

## Tips for Alumni Newsletters

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The chapter should try and send regular newsletters to the chapter's alumni, local alumni and the president and VPCR of any local alumni chapters using the chapter's database as a mailing list.

### The Perfect Fraternity Alumni Newsletter

An excerpt of the article, The Perfect Fraternity Alumni Newsletter by T. J. Sullivan (as showed in "Connections" 2009 summer issue, page 16) provides great insight of what should be enclosed in an alumni newsletter:

*"Most fraternity alumni newsletters are pretty lame, especially those that are written and assembled by undergraduates. We haven't done a good job of telling you what we want to read. I want to offer you some practical advice on what makes an alumni newsletter excellent.*

*First, let's talk about student news. The biggest mistake students make when producing an alumni newsletter is thinking that alumni want to read four pages of columns by student officers about the life of the chapter...I really only want to hear the positive stuff: the awards, the great recruitment numbers, the sports victories, the student members who have been elected to important student leadership positions. Show me you are doing worthy things. Otherwise I probably don't care. You don't have to describe every single thing you've done this year...*

*So, here are some ideas of what [the alumni newsletter] should be:*

- **ALUMNI UPDATES.** *This is the stuff I care most about. Tell me what my contemporaries are doing. Where are they working? What are their positions? Where do they live? ... What are their email addresses so I can reach out to them? You should assume that I'm completely out of touch with my brothers, and I'm dying for all the fun little nuggets of information you can give me.*
- **PHOTOS.** *Give me photos of what my brothers look like now... Get a family photo if possible... Show me some pictures from the last alumni event, and encourage brothers to send pictures of the last time they hung out with another brother. Maybe even run some old photos from 10, 20, 30 years ago. Those old photos are a blast to look at, and they bring back great memories.*
- **WISH LIST.** *Tell me the 5-10 things that the chapter is wishing for. Need a computer [money for a scholarship, money to attend a national event, money for graduating seniors memberships to their local alumni chapter]?... And, let me know who I should contact if I can help line up a donation, or if I want to write a check. You'd be shocked how much cool stuff your alumni can get for you if you just make a point of letting them know what you need. Plus, I'm more likely to contribute some money if you show me some good things you plan to spend the money on...*
- **CAMPUS NEWS.** *Give me just a little bit of this. I'm interested to know if new buildings have been built on campus. Give me a picture of the new library, student center, or rec center... Make me feel a little bit connected to the college or the university, because chances are I'm pretty out of touch.*

- *ARTICLES BY ALUMNI. I'd rather read something fun or amusing written by an alumnus ... Get alumni to write articles, and you'll boost readership.*
- *IMPORTANT DATES. The more notice you give me about Homecoming [Founders' Day, Alumni Day], the better chance I can plan to be there. It's never too early. List important events for the next school year. When you send an alumni newsletter three weeks before Homecoming promoting events, it's too late. I can't be there. You should have told me four months ago.*
- *CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION. Make sure you always print the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of the chapter president, the chapter advisor ... the [ local alumni chapter president], ...and any other leaders I might want to reach. If your chapter has a well-maintained website, tell me that also. If you don't maintain it, don't bother telling me about it.*
- *SOME NATIONAL INFORMATION. When is [Grand Chapter Congress]? Where is it? Who donated last year to the fraternity's foundation? It's easy to get some of this stuff from [Central Office].*

*The truth is that the best alumni newsletters have strong alumni involvement. As a student, you can help assemble it, print it, and distribute it. But, when it comes to content, alumni know how to write things that other alumni want to read. If you're a new [chapter] that doesn't have many alumni, ask for help from [the] fraternity's [Central Office]."* - T.J. Sullivan is the Vice President and CEO of CAMPUSPEAK... Visit his blog site at [www.tjsullivan.com](http://www.tjsullivan.com).

## Alumni Newsletter Monthly Topics

Ideas for monthly topics for your alumni newsletter include the following:

- September
  - In Congress years: recap of Congress, updates on new bylaw/policy and procedure changes
  - Introduction of the Executive Committee and highlight the chapter's goals for the fall term and for the year
  - Recruitment Schedule – invite alumni to attend
  - Information on LEAD – date, place, link to registration page, etc.
  - Goals for the chapter
- October
  - Make A Difference Day Special: What is the chapter doing for Make a Difference Day?
  - Pledging Update – How are the pledges doing? How many are there? When is initiation scheduled?
  - Information on how to donate to the Chapter's Leadership fund via the Delta Sigma Pi Leadership Foundation (with website link)
- November
  - Founders' Day special: interview a Founding member of the Chapter if available, otherwise, an alumni from the earliest pledge class available

- Initiation Reminder or Update (depending on date of initiation)
- Information on how to update contact information with the chapter and with the Fraternity (with website link)
- Information on how to contact your local alumni chapter(s)
- December
  - Initiation Update –Who was in attendance (particularly alumni)? How many new brothers?
  - Introduction of newly initiated brothers
  - Farewell to any graduating seniors
  - Recap of total amount donated to the Chapter Leadership Fund that term along with a thank you to specific donors.
- January
  - State of the chapter letter –How have the goals set for the first term been accomplished? What is the focus for the rest of the year?
  - Introduction of any new Executive Committee members
  - Information on LEAD – date, place, link to sign-up page, etc.
- February/March
  - Alumni and faculty member profiles/articles
  - LEAD Provincial Conference summary
  - Goals for the chapter
- April
  - Alumni Day Special: What is the chapter doing for Alumni Day?
  - Information on how to donate to the Leadership Foundation (with website link)
- May/June
  - Summary of the year’s events and highlights
  - Farewell to graduating seniors
  - In Congress years: special reminder on Congress, mention of who is attending from the chapter, who is the delegate, etc.
  - Information on how to update contact information with the chapter and with the Fraternity (with website link)
  - Information on how to contact your local alumni chapter(s)
  - Link to Year in review photos/video