

Every action by a member of Psi Upsilon, whether verbal or non-verbal, deliberate or unintentional, shapes the perceived image of the Greek system. To different individuals, "Greek" may refer to groups on campus, alumni in the community, or one person wearing a letter shirt. Every impression a Greek member makes upon others has an impact on the image of the Greek system... every line of ink, every word spoken, every action taken.

Issues are created when people believe a situation or event is significant. Issues can be either positive or negative depending on the context. If a campus newspaper provides positive coverage of a Greek health fair, then an issue beneficial to the Greek system has been created. If a faculty coalition determines that fraternities and sororities are anti-intellectual, then a negative issue has arisen. By monitoring trends on campus, Greek leaders can determine the significant issues and how to manage them.

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Publics and Relationships

Contrary to popular usage, the "public" is not a singular element in society. Rather, a multitude of specialized publics exists. Think about the groups with which you interact: university alumni, fraternity/sorority alumni, campus administrators, faculty, non-Greek undergraduates and student organizations. Each one is a public. Internal publics are individuals or groups within the Greek system (fraternity or sorority members, for example); external publics are those outside that system (non-Greek undergraduates, for instance).

Relationships involve all aspects of human contact - perceptions, attitudes, images, communication, etc. Human involvement is a complicated process. For example, your relationships with people affect how they perceive you, while at the same time; their perceptions of you affect your relationships. In order for the Greek system to survive, Greek members must cultivate and develop good relationships with campus organizations and community entities. Some publics never interact with the Greek system at large, but rather with its individual members. To these publics, the Greek people they happen to know constitute the Greek world.

Your Role

Maintaining positive public relations is crucial to the survival of the Greek system and Psi Upsilon. Good relations will increase the number of students interested in Greek membership, contribute to general chapter success on campus and in the community, and create an excellent reputation valuable in fund-raising, job searches and philanthropic projects.

As a Greek leader, you have the ability to work with inter/national organizations and influence Greek public relations on your campus. Begin the endeavor within Psi U. With a strong internal system, you will be able to affect external publics. You have the unique opportunity to make a difference in the future of not only Psi Upsilon, but also other Greek organizations as well.

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Identifying Greek Publics

Because public relations can affect Greek images and issues on campus, an understanding of which your publics are will prove beneficial in shaping the relationships. The following comprise the many publics of Greek organizations.

THE GREEK COMMUNITY

- Other Chapters on Campus
- Advisors
- House Corporation Board Members
- Alumni
- Interfraternal Organizations

Inter/national Fraternities and Sororities

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Faculty
- Administration

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

- Non-Greek Students
- Potential Members
- Campus Organizations
- Employees/Suppliers
- Campus Security

COMMUNITY

- Local Businesses
- Public Officials
- Civic Organizations
- Neighbors

PARENTS OF MEMBERS

PHILANTHROPIC CONTACTS

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What Issues Affect Greeks on Campus

Consider the most significant issues on your campus for each of the past three years. Utilize the sample issue to assist you in analyzing similar situations so you may effectively address your publics.

SAMPLE ISSUE

Issue: Hazing

What behavior created the issue? A campus newspaper article focused on a local chapter that had required pledges to participate in drinking games. As a result, a campus organization picketed the chapter and circulated petitions to abolish the Greek system.

How was the issue handled? The Greek advisor contacted international organizations that helped create a newspaper article discussing fraternity and campus rules against hazing, and the advisor spoke at several campus meetings. The Panhellenic president began an external promotional campaign to highlight the positive elements of Greek membership, while the IFC president spoke to internal Greek audiences to emphasize the negative consequences of hazing, the campus and national policies against hazing, state laws prohibiting hazing, and the importance of promoting a positive image.

What was the result for the Greek system? The system survived during a time of crisis.

What publics were involved? Faculty and administration, national/international organizations, advisors, Greek and non-Greek students

Public relations deserves more time, effort and planning than simply sending a card to other Greeks on Founders' Day or sponsoring a philanthropic project. Public relations are so much more!

When planned, public relations are persuasive communications designed to influence significant publics. Obviously the 10 percent function of public relations, such as publicity or advertising, is completely planned and aimed at influencing a specific audience. What is not so obvious is the notion that every day behavior (the 90 percent function) can be strategically designed as well.

The key words here are "*planned*," "*persuasive*," "*communication*" and "*significant publics*." Public relations is persuasive because a person or group wants a public to do or believe something. PR activities must communicate to particular groups of people (publics) rather than to scattered individuals.

The most important word is "*persuasive*." An attorney presenting a case to the jury, a minister preaching a sermon or a United States Senator running for re-election are all people gifted

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in the art of persuasion.

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Publicity and advertising (the 10 percent of the 90/10 formula) are tools of public relations. The goal of publicity is to inform publics. The goal of advertising is to generate an immediate reaction: you see an advertisement for two medium pizzas for \$9.99, you buy the pizzas.

Activities and behavior (the 90 percent of the 90/10 formula), on the other hand, attempt to influence opinions and attitudes. The goal of a public relations plan is to change individual attitudes toward a particular issue or to establish a positive image over a long period of time. As part of the public relations planning process, activities are evaluated and designed to enhance this effect upon a variety of audiences.

A long-term effort is necessary for a public relations plan to work because it takes time to change people's attitudes and beliefs. One positive activity is not enough and the affect of a thousand positive activities can be destroyed by one negative incident. Your time, effort and commitment will result in a positive image for the Greek system on campus and in the community. Get started today by following these five steps:

1. **ORGANIZE A PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM**
2. **SET GOALS**
3. **CREATE AN AGENDA**
4. **DEVISE A TIMETABLE**
5. **EVALUATE**

#1: Organize A Public Relations Team

Developing a public relations plan is a group effort that requires a permanent public relations team. Include representatives from several publics in order to promote discussion concerning the impact that various messages will have. For example, what might be good public relations among Greeks might not be viewed positively by administrators and faculty members. Possible team members include:

- Greek advisor
- A non-Greek faculty member
- A public relations professional
- Alumna or alumnus
- Publicity chairmen for major Greek events

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#2: Set Goals

Before developing a plan, it is important to determine your goals. What do you hope to accomplish with this plan? Once your public relations team meets, brainstorm on the goals you hope to achieve this year and in the future. To help you get started, here are some suggestions:

- To enhance the image of Psi Upsilon.
- To increase awareness of the positive effects of the Greek system.
- To emphasize the important role that Greeks have on campus and in the community.
- To enhance the credibility of Greeks.

It is also important to determine:

- Issues affecting your Greek system.
- Publics to be reached.
- The new image you want to develop with each public.

Determine at least three goals for your PR plan for this year.

Copy and complete this form and keep it with your PR handbook to guide your public relations activities.

Year:

Goal #1:

Objectives:

Goal #2:

Objectives:

Goal #3:

Objectives:

Notes:

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#3: Create an Agenda

Now that you have set clear goals, you can begin to plan for the coming year. Be creative, brainstorm and include some wishful thinking as you begin to develop your plan, but don't take on too much at once. Be realistic about what you can accomplish and design a program to build on year after year. Focus on strategies that will have the greatest public relations impact and always keep the goals of the public relations campaign in mind.

Sample public relations strategies to deal with specific issues might include:

- Implementing seminars to educate members on individual issues
- Maintaining a resource center of programming materials on topics such as AIDS, alcohol, hazing, etc. Make the resources available to campus organizations and other Greek chapters.
- Promoting the position statements of interfraternal organizations.
- Conducting campus-wide presentations on timely subjects.
- Participating in campus informational fairs.

To help you plan specific strategies; here are some sample activities.

Faculty and Administration:

- On a regular basis, sponsor receptions for administrators and faculty members. Plan a program with a featured speaker who emphasizes accomplishments within the Greek system.
- Regularly call upon administrators and faculty members for advice about chapter activities.
- Utilize faculty members to assist with educational programming.

Community:

- Participate in local community philanthropic projects. Let your neighbors know Greeks are contributing members of the community.
- Notify neighbors about weekend or membership recruitment activities, including reasonable starting and ending times.
- Implement a program that promotes ongoing, careful maintenance of chapter property.
- Invite local elected officials to speak at receptions or special dinners.
- Co-sponsor or assist the local police with an event such as a drug awareness program for elementary and high school students.
- Provide services for your neighbors, and invite them to dinner.

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Non-Greek Students:

- Assist students moving in to residence halls in the fall.
 - Organize events with other campus organizations.
 - Encourage all Greeks to get involved in non-Greek campus organizations.
-

SAMPLE ISSUES STRATEGY ANALYSIS

ISSUE: Alcohol Awareness
GOAL: To enhance the credibility of Greeks
OBJECTIVE: Alcohol education
TARGET PUBLICS: Greeks, faculty and administration, non-Greeks, alumni, community
PR STRATEGIES:

1. Reaching Publics through an all-campus alcohol awareness workshop

Greeks

Involve a Greek leader from each chapter in workshop planning
Hold dry social functions the week preceding the workshop
Planning team members visit each chapter (general meeting) to promote workshop
Flyers for chapter bulletin boards

Faculty and Administration

Involve in workshop planning
Invite president and vice presidents
Article in staff newsletter

Alumni

Prominent Greek alumna or alumnus as keynotes speaker
Feature article/photos for alumni publication

Non-Greeks

Posters in residence halls
Involve non-Greek leaders in workshop planning
Table tents in campus dining facilities

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Community

Invite community leaders
Business sponsorships of promotional materials
Involve local police in planning and as presenters

2. Utilize media resources

Print

Advertising
Calendar announcement
News releases

Broadcast

Interview
Calendar announcement

3. Use community and campus resources

Local businesses
Behavioral health facility
Campus police

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMETABLE:

Who does what by when?
Reporting system
Evaluation
Was the objective achieved?
What was the reaction of the various publics?
What improvements must be made?

Last, there are four items that should appear on every PR agenda.

- **Review current Greek activities.** You should look at the current Greek activities on campus. Positive and well-planned Greek events have a beneficial impact and these types of activities help to develop a positive relationship with the community, alumni, faculty, and administration. Perhaps you can establish criteria for events and themes to eliminate potential objections. For example, prohibit the use of themes related to alcohol or other negative contexts.

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Consider each public when analyzing your chapter's activities, even if the proposed activity is directed only at one public. The impact of your actions will be interpreted and/or received differently within each public. For example, Greek Week may provide a substantial public relations boost within the Greek system by reinforcing relationships among fraternities and sororities. However, some of the social activities, which usually accompany Greek Week, may only reinforce the negative "party" image for faculty members, administrators and non-Greek students.

Does this mean that everything the Greek system does should fall under the scrutiny of the public relations microscope? If you want to begin erasing any negative images of Greeks on your campus, then the answer is "yes."

The public relations team should discuss possible responses each public will have to each activity or event. It's a tedious process, but remember that for every action there is a reaction. It's your job as a public relations specialist to generate positive reactions and minimize the possibility of negative reactions.

- **Consider the role of the individual.** Your team should educate members about the individual's role in public relations. Emphasize the effect individual members behavior has on not only Psi Upsilon, but also the entire Greek system, and ask each member to commit to improving public relations.
- **Appoint a PR Chairman.** The PR team can ensure positive visibility by appointing an enthusiastic and effective public relations chair for each major event. By utilizing the promotion and advertising tools described in Chapter 3, the chair can effectively use the local media to publicize events and accomplishments.
- **Anticipate the future.** The PR team needs to anticipate future challenges and be proactive. Even though an issue may not have arisen on your campus, trends on campus across the nation can be followed and examined in relation to your campus. Though your Greek system or your chapter may have avoided a negative issue arising on campus, your PR team can prepare now and create public relations strategies that will avert future problems.

#4: Devise A Timetable

One of the most important ingredients in your public relations plan is an established and widely known timetable. It is important to establish dates and deadlines for all aspects of the activities and strategies you have outlined. Once your PR strategies have been defined, obtain a calendar and indicate every activity on its pages. Be sure the each member of the PR committee has a copy of the calendar and is aware of his responsibilities. Keep the calendar in a notebook with this handbook.

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These timelines will help you get started.

- As soon as new officers are elected, organize your public relations team.
- Within two weeks, the PR team meets and determines goals for the year.

- The public relations team completes its plan within one month of the team's formation.
- Near the end of the academic year, before new officers are elected, evaluate the PR team's progress and prepare a continuity report.

Be sure to schedule time to evaluate the plan on a regular basis. Is it working? Has the Greek system's image improved? Has Psi Upsilon's image improved? Is the image improving more within one public than another? The public relations team must continually ask all of these questions.

#5: Evaluate

An annual evaluation of your public relations efforts will help future PR teams be more effective and eventually propose long-term goals. Be sure to schedule time in the annual calendar to evaluate the public relations efforts on campus as well as the strategies defined for particular issues and publics.

As you work through this section, it becomes obvious that there is a lot of work that can and needs to be accomplished to improve the image of the Greek system and Psi Upsilon. Fortunately, a strong public relations program is one of the solutions.

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10% Of Your Plan: Publicizing A Positive Greek Image

Traditional public relations tools can help promote Greek accomplishments and events to the wide variety of publics identified in the preceding chapter. While publicity and advertising are only 10% of the public relations plan, these traditional activities provide an avenue to increase positive Greek awareness.

Clear content and appropriate formatting are essential components of any effective public relations tool. Before beginning, ask these questions:

- What audience is being addressed?
- What is the message?
- What response is sought?
- How will the finished product be distributed?

Taking all of these factors into consideration and developing a consistent theme can help to direct communication, increase its effect, and make it more memorable.

The length of the message, the target audience and the desired response determines the selected public relations tool, the way it is created, and its distribution.

The Importance of Publicity

Positive public relations for Greeks is most effective when it demonstrates that the Greek system is keenly aware of its social and moral responsibilities. What better way to do this than to publicize the many philanthropic fund raisers, leadership training activities and service projects that are conducted by members of the Greek community each year.

Greek special events are unique opportunities to get the good word out.

Community Relations

- Well-planned publicity can gain recognition for Greek support of the community.
- A positive perception of Greeks will be developed at the community level to promote cooperation and mutual support.

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Campus Relations

- On campus, Greeks will earn recognition for activities that benefit the college or university.

Internal Relations

- Greeks will be proud of individual affiliations and interfraternal accomplishments.

Non-Greek Relations

- Increased participation by other non-Greek students will be encouraged.
- Interest in Greek membership will be heightened.

What Merits Publicity?

Greek activities of interest to your publics:

- Functions attended by community leaders.
- Major fundraisers.
- Greek-sponsored events featuring topical or well-known speakers.
- Community services (blood drive, recycling drive, etc.)
- Chapter house property improvements.
- Individual Greek achievements.
- Greek-sponsored seminars on topics such as alcohol awareness or date rape.

Public Relations Tools

Each time an event worthy of publicity is identified, select the most appropriate public relations tool from this list of options. Include publicity in the planning stages of any Greek event.

- Print advertisements
- Letters
- Flyers, Posters, Banners, Window Cards, and Window Displays
- Table Tents and Door Hangers
- Modeling Good PR
- News Releases
- Special Event Publicity
- Public Service Announcements
- Interviews
- Newsletters

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Print Advertisements

Even though print advertising can be expensive, sometimes it pays to advertise. Because print advertising is purchased, the timing, placement, and content of the ad are guaranteed. A public relations strategy using paid advertisements can be carefully planned to work as part of a long-term plan that has a cumulative effect over the course of an academic year. This kind of approach can be especially useful when trying to educate the public about the broad scope of the Greek experience.

There are several points to consider when designing a print advertisement.

- Keep the message brief and clear.
- Identify the target audience and write the ad accordingly. When addressing the community, stress that Greeks are responsible citizens who provide community service and maintain their property. When addressing the school's administration, stress that Greeks provide campus services to their fellow students. When speaking to collegians, stress that the organizations of the Greek system provide friendship, social activities, academic support, and lifetime membership opportunities.

When preparing material for a print ad, it is important to remember these points:

- Include the necessary information (5 W's--Who, What, Where, When, Why).
- Make the ad eye-catching, with white space surrounding the copy.
- Type all copy and be sure final artwork is clean. A clearly marked layout should accompany the material. Select graphics or visual materials that support the written message.
- If a business offers to sponsor or share the cost of a paid ad, be sure to consider whether the product reflects a desirable image. Stay with neutral sponsors like dry cleaners, copying services, or pizza parlors.

The cost of placing printed ads in newspapers requires careful planning because charges are directly related to the size of the ad. Placing paid ads in campus publications is generally less expensive and relays the message to the campus community. Ads in programs for events, on campus and in the community, can promote Greek visibility and demonstrate the Greek system's support of campus and community sponsored activities.

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Flyers and Posters

Flyers and posters are relatively inexpensive and effective public relations tools. Determining how many flyers or posters are needed when planning locations and distribution will help to further contain costs. Flyers are adaptable to innovative distribution methods, for example taped to the tops of pizza boxes delivered by the local pizza delivery business.

Eye-catching colors identifying logos, and a large headline or teaser near the top of the flyer or poster will attract attention. Using the logo of the campus Greek organization being promoted on flyers and posters is a good strategy for establishing the organization identity with upbeat, well-designed, and informative public relations pieces.

Banners

Big events on campus call for large-scale displays of copy and artwork. To call attention to the activity, banners fill the bill.

- Keep the message simple and the design striking.
- For a big event, banners are useful as a background for publicity photographs and television coverage, as well as advance notice.

Window Cards and Displays

Window cards and window displays may be particularly useful for publicity purposes when local merchants are located near campus. Placement of window cards at local businesses provides an opportunity to get acquainted with representatives of the community and present a positive image to local businesspersons.

Sometimes, storeowners will donate an entire window display area to promote an important community-campus related project. Placement of a window display should only occur with a business that reflects well upon the image of the entire Greek community.

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Table Tents and Door Hangers

Table tents and door hangers are simple and effective public relations tools to use on campus to publicize an event or increase awareness of Psi Upsilon.

- Table tents and door hangers should be printed on 65-pound paper so they are stiff enough to sit upright on tables or hang in place when slipped over doorknobs.
- Obtain permission from the dining room manager before placing table tents in student dining locations. Door hangers have a direct, personal appeal since they welcome returning students to their rooms. They should be printed in bright colors and written with a personal tone. Request permission before placing any door hangers. Making arrangements with campus staff is yet another opportunity to develop positive public relations through personal contact.

Modeling Good PR

Recruiting members of Greek organizations to model for local retail and campus-related business ads takes the personal image concept of public relations to the printed page. Also, individual members of the Greek community can build the Greek system's visibility by wearing their badges and clothing with their Greek letters. These relatively effortless actions tell others that the Greek member is proud to be Greek.

News Releases

The news media (newspapers, magazines, television, and radio) represent an opportunity to publicize and promote an awareness of positive Greek behavior. For instance, news releases to campus newspapers are an important way to educate collegians about the broader activities of Greek organizations on campus.

The best way to identify your "media contact" is to call local newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations directly and ask for names of reporters who would be interested in your story. At most newspapers, you will contact the city desk editors who will be interested in contributions that Greek organizations make through volunteer projects and community service activities. By knowing the right reporter, by responding quickly to requests for information or interviews, and by being prepared to answer questions, you can plan for success.

What is newsworthy?

News is the presentation of timely facts that are of interest and importance to readers. It must be factual, not the author's opinion. The use of concrete examples, details, and figures will give the material credibility. (For example, Greek volunteers donated more than 250 hours providing safe escort services during the fall semester at University College.)

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Timeliness is crucial in news coverage. When a story is not published at the appropriate time, it loses impact. The facts of a news release should always be organized in an inverted order, with the who, what, where, when, why, and how listed in order of importance. Use opening words that will catch the reader or viewer's attention with the most important and interesting angle of the story.

Because editors have limited time and space for stories, news writing should be concise. Choose strong verbs that energize copy; use adjectives and adverbs sparingly. Use short paragraphs written in the active voice. Quotations from speakers or participants in an event help tell the story and humanize the organization. Be sure to quote only informed, articulate representatives of the Greek community.

Hometown newspapers will often print news of a member's pledging, initiation, election to chapter offices, selection for campus positions, etc. Do not neglect the hometown newspapers!

How to prepare copy for a news release.

The standard release form is streamlined to simplify reading, editing, processing, and filing of copy. Format the news release according to the sample provided.

Advance releases versus follow-up releases.

An advance release is prepared to publicize a meeting or event that will occur in the future and should be sent to newspapers at least two weeks ahead of time. It should be specific and include information on program, speakers, and admission costs.

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SAMPLE ADVANCE PRESS RELEASE

DATE: March 20
FOR RELEASE: April 1-5
CONTACT: Samuel Goodale,
Psi Upsilon Fraternity
Union College
Schenectady, NY 12345-4567

Noted columnist and emergency relief advocate, Joe Doe, will appear at the University College Club at 7:30 p.m., April 14, to address the volunteer fund raisers for Greek Aid to The Green River Flood Victims Fund.

Doe, known for his humorous syndicated column, entertains thousands of Americans every day with his tongue-in-cheek commentary on the unusual events that characterize everyday life in these United States.

During the program, Doe will share anecdotes of his experiences while visiting disaster sites around the country. His enthusiasm for the generosity he has witnessed among the volunteers who work tirelessly to face the needs of others has made him a popular motivational speaker for many volunteer-based organizations. Psi Upsilon Fraternity is sponsoring the evening with Joe Doe. The public is invited. Donations will be accepted during the evening for the flood victims.

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Calendar Listings

Calendar listings are printed in most campus and community papers. A separate release for a calendar listing should be sent to the calendar editor at least two to three weeks before the event. Study the calendar-listing format in various local publications for appropriate style.

SAMPLE CALENDAR LISTING

DATE: March 20
FOR RELEASE: April 1-5
CONTACT: Samuel Goodale
Psi Upsilon Fraternity
Union College
Schenectady, NY 12345-4567

Psi Upsilon and Chi Psi Fraternities sponsor "It's Greek to Me" -- an orientation for new students of Union College on Friday, September 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Union Lounge.

Letters

Letter writing is one task, which should be delegated to the chapter's most talented writers. Although they are time-consuming, letters provide the best and most personal means of communication next to in-person contact. Here are some tips:

- Use fraternity stationery.
- Stationery should be in good taste in color and design.
- Be sure the chapter's name and address is on the letterhead and envelope.
- Use an individual's full name and proper title.
- Never use impersonal salutations.
- If the letter is addressing a woman, know whether to use Miss or Mrs., if you do not know, used Ms.
- State the purpose of the letter in the first paragraph.
- Make the letter personal and friendly, but not flippant.
- Avoid trite and archaic expressions as well as slang.
- Make copies for your file.
- If you expect a reply, ask for one.
- Be sure of spelling (especially names and title), grammar, and punctuation.

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- A person should sign letters even though they may be from the general membership.

Follow-Up Releases

For major events such as a Greek-sponsored blood drive, you may want to send a follow-up story, after the first story is released. This is a good way to maintain visibility and interest in the special event. The follow-up may include general information about Greek activities on campus and in the community, and can be an opportunity to promote an awareness of positive Greek life.

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP RELEASE

DATE: March 27
FOR RELEASE: April 7-11
CONTACT: Sarah Smith
Office of Student Activities
University College
Student Activities Building
College Town, USA 98765-4567

Greek organizations of University College will sponsor an evening with Joe Doe, noted syndicated columnist and emergency relief advocate, at 7:30 p.m., April 14, at the University College Club.

In recent weeks, members of the Greek organizations on the University College campus have volunteered many hours collecting food and clothing for the flood victims of the Green River. Greeks have pooled their resources to conduct a week long Green River Carwash. More than 900 collegians have participated in the various relief projects while raising \$3,500.

The Office of Student Activities reports the positive response of Greek men and women to the needs of local flood victims follows the well-established tradition of their national organizations' commitment to philanthropy.

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Photographs

Photographs can be included with advance and follow-up news releases. Include all the essential facts in the caption, the purpose of which is to identify the picture. The information must be brief, factual, and accurate. People in the photograph should be identified from left to right with all names spelled correctly. If the photograph is sent on its own, without a release, more information should be included. If the event being publicized features a prominent speaker, a photograph is important for advance publicity.

The quality of a photograph is critical, because the editor will discard poor quality photographs. If submitting digital photographs they must be high-resolution images.

Some newspapers only use photographs taken by their staff members. In that case, call the editor in advance to ask if the publication will send a photographer to take pictures. Often, campus newspapers have staff photographers who can be scheduled to attend the event.

Format

Do not write or type on the photograph; instead, type the caption on the lower half of an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper and attach the sheet to the back of the photo with a line of rubber cement so that the caption is visible below the photograph. Fold the caption sheet up over the face of the photograph. Never attach a photograph caption sheet to a photograph with a paper clip or write on the front or back of the photograph. Type the contact name and phone number and the name of the Greek organization on a label and affix it to the back of the photograph.

Special Event Publicity

In order to maximize public relations results during a special event; utilize as many publicity activities as the organization's budget will allow. A few examples include:

- Announcements made during class and personal presentations to other groups.
- Airplane messages flown over the football stadium.
- Radio/TV public service announcements for community calendars in local newspapers and on local radio stations.
- Posters placed where the potential audience will see them.
- A well-known person as honorary chairman.

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- Letters to the editor of campus and community newspapers.
- Letters or direct mail to potential participants.
- Tie in with national events, for example a service/volunteer event conducted during National Volunteer week.
- Speeches.
- Billboards; ask businesses in the area with billboards and large signs to donate a message for Greeks.
- Telephone calls.
- Displays and exhibits wherever appropriate.
- Stage constructive events.
- Press releases sent to media contact list.
- Flyers.
- Advertisements; ask local businesses to sponsor ads, endorsements, billboards, prizes, T-shirts, etc.
- Special messages printed on cups and napkins to be used at the event or in dining halls before the event.

Broadcast Media

Electronic media is an entirely different method of communication to use in implementing your public relations program. Materials for television or radio must be written to be heard by the ear rather than read by the eye.

- Keep the language simple.
- Finish one thought in each sentence.
- Use the present tense to retain the immediacy of the medium.
- Use proper names. Pronouns are confusing to listeners. Give the name of the person you are quoting at the beginning of a statement.
- Check with local stations on preferred length of material.

Public Service Announcements

Probably the best opportunity available in the broadcast media is the public service announcement or PSA. Public Service Announcements are free 10, 20, 30, or 60-second radio and television/cable spots. Since there is strong competition for PSA spots, the quality and interest of contributed material will determine whether it is selected.

Submit copy for a PSA to the station's program director as far in advance as possible (a minimum of four weeks). Copy preparation for a PSA is similar to preparation for a news release.

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SAMPLE PSA

CONTACT: Sam Goodale
Psi Upsilon Fraternity
Union College
Schenectady, NY 12345-4567

RELEASE DATE: January 16-18

PSI U SAFE RIDES (*30 SECONDS*)

- Psi U Safe Rides is a safe rides program that offers free, safe, and confidential rides home to members of the entire Union College community.
- Safe Rides operates every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m.
- If you find that you, or a friend that you are riding with, should not be driving home this weekend, get help.
- Don't let drinking put you and others at risk for injury or death.
- Call Psi U Safe Rides 1-300-GO4-PSIU
- A public service announcement from the Office of Student Activities at Union College

Interviews

The best way to succeed in an interview is to be prepared. Before appearing in a broadcast interview, know the program format, whether the program is live or taped, who will be doing the interviewing, the length of the interview, and the programs target audience. If slides, tapes, and other supportive materials will add to the interview, advise the studio in advance.

Being prepared also requires that the public relations representative be thoroughly informed about the activities of the local Greek system and member groups.

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Press Interviews

A successful interview depends upon the interviewed person being relaxed and aware of the points he or she wants to make during the interview. When speaking to a press reporter, there are some pointers to remember:

- Comments given during the interview may be quoted in part, in full, or indirectly.
- Reporters and editors decide according to their own agenda what to include and what to omit.
- Reporters draw conclusions based on the credibility of the person being interviewed -- familiarity with the subject, sense of commitment, and grammar.

Television and Radio Interviews

- Use words, pictures, anecdotes, and examples that are strictly applicable and accurate.
- Make the most important points first in simple and accurate language.
- Repeat crucial pieces of information.
- Keep a calm voice, even when challenged.
- Never use sarcasm, slang, or crutch phrases ("you know").
- Avoid nervous laughter.
- Speak for the organization, not from a personal point of view.
- Correct inaccurate statements.
- Face the interviewer and concentrate on talking with him or her. Listen, so that responses to questions and comments will be accurate and appropriate.
- Microphones are very sensitive and will pick up any noise or side comments.

Media List : Channels for Publicity

Know the names of reporters at each local newspaper, magazine, and broadcast station who are likely to be interested in Greek contributions to the campus and community. Your media contact list should include:

- Newspapers: dailies, weeklies, monthlies, small community.
- Local and city magazines.
- State or local bureaus of national wire services (Associated Press, United Press International).
- News operations at local radio and television stations.
- Local cable stations.
- State and local bureaus of national television and radio networks (if located in your town).
- Newsletters on campus or in the community.
- Psi Upsilon's International Office.
- University news services and campus public relations departments.

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When there are no contacts on file for a publication or station, a new contact can be established with relative ease. Call the publication or station and ask for the name of the reporter, editor, or producer who would be the appropriate contact for a public relations person working to develop awareness on the community service contributions of a local fraternity.

Ask how the reporter or producer would like the information brought to his or her attention (by phone or mail). Once contact has been established, more extensive news and feature stories can be proposed.

Use your media list to send news releases, special event notices, interview opportunities, and newsletters.

Create A Business Resource List

Identify groups within the community that will support efforts to promote a positive image of the Greek community. Check Chamber of Commerce directories and local business guides for businesses that may provide goods and services to the Greek community. Some obvious examples include quick print shops, dry cleaners, and pizza parlors. (Avoid using businesses that distribute and sell alcoholic beverages.) These businesses may be willing to donate resources, space, and prizes for chapter fund-raisers and special events. Keep your business resources up-to-date on chapter happenings by placing them on your chapter mailing list.

Resources

Public Relations Case Studies

Achieving the Ultimate Success

Chapter members at a large university gear up for their annual Rock-a-Thon. For the next 72 hours, members and friends will dance to raise thousands of dollars to be donated to charity. When the event was over, nearly \$6,000 had been collected, but only chapter members and their friends knew of this extraordinary deed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why did only chapter members and friends know of the event?
- Should philanthropic events also be social events?
- Where was the media during this event?

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The Media Hates Us

At some colleges, the campus newspaper may be renowned for its criticism of Greeks. Every issue of the bi-weekly publication includes articles on such topics as Greeks and rape, alcohol abuse, hazing, etc. The Greeks constantly complain the newspaper treats them unfairly and feel they cannot change the attitude of the newspaper despite the philanthropic and other positive projects they do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Is the newspaper really anti-Greek?
- Why does the paper only print negative stories about the Greek community?
- Is the Greek community defenseless against the newspaper? What can be done to change the newspaper's attitude?

Parents Just Don't Understand

A chapter conducts a successful rush. However, during the course of the pledge period some members drop out because they say their parents think there is no value in fraternity membership. Others refuse to tell their parents so they won't be forced to drop out. Every semester, the chapter loses members due to the attitudes of parents.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do parents have such a negative perception of Greeks and fraternity membership?
- How can the chapter work to change these perceptions?

Selling Honesty

A chapter has conducted a successful rush, telling prospective members about plans for a new house, exciting social events, and a strong scholarship program. Soon the new pledges discover none of these promises are true and most of them de-pledge. The chapter is discontented and the former pledges have a negative image of the Fraternity and the Greek system.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How could the chapter have avoided losing so many pledges?
- Why doesn't the chapter tell the truth about its activities?

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...But That's Not What I Meant!

A rape occurs at a chapter house on a large university campus. The chapter tries to cover up the incident, but a local reporter learns about it and corners a member of another fraternity to ask what he knows about the rape. The member, who has no first-hand knowledge of the rape, declines to comment. The reporter continues to ask questions and follows him down the street. Finally, just to end the questioning, the member flippantly says for all he knows the woman probably deserved it. The lead story that night on the news is, "Greeks condone rape. It's open territory in fraternity houses!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are the repercussions of this event for the Greek community?
- How should the member have reacted when confronted by the reporter?
- Should the chapter have tried to cover up this incident?

Survey Says

The message is clear: It's time to clean up our act! A survey of more than 100 Greek advisors, fraternity and sorority leaders, and students from across the continent reveals:

When asked, "How does the college or university perceive the Greek system?" the responses were:

- 86% Favorably
- 1% Unfavorably
- 13% No Opinion

When asked, "How do non-Greeks perceive the Greek system?"

- 40% Favorably
- 38% Unfavorably
- 22% No Opinion

When asked, "How does the community perceive the Greek system?"

- 32% Favorably
- 48% Unfavorably
- 20% No Opinion

These results indicate the need to focus the public relations effort on non-Greeks and communities. Non-Greeks are media, students, parents, etc., while the community is neighbors living near fraternity and sorority houses.

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Everyone surveyed had the opportunity to express what the Greek system needed to do in order to improve its image. The responses varied greatly.

"Emphasize service over social."

"Control the dead weight."

"Promote scholarship."

"Acknowledge our presence on campus as leaders."

"Students need to hold one another accountable for their actions."

"We must begin policing ourselves on the peer level."

"Eliminate the discriminatory attitude."

"Get the faculty more involved."

"Strive for diversity."

"Reduce the elitist and sexist image of the system."

"Publicize the good."

"Behavior speaks louder than words."

"You can't market a second-rate product."

"Differentiate between public relations and publicity."

All of these ideas echo the same message: **The time for public relations is now. When asked if more education on public relations was needed, 94% responded with an enthusiastic, "Yes!"**

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Sample Letters

April 15, 20__

Mr. John F. Brown, President
Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity
21 University Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dear John:

The men of Psi Upsilon invite you to attend our semi-annual Steak and Bean dinner at the chapter house at 6:00 p.m., May 1, 20--. Your recent recognition as the fraternity man with the highest-grade average last semester qualifies you for a position at our steak table.

Psi Upsilon's Steak and Bean dinner is held each semester to recognize the upper and lower levels of scholastic achievement within the chapter. It has been a tradition to invite the outstanding scholar from among all the fraternities.

We look forward to seeing you on the first.

Interfraternally yours,

Peter C. White
Vice-President



**Invite a fellow
Greek to dinner**

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August 31, 20—

Mr. Daniel Wilder
City Of Lansing
Lansing, MI 12354

Dear Mayor Wilder,

The brothers of Psi Upsilon Fraternity at Michigan State University join me in extending our congratulations on your recent election as Mayor of Lansing.

We are pleased to be a part of the Lansing community and will continue to contribute in pursuit of its advancement.

Sincerely yours,

Joesph Green
President



**Congratulating a
new Mayor**

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March 16, 20—

Mr. James Dunn
Miami Student Council
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056

Dear James,

The men of Psi Upsilon Fraternity join me in congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the Miami Student Council. We know students have selected wisely and that your service will be a credit to our fine university.

You may be assured of the full support of Psi Upsilon in your endeavors as president. We are anxious to take part in the continuation of outstanding leadership at Miami. Please call on us if we may be of assistance.

Truly yours,

Richard Jones
Vice President



**Showing recognition
to a campus leader**