



# **Public Relations Manual**

## ***2004***

# **Public Relations Manual for the 21st Century**

**Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity**



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# **INTRODUCTION**

# Purpose of the Public Relations Program

**T**au Kappa Epsilon's Public Relations Manual prepares each chapter to effectively present the best chapter and membership image to its publics and stakeholders. Listed below is the focus of our Fraternity:

**Scholarship** – TKE expects serious attention to academic performance. Having a strong academic record not only prepares you for success after you get your degree, but it represents your strength of mind to the world.

**Character** – Tau Kappa Epsilon shows members that there are basic principles of effective living such as integrity, honesty, patience, and fidelity. You can only experience true success and enduring happiness through life as you learn and integrate these principles into your basic character.

**Leadership** – TKE offers young men the opportunity to develop as leaders – and prepares them to use those skills during their lifetime. Members are encouraged to take an active leadership role in chapter and campus activities.

**Teamwork** – Tau Kappa Epsilon believes that building relationships, unselfishness, and people caring about each other are the keys to successful teams. When chapters reach their potential, they will achieve a level of excellence in athletics, chapter business, campus activities, or anything they do.

**Service** – TKE is committed to instilling a sense of responsibility and contribution in all of our members. TKE enables chapters to provide service to their campus, community, and our international philanthropy.

**Brotherhood** – Tau Kappa Epsilon provides a family environment in which members establish solid friendships that last a lifetime. Tekes around the world act as a network of friends, which can be very beneficial, both personally and professionally. Stated in our Declaration of Principles, *"We believe that the essential elements of true brotherhood are love, charity and esteem."*

A strong Public Relations program is the basis for activities such as recruitment and especially for campus and community relations. Each and every member of the chapter must realize they no longer only represent themselves, but they represent their chapter, its members, the 9,000 other collegiate Tekes across North America, and over 200,000 living TKE alumni around the world today.

# Purpose of the Public Relations Manual

The purpose of the Public Relations Manual is to provide your chapter with suggestions and ideas to present your chapter image in the best possible light. Each of your "publics" see your chapter and membership in a different light, based on prior experiences – making it sometimes difficult to gauge exactly what "light" they are seeing!

This PR Manual is essential to the complete success of the chapter. It not only attracts new candidates, keeps members informed and active, but it interprets our Fraternity to

our publics and stakeholders – ultimately building better support for the vision, mission and purpose of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity.

Chapters are not expected to adopt all of the suggestions presented – they are simply PR

## What is Public Relations?

**P**ublic Relations, simply put – make up our reputation. Our reputation is what people think about us. What people think about us determines whether they speak favorably or unfavorably about our members, our chapters, and our Fraternity.

**A favorable reputation is our most valuable asset.** It determines whether a prospective man becomes a member, personally subscribes to our “Declaration of Principles,” remains a Life Loyal Teke in our Bond, supports our programs, contributes to our successes, accepts fraternity life as a meaningful and permanent part of the institution and community, and values our brotherhood as a member of the Interfraternity world.

This favorable reputation does not evolve because we serve a noble cause as fraternity men or because we are an established organization. It does not just appear because we are wealthy in material assets, influential in community or academic circles, or are the world’s largest fraternity – although the latter is encouraged for other beneficial results.

A favorable reputation is created only because we successfully communicate to others our virtues of Love, Charity and Esteem. The plan, the projects and the process in achieving this goal are what make a public relations program! Our public relations program can affect our Fraternity’s personality and public image. It is an individual and collective responsibility – everything we do, say or promote, or that happens to us affects our public image as well as our internal and external relations.

## Why Public Relations? Why Now?

**H**ow we share our good actions and principles with others lies within an effective public relations plan – which also depends heavily upon the calculated recruitment of high-caliber men and sound risk management policies. A positive image, public perception of that image, and how Fraters go about sharing their TKE experience with others are three key considerations that can either lead a chapter toward greatness or seal its fate.



This guide addresses presenting your image by adopting a “90/10” view of public relations. Because most “relations” with your publics are based on the behavior of individual members and chapters, these activities comprise 90 percent of public relations. Traditional publicity activities which communicate about behavior (i.e. news releases, public service announcements, speeches, banners, fliers, etc.) constitute only 10 percent of the entire realm of PR.

While public relations is often equated with news releases and television interviews, it is also true that most of your chapter’s public relations depends on individual behavior – anything

that anyone sees you doing, or even hears you saying will affect your image.

You have probably heard how actions speak louder than words. When dealing with your chapter's public relations, **your actions will directly affect your publics' attitudes.** In the most simplistic of definitions, public relations is everything that affects "public opinion" – from how a letter is written, to how your Fraters greet guests, and even how your Fraters conduct themselves in the classroom.

A consistent public relations program is absolutely essential to the complete success of the chapter. It not only attracts new candidates, keeps members informed and active, but it also enables our Fraternity to remain proactive in our efforts to inform and educate the general public about the objectives and efforts of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity. The key to maintaining positive public relations is to **control your PR before it controls you!** All public relations programs need to be *proactive* rather than *reactive*. Building better relationships with both the campus and community often alleviates the negative impact that individual behavior may have.

It's important to remember that effective public relations plans don't happen by chance nor do they simply materialize overnight; they require time, effort and forethought. In addition to creating a proactive and solid chapter PR strategy for working with the media and chapter publics, it is imperative for chapters to also develop an action plan either at or before the start of each school year that maps out social events, philanthropic activities and other notable happenings in the chapter (Founder's Day, Rush, RCB, Greek Week, elections, etc.).

It is also important to note that *Public Relations* are not the same as *Publicity*. Our Public Relations is *who we are and what we do every day*. "Publicity" is the spreading of information and what we or others may say about us as a result (such as the distribution of fliers, Rush t-shirts, etc.). As a fraternal organization, we use communication skills to improve public understanding and build support for our principles, programs, and goals.

## **Public Relations Chairman & Committee – Qualities & Responsibilities**

**T**he key to an effective public relations program lies in the selection of the chapter's Public Relations Chair, or chapter Vice President (Epiprytanis) if no PR chair has been established. As chair of the public relations committee, this Frater should be a friendly, energetic, impartial, enthusiastic and assertive member – fully capable of serving as the chapter spokesperson in both times of celebration and times of crisis when the chapter Prytanis is not immediately available.

The election or appointment of the Public Relations Chair should be taken seriously by the chapter. An effective Public Relations Chair can motivate the chapter and help develop a more positive image. The PR chair who simply does nothing with his office will leave his chapter stagnant – with little positive outlook for its future.

The duties and responsibilities of the PR Chairman:

- ✓ Be sure you are always up to date with events and activities of the chapter. It is your responsibility to know everything that is going on. This requires attendance

at all meetings and communicating regularly with the executive board – with special consideration given to the chapter Prytanis.

- ✓ Develop and facilitate a 24/7/365 PR Campaign. Remember – effective public relations should be a continual effort at all times – not just in times of crises.
- ✓ Find creative and innovative ways to promote your chapter’s activities to the public.
- ✓ Help educate chapter members on the methods of effective public relations.
- ✓ Contribute regularly to the chapter’s newsletter.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with the Offices of the Grand Chapter on chapter PR initiatives, questions and concerns.
- ✓ Hold educational workshops for all chapter members to inform and discuss the qualities of an effective PR program, and sustaining a positive public image.
- ✓ Keep a current and up-to-date list of media contacts for promotional purposes.
- ✓ Keep a PR file for your successor! Nothing can be worse for a new officer than to have to start from scratch every year because of careless record-keeping!

The Public Relations Chair and his committee are charged with promoting and maintaining the proper image of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity. These Fraters are also responsible for maintaining good relations with other campus organizations – primarily social Greek-letter organizations, campus administrators and other community interests, to name a few.





**WORKING THAT  
PR ANGLE**



# Informing the Public

The phrase, *"You are always wearing your letters – even when you don't wear them"* is commonplace when considering the development of organizational image and public perception with today's fraternity members.



This past decade has been a period of great accomplishment for many TKE chapters and colonies, and there has been an abundance of press coverage attesting to how TKE Fraters continue to go "above and beyond" in the name of the Bond. As many of our brothers and sisters in the fraternal world know, there can never be enough good news to share with others about the "Greek experience."

Facts and figures show that social fraternities and sororities are the largest, and most visible, values-based organizations on today's college campus; all while recording 10 million hours of volunteer service annually (source: North-American Interfraternity Conference). These are just a few statistics which speak volumes of what the Greek experience – the Teke experience – is all about: cornerstone principles of scholarship, character, leadership, teamwork, service and brotherhood.

Each year should be seen as a new beginning for chapter officer transition and the turning of a new leaf in our leadership. With these changes come new ideas and different directions for our chapters. Reflecting back upon the history of TKE, a question to ask is, "How did we get the good word out about Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity?"

All too often, TKE chapters do great things in the community that go unreported. In order to properly inform the public about the numerous contributions of the chapter, it is up to the chapter's Public Relations Chair, as well as the general membership, to promote all positive aspects of the TKE experience and fraternity life in general. This may include: chapter community service events, donations to charities, high scholastic achievement and members or alumni who are leaders in both the community and Fraternity.

To help manage the development of a positive image through sharing the TKE experience, before anything else – a timetable should be created. By developing an all-inclusive plan early on, the chapter is more likely to prevent complications, thus avoiding a hectic scramble for last-minute preparations. An effective method in creating a chapter action plan is to lay out a large blank calendar for the coming year; it is much easier to have plans and procedures written down on paper, making them visible and tangible for members, officers, alumni and advisors alike.

# Your Target Publics

If your chapter does not know who your target publics are, it is very difficult for you to have any sort of public "relations" with them! Your chapter's overall publics are any person or group with whom you come in contact. Recognizing those publics who have the greatest impact on your chapter is important when identifying your "target" publics.

However, it is also important to note that your internal public relations need to be in top order before you approach your external target publics. Nothing can be more frustrating for a PR chair/committee than spending countless hours working on building relationships with external publics or planning an event, to only have the efforts brought down by the careless actions of a few members.

Here is a sample list of "Target Publics":

- Members
- Candidates
- Other TKE chapters
- Alumni
- Parents
- Non-Greek Students/Prospective Candidates
- Other Greek Organizations
- Administration/Faculty
- Guests in the Chapter House
- Chapter Employees
- Business Contacts & Vendors
- The Media
- Community/Neighbors/City/Officials
- Regional Consultants/Tau Kappa Epsilon Professional Staff
- Charities/The Alzheimer's Association's Ronald & Nancy Reagan Research Institute

This list is not all-inclusive, but it is important to keep in mind that positive public relations require a building block process. It begins with good personal reputations and continues with strong internal public relations.

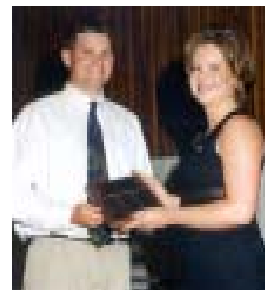
From this list, your PR committee should set realistic goals which include involving specific public relations approaches that will reach each of your target publics. Plan to achieve your goal within a set amount of time (quarter, semester, year), and schedule a yearly calendar with dates and deadlines ... and stick to them!

## Building a Positive Image With Your Publics

There are many things both individuals and chapters can do to create positive public relations with various segments of your publics. A list of some of these activities follows:

### Members

- 1) Develop an awards program. Make presentations at a formal banquet or chapter dinner.
- 2) Develop a chapter phone tree. This keeps out-of-house members informed.
- 3) Develop a chapter newsletter. It keeps members informed and serves as a back-up to meetings.
- 4) Host a chapter retreat or brotherhood experience weekend.
- 5) Have guest speakers. Utilize professors and staff at your



school! Topics may include: study skills, current events, dress for success, interviewing tips, or etiquette.

## Candidates

- 1) DON'T HAZE. **EVER.**
- 2) Have candidates serve on committees. Get them involved early and keep them involved!
- 3) Help them with their studies and adjusting to college life.

## Other TKE Chapters

- 1) Executive retreats: invite neighboring chapter officers to a retreat, leadership workshop or planning session to share ideas ... after all, we're all in this together!
- 2) Regional conferences: attend any and all regional activities made available to your chapter (RLC's & PEC's).
- 3) Activities/events: invite other chapters for a social event, softball game, or athletic event where teams from both schools are playing.
- 4) Conclave: attend any and all events sponsored by TKE headquarters. Stay in touch with neighboring chapters, as there could be ways to travel together to save money.
- 5) When visiting other chapter houses, treat their house and their members as you would your own. It is not gentlemanly, nor is it becoming of a Teke to "steal," damage or vandalize other TKE chapters' property. These men are your fellow Fraters – treat them as such.



## Alumni

- 1) Alumni newsletter.
- 2) Alumni Association: not a Board of Advisors or Housing Corporation, but simply an alumni chapter with the purpose of keeping the bonds of brotherhood alive after graduation.
- 3) Alumni big brother program: contact area alumni to spend one day a month with an undergraduate Frater. This can have a tremendous impact on both developing the undergraduate member while improving alumni contact with the chapter.
- 4) Alumni phone tree: sets up a system for personal calls to keep alumni Fraters informed of events and activities.

## Parents

- 1) Parents Day: plan activities of interest to parents. This might include a meal, tour of campus, attendance at an athletic event, etc.
- 2) Write letters to parents: every candidate or even potential candidate's parent(s) should receive information explaining TKE, the benefits and costs of membership, our history and other information to help support the decision of their son.
- 3) Mothers/Fathers (or Parents) Association: many chapters have combined parents and alumni in their programming by inviting everyone to the Founders'

Day activities.

- 4) Parents Newsletter: it is nice to have a separate publication specifically for parents, but if funds are short, you can always send parents your alumni newsletter.

### **Non-Greek Students/Prospective Candidates**

- 1) Market items that get the TKE name and logo out in front of the general student population: calendars with important dates (rush included) with advertising to supplement costs, book covers, bookmarks, maps or directories. Make available to all students as a resource provided by Greeks.
- 2) Utilize the campus media. Advertise in the campus newspaper, have TKE materials included in registration/new student orientation packets, use press releases and public service announcements.
- 3) Sponsor scholarships for non-Greek students.
- 4) Open your chapter house. Utilize a "guest night" for campus-wide presentations. Invite residence hall students. Have an Open House or sponsor a pep rally. Offer your chapter house as a place for other organizations to use for a meeting.
- 5) Positive visibility. Again, watch your actions! Participate in new student orientation, help students move into residence halls, be involved in campus activities and clubs.
- 6) Sponsor an all-university scholarship for a needy student.

### **Other Greek Organizations**

- 1) Never speak unfavorably about, or give disrespect to other fraternities. Unfair criticism and mudslinging show insecurity, weakness and fear more than anything. Such attitude leaves an atmosphere of unhealthy growth in your chapter and the Fraternity. First and foremost, Tekes are gentlemen at all times.
- 2) Recruit cleanly, fairly and positively! Nothing can create more ill-will among fraternities than dirty, cut-throat recruiting.
- 3) Be involved in IFC.
- 4) Sponsor functions with different fraternities and sororities.
- 5) Send different groups congratulatory cards, sympathy cards and "welcome back" cards – this is always good communication.
- 6) Observe other fraternity/sorority Founders' Days: send an anniversary card to other fraternities and sororities on their Founders Day.
- 7) Send your newsletter to other Greeks.
- 8) Start a Greek newspaper or newsletter for the entire Greek system and other students/faculty/administration.
- 9) Don't steal or vandalize property – we cannot gain respect from others when we disrespect them.
- 10) Sponsor a tutoring/mentoring program.

### **Administration & Faculty**

- 1) Use faculty as advisors.
- 2) Watch your conduct in the classroom.
- 3) Use "Guest Night" to invite a faculty member or administrator to speak to your chapter.
- 4) Have a "Faculty Appreciation" dinner. It's good to combine this with the chapter scholarship banquet, presenting an excellent opportunity for the faculty to see the

emphasis Takes place on academics.

- 5) Organize events with faculty. A Faculty vs. Takes softball game, for example, offers the chance to meet faculty in a casual setting. Another opportunity is to co-sponsor a philanthropic event, such as the Alzheimer's Association. These make excellent press!
- 6) Send copies of your newsletter to select faculty.
- 7) Use positive visibility at university events.
- 8) Attend regularly-scheduled meetings with the Greek Advisor (you should meet at least once a month).
- 9) Sponsor a reception to introduce the Greek Advisor to your members.

### **Guests in the Chapter House**

- 1) Do not ignore strangers!
- 2) If a person walks around for five minutes before being greeted, s/he will have a negative impression of the chapter. Every member should be prepared to greet and welcome guests. Remember, do not greet them and then leave them alone!
- 3) Give a tour of your house. Include a brief history of TKE, your chapter, etc. Have all members practice and be able to conduct such a tour.
- 4) Have a registry book. Names and addresses help if you'd like to contact visitors later.
- 5) Develop souvenirs. TKE-approved vendors have several items that can be purchased for a reasonable price (t-shirts, key chains, pens, mugs, etc.).

### **Chapter Employees**

- 1) Pay all employees on time!
- 2) Study employee relations: there are many laws and practices in employment situations. Time off, sick days, breaks, benefits, notices – all can affect the relationship between the chapter and an employee. Know the law.
- 3) Personal contact. Be friendly to all employees.
- 4) Always maintain a professional relationship. If employees are treated in a professional manner, they will respond in a professional manner.

### **Business Contacts and Vendors**

- 1) Send greeting cards during the Holidays.
- 2) Develop a personal contact, particularly when dealing with large companies; this is especially important in dealing with food suppliers.
- 3) Operate professionally. Late payments, last-minute requests and poor communication can result in bad relations.
- 4) Avoid long-term contracts. Since chapter officers generally serve no more than one year, they should not enter into long-term contracts.

### **The Media**

- 1) Co-sponsor philanthropic events by having radio stations and newspapers do a philanthropic project with you, you'll get extra exposure in their medium.
- 2) Send press releases and public service announcements.
- 3) Advertise and promote upcoming chapter events with a small ad, or utilize display cases in your student center, and use the all-campus access channel (as many of these are free of charge).

## **The Community/Neighbors/City Officials**

- 1) Sponsor or develop a neighborhood watch program.
- 2) Notify neighbors of any late events in advance. Better yet, keep the noise down after 11 p.m.
- 3) Have a block party or picnic. This provides a good way to meet your neighbors on an even basis. A personal acquaintance will help in case of any problems later.
- 4) *DO NOT LITTER*. Keep the chapter grounds clean and mowed.
- 5) Do community service regularly and let others know you're doing it!
- 6) Attend city council meetings often, not just when problems occur.
- 7) Participate in local elections by registering chapter members to vote.
- 8) Assist with voter registration in your area by manning booths.
- 9) Invite the chief of police or mayor to a chapter dinner.
- 10) Sponsor a "You and the Law" program, using local lawyers, judges and police officers as speakers.

## **Regional Consultant/Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity Professional Staff**

- 1) Communicate in a timely manner. Send in chapter reports on time or call and inform your regional chapter services staff and say when they will be sent.
- 2) Be a good host for chapter visits by your Regional Consultants.
- 3) Cooperate! Take advantage of the resources, networking and accumulated knowledge at the OGC.

## **Charities/The Alzheimer's Association's Ronald & Nancy Reagan Research Institute**

TKE is part of the community, and we want to be a good citizen. We have grown significantly since our founding in 1899. We are proud to say that Tau Kappa Epsilon is the largest international social fraternity and an integral part of over 270 campus communities throughout the United States and Canada. We must continually strive to recognize our community responsibility which this leadership has obliged us to uphold.

For generations, our TKE Fraters have been known as good neighbors and good citizens. Our goal is to continue this tradition for those generations of Tekes to follow! Only being a good neighbor where your chapter house is located is not good enough. As you already



know, there are numerous opportunities for your chapter to get out the good name of TKE in your campus and city communities. A key to an effective community service initiative is remembering not to over-program your members with philanthropies and service work.

While each charity or non-profit organization has an identifiable need, it is most effective for your chapter to focus on planning/implementing one or two "large" fundraising events for the year, and participate in several campus-wide service events to show your support of the community.

In 2001, Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity set a goal to raise \$240,000 over a three-year period for the Alzheimer's Association's Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Institute. Through this fund-raising effort, the Fraternity is sponsoring a research project of Dr. Desmond J. Smith, Bm, BCh, PhD at UCLA. Dr Smith's project is one of several Alzheimer studies included in the

Association's Ronald & Nancy Reagan Research Institute. The Reagan Research Institute is not a physical structure, but a special portfolio of research grants funded by the Alzheimer's Association.

The collection of research projects serves as a paradigm for a key principle of the entire research effort – a commitment to cutting-edge, basic science and to exploring the broadest possible spectrum of approaches to developing Alzheimer's treatments.

TKE chose to support the Alzheimer's Association and sponsor this particular project within the Reagan Research Institute in tribute to Frater President Reagan, who announced his diagnosis with Alzheimer's disease in 1994.

Make sure your philanthropy committee raises funds for our national charity, the Alzheimer's Association's Ronald & Nancy Reagan Research Institute.

*"Not only are we giving something back to a Frater who gave so much during his lifetime to TKE, but we are affecting the lives of thousands and thousands of people across the land who suffer from this dreadful disease."*

– Mark Romig, Grand Prytanis

Remember, in order for your chapter to be given credit for your philanthropy efforts: all donations must be sent to the Offices of the Grand Chapter at the address below.

Please contact Justin Kirk if you have any questions:

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# Public Relations Tools

It is important to create a list of chapter fraternity supplies and materials which the PR Chairman and committee members will use frequently in their PR program. These materials can be ordered at low cost or no charge from the Offices of the Grand Chapter.

- Redefining Fraternity materials
- TKE Decals
- TKE Official Letterhead
- TKE Envelopes
- TKE Certificates for awards
- Song Book
- Red Carnations
- TKE Apparel



## TKE Apparel

T-shirts can be one of the most potentially explosive areas of chapter visibility. Most Greek t-shirts represent major parties, events, philanthropies, recruitment and other aspects of Greek life. Avoid any suggestion or hint of racist, sexual or alcohol-related implications.

If you are ever unsure whether a t-shirt design is acceptable, consider these points:

- Is it consistent with the ideals and objectives of Tau Kappa Epsilon?
- Are there references to alcohol in the picture, logo or slogan? **There should be none.**
- Would the slogan or pictures be seen as offensive to a minority group?
- What would different segments of the public think of the shirt?
- Are women and men portrayed with proper dignity and respect?

Remember that our fraternity emblems – name, letters, and coat of arms are copyrighted. Distributors who use them improperly and without permission are subject to legal action.

## Chapter House/Meeting Room/Dorm

No fraternity has a \$250,000 mansion on every campus, and regardless if your chapter has a small frame, made-over private residence, a wing in a dorm, a lodge on campus, or the show-place of fraternity row, part of our PR image is physical. How does your Teke chapter house look from the street? Is it unkept? Is the grass overgrown? Paint peeling? Window screens missing? Does it look like a fraternity house?

Regardless of the size, shape or original cost of your chapter house, there is no excuse for sloppy housekeeping!

Be sure the TKE Triangle door plaque, sign or TKE letters are kept in repair and are visible at all times to identify the house. The porch or patio should remain well-lit at night, the sign or TKE letters illuminated, and address number clearly visible from the street.



- Be sure a recent and flattering photo of your house is used in all media: IFC, campus to institutional publications, and THE TEKE magazine. Take at least six good views, preferably an 8" x 10" glossy black and white. Photos should be taken regularly to show any change, remodeling or if you relocate to another facility. Send sets of photographs to the editorial staff of THE TEKE magazine. Include a variety of informal indoor shots that can be used in THE TEKE magazine, The Teke Guide, and other fraternity publications, and a color exterior shot as well.
- Hang a framed poster of "The Objectives of Tau Kappa Epsilon" and a framed collage of TKE treasures which clearly display Love, Charity, and Esteem.
- Be sure the TKE chapter house has a fraternity atmosphere, even though it may not have originally been built for that purpose. In addition to your trophy case, scrapbooks and the like, hang framed pictures of your prominent alumni, athletes, past Prytani, Grand Officers, Homecoming floats, and decorations in various rooms.
- Correct the "animal house" image by having a chapter where you would be proud to invite your parents, campus administrators and others to sit and stay awhile. Correct the hazing image by removing symbolic paddles unless they are trophy remembrances, and never display them prominently!
- Be sure to set aside a room or shelves in the den for a Chapter Library and stock it with texts and reference books. Every TKE chapter house should have a library and it should be well used. Honor your Phi Beta Kappa, Order of Omega and other outstanding scholars with framed pictures. One TKE chapter converted an old party room into a library with over 200 volumes!
- Honor your distinguished alumni by naming the chapter room, den or library in their memory. If your individual rooms are numbered, name them instead after prominent alumni, and hang a framed picture of them in the room.
- Fly the TKE Flag, especially on all special and fraternity-wide occasions. There is only one official TKE Flag, and if your chapter does not have the approved version, you should order one from the Offices of the Grand Chapter without delay. The U.S. and Canadian flags should also be properly displayed on these occasions.

The logo consists of a grey, stylized arrow pointing to the right, with the letters 'TKF' in white inside it.

# **COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA**

# Contacting the Media

Once the chapter has mapped out the upcoming year and identified opportunities to share the TKE experience with others, members should then identify the target media and target audience for events and activities. In addition to notifying the Offices of the Grand Chapter, “target media” also might include: a university, regional, or suburban newspaper; local radio station(s); cable access channels; media that specialize covering one specific topic, such as volunteerism or athletics; or local television station(s).

A familiar criticism of the news media is that they disregard positive fraternity-related stories in favor of those which are damaging or sensational. In larger communities, noteworthy fraternal causes and events often compete with scandal, crime, or politics for a brief mention in the news, if any mention at all. Yet, fraternity-related stories that are published in print or appear on television have several factors in common: they are timely and possess a relevant interest to the greater community.

However, the good news of a chapter can make an even greater story if it fits the needs of journalists and reporters in the community. When considering newsworthy activities, make sure stories brought to the media are relevant to the larger community as well, not just TKE Fraters.

Just as businesses are intentional in marketing their products on a daily basis, Tekes must “sell” their experience to the public and media as well. Keeping informed and up to date with current events to see if there are any particular print columns or broadcast segments where a TKE story would fit is beneficial for media relevance, and also gives the chapter a greater chance of landing deserved coverage – thus increasing a positive public image and perception of what it means to be a fraternity man.

What types of chapter activities or projects interest reporters? What kinds of projects make great material for a news release? Experience shows the following Tau Kappa Epsilon stories are most effectively promoted:

- ✓ Outstanding members & alumni (succeeding in leadership, academics, business);
- ✓ The interaction of members & alumni and worthy causes (Alzheimer’s Association, community advocacy);
- ✓ Human-interest stories of individuals benefiting from Tau Kappa Epsilon chapter service.



There are several methods to approach when taking a TKE story to the media. Regardless of which method is chosen, it is important to be convincing, determined and gracious – not aggressive. The most effective method will often depend upon the journalist’s personal preferences as well.

When contacting media by phone, take into consideration journalists often prefer a *brief* description of the story or idea, along with some compelling reason of why it would interest their readers or viewers. During the conversation, reporters will typically inform the individual if they are interested, or if they need additional materials to research the story or idea.

Taking into consideration how faxes and emails have become an inexpensive and swift tool for effective public relations, this method may be most friendly to your budget. Keep in mind, however, that most reporters discourage faxes or emails that are unsolicited; in particular – those which are not sent in a timely fashion.

It is not uncommon for newsrooms to get bogged down with unwanted press releases from several organizations that are competing for the same coverage. Therefore, using eye-catching letterhead with a headline that sparks enough interest for the reporter to continue reading is ideal in making the difference between a chapter receiving the press it seeks and simply being nothing more than recycled paper in a trash receptacle.

Develop press releases that are both to the point and objective. Include a quote from a chapter officer or advisor, explaining the event or project as accurately as possible and limit the release to one or two pages. When sending a press release to a television station for broadcast coverage, think of the visual needs of the event or activity. Hands-on work, unusual events, and human interest narratives make for stories that can create a mental picture of the TKE experience for those individuals who are interested, yet unfamiliar, with this great Fraternity.

In maintaining effective public relations with the media, remember these helpful hints:

- ✓ Keep media contact lists up to date. Personalize materials as much as possible.
- ✓ Contact the media only with newsworthy story ideas.
- ✓ Contact media one or two weeks in advance of the date the event occurs.
- ✓ Call reporters during times other than deadline (mornings are usually best).
- ✓ When speaking to reporters, be brief and stick to the point.
- ✓ Know your story and anticipate possible questions.
- ✓ Avoid asking reporters if they received your release or if they intend to use it.
- ✓ Send background materials immediately following contact (chapter & TKE history, etc.).
- ✓ Be available – appoint an informed member (Prytanis, chapter PR chair, AA president, or Chapter Advisor) to be available to take journalists' calls should they need more information or want to check a fact for accuracy.
- ✓ Always know and work within a reporter's deadlines.
- ✓ When sending out information to the media, make sure chapter members are informed.

These are a few basic tips when creating a proactive public relations plan and dealing directly with the media. Keep in mind that each media contact is a unique opportunity to tell the great story of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity and sharing the TKE experience! Therefore, when a reporter calls, there is no need to panic – work with them, use them, and turn them into an ally for both the chapter and the Fraternity.

Send press releases to the editors of local news, industry newspapers, radio talk shows, magazines, radio and television stations, and Tau Kappa Epsilon Headquarters.

- The contact person is the individual who will be contacted by editors and others receiving the press release to get more information.

- Always include the date to give the release a sense of timeliness and urgency.
- The headline should read like a newspaper headline.
- Effective press releases sound newsworthy – not like an advertisement for your chapter or TKE.
- Mention the benefits of what your chapter is doing ... how is it helping the community? Why should readers care?
- Use your chapter or TKE letterhead.
- Keep press releases to one page if possible, or a maximum of two pages.
- Customize the press release to the audience you want to impact. Using TKE-specific words such as “Frater” or “Prytanis” will often confuse those who aren’t familiar with TKE terminology.
- Individuals mentioned in the text of a press release should be named only for the purpose of being quoted or mentioned in the body of the article.
- In general, make the press release user-friendly for the editor by including all the information he or she will need to create a story from your release. The easier it is for the editor to read and use the press release, the more likely it is that your news will be published.

## Sample Press Release

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 13, 2003**

**Contact: Heather N. Redeske, M.A.**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity**  
**(317) 872-6533, ext. 241**

### **TKE Kappa-Chi Chapter at Concordia University Goes Homeless to Help Quebec's Physically Disabled Gain Life Skills**

(MONTREAL) – Members of the Tau Kappa Epsilon Kappa-Chi chapter at Concordia University lived in boxes and begged on the streets of Montreal, benefiting the Action Centre, a drop-in day care facility for the physically disabled.

Raising over \$4,000 for the Action Centre, Kappa-Chi Tekes are in their 12<sup>th</sup> year of the annual "TEKE IN A BOX" philanthropy. Over the history of the event, several area charities have benefited from the giving of TKE members and the Montreal community.

"[The Action Centre] is a place where these individuals are taught various skills and develop a sense of self-esteem and usefulness in society. They receive absolutely no government funding," said Brent Thomas Gerchicoff, Kappa-Chi Chaplain.

Each year, the members sleep outside for 36 hours in a shelter built of wood, cardboard and other debris that can be found on the street. The Kappa-Chi members panhandle during this period of time around the streets and near the campus at Concordia University.

"TEKE IN A BOX" was originally created by the chapter to help homeless youth of Montreal find a new path so that one day they may return to a more stable environment. On any given night, many of the homeless youth who benefited from Kappa-Chi's efforts could be found panhandling or living on the streets, often choosing the streets over an abusive home environment.

"We at Kappa-Chi believe that our charity drive is the best way to dispel the stereotypes and misconceptions of fraternities on campus and in the Montreal community," said Gerchicoff. "I am constantly proud of my brothers in their dedication. It makes a Frater proud to wear the TKE letters when I see my fellow brothers running around for spare change for this event."

With the assistance of local media, other fraternities on campus and the Montreal community, the charity drive is always met with great support and generosity from both the students and the general public. "Other organizations, such as Delta Phi Epsilon, always drop by with hot chocolate to keep us warm," Gerchicoff said.

Founded in 1899, Tau Kappa Epsilon is the world's largest social fraternity, with over 228,000 initiated members and more than 270 undergraduate chapters and colonies in the United States and Canada. The **TKE Vision** is to be the best lifelong collegiate social fraternity; the **TKE Mission** is to aid men in their mental, moral, and social development for life; and the **TKE Purpose** is to contribute to the advancement of society through the personal growth of our members, and service to others.

###

NEWS RELEASE  
(One word title)

RELEASE DATE: IMMEDIATE  
CONTACT: (Publicity Chair)  
  
(You're a/c & phone #)

(Headline)

*(City and State of release), (Date of Release) – (Event) will be held (date) to benefit the (group). The (college/university) chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon will hold the event in conjunction with (other sponsoring groups if any).*

(Elaborate on special or important information about the event, particularly date, time and place of the event, specific beneficiary program or persons, whether this is an annual project, etc.)

Founded in 1899, Tau Kappa Epsilon is the world's largest social fraternity, with over 230,544 initiated members and more than 270 undergraduate chapters and colonies in the United States and Canada. (Name) Chapter was founded in (year). The TKE Vision is to be the best lifelong collegiate social fraternity; the TKE Mission is to aid men in their mental, moral, and social development for life; and the TKE Purpose is to contribute to the advancement of society through the personal growth of our members, and service to others.

###

Date of release

## Explanation of a Press Release

#1 Contact Information

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← Quote

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↗  
Always end release with  
general Fraternity information

###



The logo consists of a grey, stylized triangle pointing to the right, with the letters 'TKF' in white inside it.

**TIMES OF CRISIS  
MANAGEMENT  
& PUBLIC  
RELATIONS**

# Taking Responsibility

Your chapter has worked hard all year, doing extensive volunteer projects to benefit others and proactively reaching out to the community, parents and alumni. However, this week, the new members decide to steal pumpkins off the front of porches from more than a dozen houses in the neighborhood and suddenly, your chapter is in the news. Shouldn't you be cut *some* slack, considering all of the good work you've done?

NO. It's as simple as that. Yes, the positive contributions you make all year round should be taken into consideration when something negative happens, but they can't be used as collateral on the loan of trust you are extended from your publics. Think about it. How many service hours does it take to make up for sending a candidate to the hospital with an alcohol overdose? The system just doesn't work that way. We should do good because it is the right thing to do. When we do bad, we need to take responsibility for our poor judgment and deal with the consequences in a responsible and mature manner.

# Media Exposure You Can Do Without

In the fraternal world, there are also too many instances where chapters receive negative media exposure for their actions or events that could have and should have been avoided, had members only considered the impact of the activity beforehand.

As difficult as it may seem to believe, the media is not "out to get you." Some reporters and journalists may have an unfavorable opinion of Greeks and will want to dig for dirt when there is a crisis, but most are objective and will try to report the facts. While reporters are supposed to remain objective, they are human; often influenced by the behavior of the people with whom they are dealing. If you are rude, or are trying to "spin" the facts, they are unlikely to report about you fairly.

Beware, however, of getting too friendly. A reporter's primary job is to report the full story. Don't become so comfortable with a reporter that you start telling things the reporter does not have to know. Remember: nothing is EVER "off the record." A good practice to live by is that if you tell anything of importance, they will probably use it, on or off record.



One component of public relations is crisis communication and risk management. The chapter Public Relations Chair and Pylortes (or Risk Management Chair) should have a solid working relationship with each other. Should a crisis occur within the chapter or with a member, these Fraters will often be the "go to" guys to communicate to the chapter risk management, public relations and crisis communication policies and procedures.

Unfortunately, there are also times when chapters are suddenly faced with responding to a crisis or risk management issue when they are ill-equipped to deal with the situation in an efficient and strategic manner (usually due to the lack of proper planning). The integration of a crisis communication strategy is imperative for the successful operations of chapters and Board of Advisors alike.

More often than not, when thinking about the fraternity experience, chapters and members rarely anticipate dealing firsthand with fires, serious injuries, sexual assaults, suicides or deaths. The use of case scenarios and frequent chapter discussions of “what-ifs” as membership training tools should be just as much an educational commonplace in the chapter and taken just as seriously as recruitment or Ritual.

Keeping consistent with the idea that a crisis is a fluid series of events, the response a chapter gives to the crisis must be thoroughly evaluated. For chapters, it often becomes a difficult task to simultaneously understand the crisis while keeping the public informed of the proceedings as well. For any organization, determining when to break the news about a crisis is also crucial in maintaining some sort of control over the circumstances at hand.

Effectively managing a crisis in the chapter is not only vital to the operation of the organization, but also to the perception by which the media and the chapter’s publics view the chapter as well.

The following is a crisis management plan designed as an aid for Fraters and TKE chapters in the event of a crisis or risk management situation. Crisis and risk management is much more than just dealing with a crisis; it is stopping or avoiding a crisis as well. It is also about crisis prevention, planning for a crisis, and damage control after a crisis. A chapter emergency situation may be prompted by any of the following occurrences:

- ✓ An accident resulting in severe or fatal injuries, sexual assaults or domestic disputes, or a member attempting or committing suicide.
- ✓ A fire or explosion in the fraternity chapter facility.
- ✓ Substantial damage to the chapter facility caused by storms, floods, or tornadoes.
- ✓ Deliberate damage to the chapter facility from malicious mischief, sabotage, fighting or riots.
- ✓ Chapter member(s) or the entire chapter being accused of violating local, state, federal, or university/college laws, rules, and regulations.

There may be other types of emergencies, which are not identified specifically above. When an event like this occurs, it can do irreparable damage to the future of the chapter, the Greek community, and Tau Kappa Epsilon if not handled correctly.

These widely-used guidelines should assist the chapter in dealing with and managing a crisis in the most effective and efficient way and put the chapter on the track towards normal operations.

As a matter of chapter policy, you should completely ban any activity that runs the risk of unnecessary publicity, misunderstanding or disrespect. Even though it may not readily appear to you or other Fraters as damaging to your reputation, chances are – it will be.

# Bad Image Makers

- Ditching actives or candidates, anywhere at anytime!
- Bonfires and spontaneous rallies that get out of control.
- Water fights, rough housing, and Inter-Greek pranks.
- Pranks with shaving cream, flour or paint.
- Panty raids, stealing, or scavenger hunts.
- Use of paddles for ANY purpose.
- Improper conduct at any place, at any time.
- Raids or destructive trips to nearby chapters or campuses.
- Rush and special event t-shirts, fliers or invites that display messages and/or images of poor taste.
- Theme parties with inappropriate/sexist/racist overtones (“Pimps-n-Ho’s,” “Run for the Border,” “Trailer Trash Bash,” “Ghetto Party,” etc.).



Remember, this list is not all-inclusive. Oftentimes, media exposure with fraternities heightens when there has been a tragedy or high-risk incident, often associated with alcohol and hazing. When addressing this particular topic, it is not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing – if you use common sense and ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Is alcohol involved?
- 2) Will active/associate members of the group refuse to participate with the new members and do exactly what they've asked the new guys to do?
- 3) Does the activity increase the risk of emotional or physical abuse?
- 4) Is there a risk of injury or a question of safety?
- 5) Do you have any reservation describing the activity to your parents, to a professor or university official?
- 6) Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV crew?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” then the activity is probably hazing.

(Adapted from *Death By Hazing*, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 1988)

## It Can Happen to You ...

A portion of this guide is devoted to the prevention of crises. Yet, we must be prepared to react quickly and effectively should the unforeseen happen.

### Educate members before a crisis:

- **Review procedures in the membership development program.** The first priority should be the health and safety of each member, and the chapter in general. All members must know who is in charge and be prepared to follow instructions.
- **The Prytanis should take charge of an emergency situation.** The Prytanis may, and perhaps should, consult with other members who possess more expertise or insight. The final decision, however, must rest with the Prytanis.

- **If the Prytanis is absent, the next highest-ranked officer is in charge.** All chapter officers should know where to find a copy of the chapter's emergency procedures.

### Initial steps:

- 1) **The Prytanis** (or next in line) **takes charge.**
- 2) Always first **call emergency number(s)**, usually 9-1-1, so appropriate emergency personnel (police, fire, ambulance) can respond.
- 3) **Close the chapter house at once.** The Prytanis cannot give instructions and maintain control if members are leaving and strangers are entering. Only allow your members and appropriate officials to enter. Assign one or more responsible members to calmly guard the door.
- 4) **Notify your Chapter Advisor.**
- 5) **Notify Headquarters** – (317) 872-6533 – A member of the Headquarters staff will contact you to assist with the situation.
- 6) **Assemble your members in a group** (in case of fire, assemble outside, in front near the street).
- 7) Explain there is an emergency, but that it is under control.
- 8) Remind members that only the Prytanis or Chapter Advisor can speak for the Fraternity – members are not to speak to anyone about the crisis.
- 9) Do not discuss details, speculate on events or otherwise elaborate on the situation. Often, litigation follows crisis. Statements made could later be used in court.
- 10) **Contact appropriate campus officials.**
- 11) **Fully cooperate with appropriate authorities.**



### Dealing with the media:

- If contacted, only the Prytanis or Chapter Advisor should speak for the chapter.
- Avoid “**no comment**” as it leads to speculation. Instead, make a simple statement: ***We are aware that an incident occurred and are cooperating fully with the police and university officials who are investigating the matter.***
- Keep repeating the above statement if you are pursued further. Do not give in because you are asked the same question several different ways.
- Never release names or admit fault / liability.


### Serious injury or death of a member:

- **DO NOT NOTIFY THE PARENTS.** Medical or police personnel who are trained in this will notify the family. You should always have parent/guardian information on file available to proper authorities. After you know that the family has been notified, it is appropriate for a chapter representative to call and share your concern.
- In the event of a death, do not remove any personal items from the room. Do not let members enter the room. Allow only authorized personnel to enter the room. If possible, keep the door locked. Ask the family what their

wishes are in regard to the member's possessions. You may offer to pack them in boxes, but it is more likely that the family will want to do this themselves. Before they arrive, be sure that any borrowed items are returned. When the family arrives, have empty boxes available and offer your help. Understand that this is a difficult time for them and they may want privacy.

- Coordinate member attendance at the funeral or memorial service. Along with your Chapter Advisor, discuss with the family or the family's clergyman the possibility of conducting Tau Kappa Epsilon's memorial service, which is available through Headquarters.
- In the case of serious injury or illness, find out the visitation wishes of the family and coordinate this with members of the chapter.
- Teams outside your chapter may want to help. Headquarters should coordinate the appropriate responses.

**An Incident Report Form should be filled out and sent to Headquarters within 24 hours of the incident.**

The logo consists of a grey, stylized triangle pointing to the right, with the letters 'TKF' in white inside it.

**APPENDIX**

# ALUMNI PROFILE

Help update our chapter membership records with current and complete information. Please return this form along with photos of you and your family, and include a business card.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Mailing Address (circle one):      Home              Office

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife's Name (please include maiden name): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

News that may be of interest to your fellow Fraters: \_\_\_\_\_

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What is your favorite memory about Tau Kappa Epsilon: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please feel free to add any other information. Please return to the address listed on the newsletter. Thank you!*



# SORORITY FOUNDERS DAY PRESENTATION

One great way to recognize sororities on their Founders Day is to give them a short presentation about their history. The Public Relations Chairman needs to call the president of the sorority a week ahead of time in order to set up a time to present to the chapter. Before presenting, be sure to go to the sorority headquarters Web site and research some of their history. Rally up the public relations committee to dress in suits and present the flowers to the sorority. Below is a sample presentation:

"Good evening ladies. One hundred and twenty-five years ago, five women came together at the University of \_\_\_\_\_ in order to form the sorority you are a part of today. They formed this sorority on the principles of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We are certain that your founders would be very proud to see that you ladies are now a part of that wholesome tradition, and have done a wonderful job preserving their integrity. The men of Tau Kappa Epsilon are honored to have you on this campus, and we look forward to sharing many more memories with you. Happy Founders Day!"



## Women's Fraternity Flowers & Founding Dates

### *National Panhellenic Conference (NPC)*

Alpha Chi Omega	Scarlet Carnation	October 15, 1885
Alpha Delta Pi	Purple Violet	May 15, 1851
Alpha Epsilon Phi	Lily-of-the-Valley	October 24, 1909
Alpha Gamma Delta	Red and Buff Roses	May 30, 1904
Alpha Omicron Pi	Jaqueminot Rose	January 2, 1897
Alpha Phi	Forget-me-Not & Lily-of-the-Valley	October 10, 1872
Alpha Sigma Alpha	Narcissus & Aster	November 15, 1901
Alpha Sigma Tau	Yellow Rose	November 4, 1899
Alpha Xi Delta	Pink Rose	April 17, 1893
Chi Omega	White Carnation	April 5, 1895
Delta Delta Delta	Pansy	Thanksgiving Eve, 1888
Delta Gamma	Cream Rose	December, 1873
Delta Phi Epsilon	Iris	March 17, 1917
Delta Zeta	Pink Rose	October 24, 1902
Gamma Phi Beta	Pink Carnation	November 11, 1874
Kappa Alpha Theta	Black & Gold Pansy	January 27, 1870
Kappa Delta	White Rose	October 23, 1897
Kappa Kappa Gamma	Fleur-de-Lis	October 13, 1870
Phi Mu	Rose Carnation	January 4, 1852
Phi Sigma Sigma	American Beauty Rose	November 26, 1913
Pi Beta Phi	Wine Carnation	April 28, 1898
Sigma Delta Tau	Tea Rose	March 25, 1917
Sigma Kappa	Violet	November 9, 1874
Sigma Sigma Sigma	Purple Violet	April 20, 1898
Theta Phi Alpha	White Rose	August 30, 1912
Zeta Tau Alpha	White Violet	October 15, 1898

*National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)*

Alpha Kappa Alpha  
Delta Sigma Theta  
Sigma Gamma Rho  
Zeta Phi Beta

Tea Rose  
Violet  
Tea Rose  
White Rose

January 16, 1908  
January 13, 1913  
November 12, 1922  
January 16, 1920

# Credits

This manual, first printed in 1965, is a publication of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity Programs Department. In its fourth revised edition, the TKE PR Manual was drafted by Heather Redeske, Director of Communications.

Many chapters conduct highly successful PR practices. But, there are literally hundreds of other others that we do not know about! The Offices of the Grand Chapter want a description of your successful PR practices! Provide brief, written examples of your PR practices and events, with newspaper clippings (if appropriate) and photographs of the event.

Send examples of your chapter's best public relations practices to the Offices of the Grand Chapter in a timely manner to be considered for special chapter recognition through national press releases and THE TEKE magazine!

We would like to thank the College Fraternity Editor's Association, Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity and Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity for adaptations of public relations best practices.