Setting up a Newsletter

NOTE: It is important to send a copy of your chapter's newsletters to the Executive Offices. We maintain newsletter copies for archival reasons, as samples to show other chapters, and as content for The Laurel and other publications.

**Format**

**Size:** 11 x 17 paper, folded, is ideal. 8 1/2 x 11, folded, also works well.

**Layout:** There is a lot of desktop publishing software available for producing a newsletter on an in-house computer. This is the least expensive way to produce a newsletter.

**Typefaces:** In general, use no more than two different typefaces. In PageMaker, for example, use the Style Box to create a body type and headline type. Any additional faces should be carefully considered (i.e., a special logo/typeface for a special event).

A serif typeface like Times New Roman is good for body text. It is readable and works well in justified or non-justified text. Suggested specs: 11 point, auto leading.

A strong, non-serif face, 18-24 point, provides a good contrast for headlines. "Small caps" is another excellent option for headlines in PageMaker. Drop caps give an added professional dimension to copy.

**Margins:** In general, set all margins no narrower than 0.75. Leave at least a quarter inch between columns. Effective use of white space gives a professional look.

**Masthead:** Many chapters have a newsletter name that's been used for generations. Others create new ones. The title should be catchy and directly reflect the chapter (i.e. "Etagram" from Eta chapter).

**Paper:** Many commercial printers and copy shops stock standard white paper that is relatively inexpensive. Colored paper is a slightly more expensive option but helps draw attention to your newsletter. Colored ink is also standard. NOTE: "Harvard Red" is PMS 201.

**Headlines:** Present tense. Concise. Draw reader in to article.

**Photos:** Always an attractive addition. Requires professional printing, however, which is more expensive than copying by other methods.

**Graphics:** Many clipart files for all varieties of computer programs are available. Consider special logo designs for activities like a reunion weekend.

**Copy:** Should present all details in standard "who, what, where, when, why" format. Do not say, "One of our guys was elected to IFC." Say, "John Davis, a senior, was elected president of our campus IFC in April." Do not say, "Please come to our homecoming this fall." Say, "Our homecoming activities are scheduled for the weekend of Oct. 4."
Labels: Readily available from the Executive Offices at a small charge. Their accuracy depends on the chapter submitting regular address updates. Your campus alumni office is also an excellent source.

Mailing: Third class is the least expensive. A non-profit, third-class mailing permit is required and can be obtained through your local post office. Please note: Third-class mailings have certain restrictions. You must have at least 200 pieces, and if your newsletter is folded, the fold must be at the bottom (staple at the top). You must also plan ahead because the post office is allowed three weeks to mail a third-class piece.

General Timeline

- Make deadlines for printing, submission of articles, etc. Make sure to assign articles.
- Choose photographs/graphics.
- Produce on desktop system and submit to commercial printer.
- Mail!

Checklist before printing

Have you:
- ...used correct grammar?
- ...run a spell check?
- ...identified photos clearly?
- ...used present tense in headlines?
- ...written complete sentences and proofread for errors?
- ...edited copy for conciseness?

Ideas for your next newsletter

- Ask your advisor to write a column.
- Feature seniors (two or three per issue) and emphasize their major and any prospective jobs (alumni might be able to help).
- Feature varsity and/or intramural athletes.
- Feature a campus club, student government and/or IFC leaders from the chapter.
- Highlight Leadership Academy or National Convention.
- Feature an alumni faculty member.
- Feature a legacy and his relative Phi Tau.
- Feature members’ talents or hobbies.
- Feature an Executive Offices visitor.
- Feature a prominent alumni.
- Feature alumni from a certain class (especially on decade anniversaries).
- Write a short editorial on a timely topic to keep alumni informed.
- Review your school’s alumni magazine to get an idea of what kinds of articles are being written to general alumni. Pick up on some of these ideas.