

Alumni Relations Guidebook

Your guide to successful alumni relations

A Guide for the Chapter Vice Noble Ruler-Alumni Relations

A Chapter Vice Noble Ruler of Alumni Relations holds the future in his grasp. One year with little or no communication between the undergraduate chapter and alumni can cause ten years of headaches for future members. To employ a trite phrase that is often overworked today, the key to successful alumni relations is **COMMUNICATION**.

The National Constitution and Statutes spells out the duties of the Vice Noble Ruler of Alumni Relations in Chapter III, Section 7:

“The duties of the Vice Noble Ruler-Alumni Relations shall be: a) to take such steps as the Chapter may deem necessary to keep in touch with its own alumni; b) to assume responsibility for the proper maintenance of Chapter alumni records; c) to be responsible for the observance of Founders’ Day; d) to publish two or more times during the year a Chapter Newsletter to be known as the ‘..... Crescent’; e) to be responsible for the publication of a Chapter Directory, either supplemental or complete, arranged in both numerical and alphabetical order, identifying each brother listed therein as to his year of initiation and his latest mailing address, and said Directory to be furnished to the Home Office by November 15th each year.”

The Crescent/Newsletter

Four times a year this publication should be mailed to all alumni of your Chapter. The publication need not be an elaborate offset paper in color – a neatly mimeographed 3-page publication will suffice. The important point is that alumni regularly receive this publication.

(See Guidelines For The Chapter Crescent)

The Alumni Records

Keeping up with address changes is a constant trial for the Vice Noble Ruler of Alumni Relations. The Home Office can provide you with address change forms or you can e-mail changes - send all changes promptly to the Home Office so (1) your next label order will be correct and (2) the alumnus will continue to receive the SICKLE & SHEAF as a reminder of his ties to AGR and his own Chapter.

The Vice Noble Ruler of Alumni Relations must also submit names of all deceased brothers to the Home Office.

The following information should accompany each address change to the Home Office:

1) Alumnus’ Name 2) Initiation Number 3) Chapter 4) Old Address 5) New Address with Zip Code

The Home Office will also be providing you with changes they receive directly from the alum or the Post Office. After you receive these changes from the Home Office, what do you do with them?

The Directory

This publication should be published every other year with mimeographed supplemental corrections, additions or deletions as an insert in the off-years. The ideal Directory should include the following to be actually useful:

- Foreward (by Alumni President and/or VNR-Alumni Relations)
- Chapter Officers
- Alumni Officers
- National Officers
- Housemother (including phone and summer address)
- All Chapter alumni in alphabetical order with initiation number, profession (if known) and present address
- All alumni broken into geographical areas (an easy reference for the brother in a strange town)
- All deceased brothers
- Any “Lost” brothers
- AGRs of other chapters who reside in the university community
- AGRs of other chapters who reside in the state

The Directory should be mailed to: All Chapter alumni and the Home Office (two copies).

Founders’ Day

The well-planned Founders’ Day is the well-received Founders’ Day. It’s that simple. Let the alumnus know well in advance, secure a “drawing card” attraction, make the date a practical date and be certain of 100% attendance by the undergraduate’s Chapter brothers.

In recent years, Chapters have had tremendous response through the employment of an invention of Alexander Graham Bell. Calls on Saturdays and Sundays, as well as in the evening during the week, are at reduced rates – take advantage of this and follow-up each letter with calls to those in, say, a 150-mile radius of the Chapter. The results will more than pay for the phone bill in the long run.

Some Chapters have seen fit to incorporate a parents’ weekend into the Founders’ Day celebration. The result is a good turnout in almost all cases.

Special Events

Always be on the lookout for reasons to have a special celebration with the alumni, i.e., anniversaries (especially the Chapter’s 25th and 50th) and initiation of brothers number 500, 1000, or 1500

Each Chapter may desire to investigate the feasibility of special alumni events at Homecoming, Summer Picnics, Pink Rose Formal, etc.

Special Alumni Awards

The Home Office can supply you with both 25 and 50-year testimonials. The 25-year are silver and the 50-year are gold. They are mounted on walnut wood with Plexiglas covering the certificate. Many Chapters have begun this on a yearly basis and found that the alumnus are very appreciative. In addition, the Home Office can design any special awards you may desire for alumni. Each Chapter is wise to institute a program of honoring certain alumni each year. An award for the outstanding alumnus of the year is being given with great success at many Chapters.

SICKLE & SHEAF

The Vice Noble Ruler of Alumni Relations should encourage the Chapter Reporter to see that each issue carries news from your Chapter. This magazine is now mailed to ALL living alumni and, of course, the first thing your alumnus look for is news from your Chapter. If no news, the obvious conclusion of the alum is that “the Chapter isn’t doing anything at all.” Only careful meeting of the deadlines for the issues can avoid this misconception.

**ALPHA GAMMA RHO FRATERNITY
SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE NUMBER OF LOST ALUMNI**

1. Mail Crescents and Newsletters frequently (6-10) a year to avoid losing addresses.
2. Print "Return Service Requested" close to the address on each Crescent and Newsletter. This will inform the Post Office that the Chapter will pay a nominal fee to receive any change of address.
3. Consider sending one piece of information each year using First Class mail. If an address is unknown, the piece will be returned without charge.
4. Publish names and addresses of all lost Alumni in your Crescents and Newsletters. Request that any information on lost brothers be sent to the VNR-Alumni Relations.
5. Assign a brother to visit the town and the last known address of a brother. Checking with neighbors or last employer could lead to a current address.
6. Locate the parents of the lost Alumnus (using his initiation form) to request his most recent address. (Call the Home Office to get a copy of his initiation form if you do not have it.)
7. Call the telephone directory assistance in the town you might suspect the lost brother currently resides. Request a current telephone number and/or address. Be sure to call them to verify that you get the correct person, not just same name.
8. If a lost brother has a "last known address" check with the local Post Office to see if he left a forwarding address. They can provide addresses even after forwarding order expires for a nominal charge.
9. Contact brothers of the lost brother's graduation class to inquire if they can be of assistance in locating the lost Alumnus.
10. Work closely with your **University Alumni Office**. They often have extensive files on Alumni and have personnel to help locate lost graduates.
11. Use Alumni Association Officers as a source of address corrections. Have the lost list at all Alumni meetings and functions.
12. Ask your Adviser for assistance in locating the lost brothers.
13. Ask a local Alumnus to help keep track of member addresses.
14. Set a goal to reduce lost Alumni each semester.
15. Establish an Alumni re-recruitment program.
16. Have a sign in and address table at all events -- for both lost Alumni and current Alumni.

Finding Lost Alumni via the Internet

-On the Internet, go to

<http://www.switchboard.com> (there are other sites which can be found in the opening of different search methods, for example in America Online, on the cover screen there is an option to search for people, switchboard, however was the most updated and complete record found.)

-Choose Find People

-Type in First Name, Space, Middle Initial

-Last Name

-State, if it is likely that the person still lives in the same state (College and previous address are the same state)

-Use discretion as to whether the person on the screen is the alumnus you are looking for.

-If the town or phone number is the same, or if it is an odd name

-Most changes will be from a post office box to a street address or vice versa

-Consider sending a letter or making a phone call to confirm that you have found an AGR alumnus.

Determining whether an Alumnus is Deceased

-On the Internet, go to

<http://www.ancestry.com>

-Scroll down to SSDI (Social Security Death Index)

-Type First and Last Name

-Type Birth date

-Check For matches, if any are found, record social security number and date of death.

Schedule of Chapter Publications

<u>Date</u> August 1	Deadline for Chapter News in Fall, SICKLE & SHEAF
Early September	Newsletter to Alumni: a) Alumni Features b) Fall Activities Calendar, i.e., Homecoming Plans c) Rush Results d) Stories of Summer Alumni Activities
3 weeks before Homecoming	Reminder Card (RSVP, perhaps?)
Late September	Deadline for Chapter News in Winter, SICKLE & SHEAF
2 weeks after Homecoming	Fall Crescent: a) Alumni Features b) Winter & Spring Activities Calendar c) Results of Homecoming Activities (pictures!) d) Announce date of Founders' Day e) Print "lost alumni" from updated list provided by the Home Office
Early December	Christmas Newsletter: a) Miscellaneous Notes b) Mention Founders' Day Plans c) Christmas Greetings
Mid-January	Deadline for Chapter News in Spring, SICKLE & SHEAF
Late January	Winter Crescent: a) Alumni Features b) Spring & Summer Activities Calendar c) Founders' Day Announcement d) Rush Results
3 weeks before Founders' Day	Reminder Card (RSVP?)
Mid-April	Deadline for Chapter News in Summer, SICKLE & SHEAF
2 weeks after Founders' Day	Spring Crescent: a) Alumni Features b) Summer & Fall Activities Calendar c) Founders' Day Results (pictures!) d) Plans for Summer Alumni Functions e) Dates for Summer Rush Activities
Late May	Summer Crescent: a) Alumni Features b) Fall & Winter Activities Calendar c) Summary of Year's Activities d) Final Plans for Summer Alumni Activities e) Preliminary Homecoming Announcements

ALPHA GAMMA RHO FRATERNITY

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHAPTER CRESCENT

A Publication for Alumni

The goal of every Chapter should be to maintain a continuous flow of contact with its Alumni. If such a flow is developed, the two groups will interact much more favorably. This will cause greater support and brotherhood at both levels.

Probably the most effective tool used to maintain such contact is the **Chapter Crescent**. The Crescent is one of only a few ways to reach large numbers of Alumni at minimal expense. In fact, when used properly, the Crescent should more than pay for itself in benefits to both undergraduates and Alumni. The following guidelines are to help you develop an effective and quality Crescent program.

A good rule of thumb: 75% Alumni News - 25% Chapter News.

- A) **FREQUENCY:** A pattern of at least **three Crescents a year** is recommended as being the most effective. **Establish a schedule and remain faithful to it.** Continuity in a publication increases the rate of favorable reception. Supplement the Crescents with one-page, typed newsletters containing important information. Once such newsletter between each Crescent is optimal. 3 Crescents, 4 Newsletters = 7 Alumni Publications per year.
- B) **ALUMNI ARTICLES:** Always include features on Alumni. One or two longer "profiles" and several shorter "news notes" are good. Inform Alumni of their peers' new jobs, recognitions, appointments, awards, and other data. People like to read about themselves first and people they know second. Don't disappoint your readers (the **Alumni**). Include as many names as possible in each issue without losing readability. Always remember that the Crescent is for the **Alumni**, not the brothers living in the house
-- they already know what is happening.
- C) **SPECIAL INVITATIONS:** Include special features about Homecoming, Founders' Day, Pink Rose, etc. The coverage preceding the event should at least equal that of the follow-up. Build up the function with details and encourage attendance. "Sell" it as being sure to be entertaining, a good time to renew old friendships, an exercise in brotherhood, etc. The Crescent is often your only mode of contact before an event -- **make it worthwhile -- advertise.**
- D) **FEATURES:** These are interesting ways to provide continuity within the Crescent. A series on various **graduating classes** is a good example. Others that have worked are a "Back on the Farm" series; a series including Alumni from each decade; a "Do You Remember?" series; and a "Guess Who is in the Picture?" series, "What's the Hottest in Agriculture?" series.

- E) **PICTURES:** People like to **see** themselves and their friends even more than reading about them! Pictures are attention getters. A quality picture with a good caption is extremely effective in "drawing in" a reader. Always include the name with the picture. Use lots of pictures -- often an Alumni will browse through the Crescent and look only at the pictures. Try to draw him into the article by using an effective picture. Pictures of the "old days" are always good, but be sure to describe "who and what." If it is a good photo and you don't know who is in it, try the "guess who" route!

DEFINITION: Alumnus = 1 Alumnus from an undergraduate institution
Alumni = Plural Alumnus from an undergraduate institution

- F) **LISTING LOST ALUMNI:** Each Crescent should contain a list of all **lost Alumni and their last known address**. Alumni are probably the best source for locating our lost brothers.
- G) **GENERAL CHAPTER NEWS:** Remember that the Crescent is for the **Alumni**. All too often the only items in a Crescent are "AGR WINS SECOND IN BOWLING", officer reports, and the like. **These articles only bore Alumni**. Alumni do like to know who was initiated and elected as officers, and involvement both with campus and Alpha Gamma Rho. A simple list will suffice; however, names alone often mean nothing. Always include parents names and hometown to help the reader place the individual.

Worthwhile chapter projects and major events do merit coverage. Awards won, high scholarship, campus recognition, individual honors, and the like deserve mention. Just don't over do it at the expense of Alumni coverage!

- H) **BIOGRAPHICAL FORM FOR ALUMNI:** Include a biographical form in each publication. Design it in a way that encourages Alumni to fill it out and return it to the Chapter. Asking for information such as present occupation, comments, or criticisms could lead to interesting ideas for future issues. Use a postcard method for increased response.
- I) **OUTSIDE NEWS:** Each Crescent event should occur outside the Fraternity that Alumni should be made aware of. A common example would be a new Dean of Agriculture who is not a brother in Alpha Gamma Rho. Remember that your readers are not only the Alumni of the Chapter, but of the university or college as well.
- J) **RECRUITMENT:** Alumni are the best source available to provide names of recruits. Capitalize on this by seeking help from them through the Crescent. Most brothers will not hesitate to submit the names of good men -- they only need to be reminded occasionally!
- K) **FUND RAISING:** Unless a special need arises, the Crescent itself should not be used to generally solicit funds. It is to entertain and to renew the Fraternal spirit. That alone may be enough to encourage donations. If any appeal is included, make it a small and non-obtrusive one. A good means to accomplish this is a small block

stating, "This Crescent is provided to you as part of our Chapter's ongoing Alumni relations program. Contributions to offset the printing and mailing costs would be greatly appreciated." Of course, if the fire marshal is threatening, a more direct appeal would be warranted!

- L) **READER APPEAL:** Has your Crescent been toned to create the feeling that the publication is FOR, ABOUT, and TO your Alumni? **Is it tasteful?** Remember, you are communicating with **all** of your Alumni. (no inside jokes -- no punts)
- M) **QUALITY:** A good way to achieve this is to have the Crescent done in cooperation with the National Headquarters. Odds are that the staff there has much more experience in creating a good publication, and can do so at a more agreeable price, than you can locally. It is nonetheless wise for you to check out local prices. Saving money is always encouraged by our Fraternity.
- N) **MAILING:** The Home Office can supply pressure-sensitive labels of all of your alumni. The mailings can be sent much more cheaply if the Chapter secures a bulk mailing permit; your local Post Office can fill you in on the details. Some people argue that a hand-stamped mailing looks more personal and promotes greater readership... again, the decision should be commensurate with your Chapter's budget.

Send copies of each issue to: All Chapter Alumni
All AGRs (without regard to Chapter) at your university
National Executive Council
Home Office (two copies)
Your Dean of Agriculture
Your Dean of Students
Your University President
All AGR Chapters across the country

Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity Membership Directory Printing Service

1. Present alumni with an up-to-date listing of all Brothers.
2. Use as a fund-raising device.
3. Locate alumni to contact prospective members.
4. Handy companion when traveling in-state or across the country.
5. Eliminates all Chapter handling. Labels, postage and mailing done by Home Office.

Inexpensive And Simple To Prepare

Your 3-1/2" X 8-1/2" Directory will contain:

Cover: Coat of arms or drawing of Chapter house, Chapter name, address, telephone number and date.

Inside front cover: Foreword and Purpose of Alpha Gamma Rho.

Three listings of all Brothers:

- Alphabetical (includes address and home phone if available)
- Geographical (alphabetical by state and then city)
- Roll Number (in order of initiation number)

Inside back cover: List of Chapter and Alumni Officers, complete address(es) and telephone number(s) for Adviser(s) and/or Housemother (Chapter must provide).

Back Cover: Self-mailer, space for postage and label.

Inside:

- ! Greek letter index to all Chapters
- ! Listing of all Alpha Gamma Rho Chapters, including full address
- ! Can include **all** AGRs in your state or just Brothers of your Chapter; Greek Chapter designation appears by each name
- ! Color cover, photos, envelope inserts and special dedications can be included if desired for an extra charge.

Use your imagination to picture a 20-70 page stapled directory. Each page is 3-1/2" X 8-1/2" in size; covers are a heavy, durable paper.

The Home Office will mail the directory to each Brother listed in the directory using a bulk rate permit; plus, a bulk shipment of any requested quantity can be shipped to the Chapter for undergraduate Brothers (please specify number, if any).

Price: \$1.95 - \$2.40 each copy; includes postage, labels and handling. Final cost depends on quantity ordered (more members = less cost per directory). A more accurate estimate can be provided if necessary.

Alpha Gamma Rho Crescent Publishing Service

Crescent Publishing Service is provided by the Home Office to assist chapters in printing regular Crescents for alumni at a reasonable price. For a minimum cost of \$200 you can send out a Crescent to stay in touch with your alumni!

How it Works

- The chapter types up articles in Microsoft Word for the Crescent and sends it on disk to the Communications Coordinator at the Home Office.
- The Communications Coordinator organizes the printing schedule, lays out the Crescent, provides suggestions for articles and ensures that each issue is mailed as scheduled.
- The cost of printing the Crescents is through voluntary alumni contributions and a minimum charge of \$200 to the chapter (cost is based on number of alumni).
- The budget is based on a two-color format (black plus one color) on 70# Vellum paper, which will add to the professionalism of each issue.

Benefits to You

- The undergraduate chapter saves time and money.
- Increase the frequency of thanking alumni for their support and encouraging additional support.
- Improved image with alumni through high quality publications.
- Fewer lost alumni.
- More accurate alumni records.

If you are interested in utilizing Crescent Publishing Service, please contact:

Debbie Davids, Communications Coordinator
10101 N. Executive Hills Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64153
(816) 891-9200 Phone
(816) 891-9401 Fax

*** Please contact the Communications Coordinator before sending any information to AGR.**

