

Tips for a Successful Founders' Day Banquet

by Max Goecker, Ball State '88

- Should be organized by alumni – for alumni.
- Organize a big event every 10 years. This is something you want everyone to attend.
- Solicit the attendance of the charter members by phone. They are worth the extra effort. It is because of them that you are having such an event. As you obtain each commitment to attend, name-drop (use their names as you make each successive call). Ask them who they would like to see in attendance. Call those brothers next and let them know who is counting on seeing them there.
- Announce the event no less than 1 year in advance. Build awareness at all alumni functions (golf outings, Homecoming, newsletters, etc.).
- Obtain the alumni list and labels from the Headquarters. Both a chronological and alphabetical listing is recommended for the primary organizer.
- Hold a Ritual
Exemplification immediately prior to or after the banquet. For many alumni, this will be the first time they have witnessed the Ritual since they were in college (could be 40, 50 or 60+ years!).
For some, you may need to go to great lengths to determine if they are a Delta Chi . . . plan ahead for gaining admittance.
- Hold an Alumni Ceremony. Even (especially?) the oldest alumnus in the room will get a special feeling going through this ceremony.
- Make personal phone calls to key individuals from each era. Get them to recruit other brothers from their era. You will get better attendance when brothers know that other brothers from their class will be there.
- Set aside time on the agenda for alumni introductions/career/family updates. It is also a great icebreaker. Don't worry, they will make this fun.
- Newsletters and mailings are not enough. Personal contact is required for a well-attended function.
- Be thoughtful of the group dynamics when planning the agenda and accommodations. A DJ may be appropriate for a 5-year anniversary, while a lighter atmosphere more conducive to visitation may be more appropriate for a 50-year anniversary. Remember many of those in attendance may not have seen one another in a long time. Let them talk and reminisce. In any case, this is not an undergraduate party.
- Recruit one or two prominent brothers to deliver a keynote address.
- Recruit a polished and capable Master of Ceremonies.
- Acknowledge your outstanding key individuals for all of their volunteer work to the chapter . . . "BB", Faculty Advisor, ABT, House Corporation, etc.
- Invite your Regent and Vice Regent (where applicable), and current and former International Officers that live in your area.
 - Invite the Greek Advisor and others from the college/university that are involved in Greek affairs.
 - Require RSVPs. You need to know who and how many are going to be there.
- Give caterer/banquet facility a 95% number of RSVP'd attendees. Not everyone will show . . . even if they already sent in their money. Besides, a good caterer/facility will prepare the meal and place settings for a few extra anyway. They will not let anyone go hungry or without a seat. It is better to pay extra for last-minute attendees than to pay for no-shows.
- Nametags are a must. These can easily be printed in advance from the RSVP list. Be sure to print the first names extra large to facilitate name recognition. Have a few blank ones on hand. Identify the charter members by using a different color or design.
- Carnations are an excellent touch for the female guests and charter members.
- Thank or recognize the spouses/guests for attending the event.

“In any case, this is not an undergraduate party!”

- Have a big display of memorabilia. The old scrapbooks are a BIG hit. Don't have any? Ask the alumni to donate duplicates of the photos they have and make new ones!
- Programs with the agenda should be provided. Print the "Bond Song," "Preamble" and anything else they may want to reference on the back.
- Have all alumni in attendance fill in the guest register. Acquire current addresses, graduation year, spouses' names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Do not underestimate the power of the Internet. Use it to obtain phone numbers for your alumni. Develop an e-mail distribution list. Publish this list in your newsletters. This is a great way to keep your alumni informed and in touch with one another.
- Mail a "thank you" and, where possible, a photo and the attendance list, with the addresses and phone numbers, to all in attendance.
- Recruit ABT and House Corporation members. You will find others that are willing to organize golf outings and other events. Seize the moment.
- Videotape the occasion.