

## Public Relations Defined

First, exactly what is PR? Here are some descriptions of Public Relations:

*Public Relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.*

▣ "Effective Public Relations" by Scott Cutlip, Allen Center & Glen Broom

**"The purpose of public relations in its best sense is to inform and to keep minds open...."**

▣ John W. Hill

*"Good or bad, every organization has a reputation. Public relations helps you manage that reputation."*

▣ Dawn McDowell

**"Public Relations is a planned and systematic two-way communication process to encourage public involvement and earn public understanding and support."**

▣ National Chapter Public Relations Association

*"Public relations affects almost everyone who has contact with other human beings. All of us, in one way or another, practice public relations daily. For an organization, every phone call, every letter, every face-to-face encounter is a public relations event."*

▣ "The Practice of Public Relations" by Fraser P. Seitel

In a nutshell, public relations is communicating with people, relating to the public, and building relationships. The GOAL of good PR is to connect with the community by building positive relationships and promoting two-way communication.

## **Tools of the Trade**

- ❖ News Releases  
Print: newspapers and magazines; broadcast: radio and TV
- ❖ Public Service Announcements  
Print: Newspapers and magazines; broadcast: radio and TV
- ❖ Media Advisories
- ❖ Fact sheets
- ❖ Photographs (a picture is worth 1000 words!)
- ❖ Letters to the Editor
- ❖ Op-ed pieces
- ❖ Interviews/Features
- ❖ Chapter newsletters
- ❖ Special events such as conferences or 5Ks
- ❖ Web sites
- ❖ E-Mail
- ❖ Audiovisual materials such as PowerPoint presentations
- ❖ News Conferences

## **NINE STEPS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PLANNING**

### **1. Establish a public relations role in your chapter.**

This is the easiest step in the process! At all times, the chapter leadership must be committed to the PR function. PR must be given the same importance given to leadership development, membership, and other chapter roles.

### **2. Define the objectives of the public relations program.**

What do you hope to accomplish? A good tool to define objectives is a chapter officers' brain-storming session. This will result in objectives the leadership is committed to supporting.

### **3. Define your publics or target audiences.**

Who do you wish to reach with your message? Current members, potential members, young alumni, general community, and the media can all be target audiences.

### **4. Define the message.**

What are the important issues? Identify these and know which audiences are concerned about what issues. Create clear, key messages that you wish to communicate. The message will vary depending on the audience.

### **5. Develop your strategy(ies).**

The strategies are a key element of your plan. These are your tools used to reach your target markets and convey your messages, as well as forming the basis of your PR plan. a list of strategies might include:

- a. Continually develop public relations materials.
- b. Use a broad spectrum of media to convey the message.
- c. Build and develop media contacts.
- d. Work to position yourself as a credible, reliable source of information for the media.
- e. Work to position your president as a spokesperson for your chapter.
- f. Coordinate with other chapter board members.

### **6. Set goals.**

What do you want to accomplish through public relations? You may wish to:

- a. Build membership
- b. Change attitude or behavior
- c. Inform the publics about special events
- d. Recognize award winners
- e. Communicate scholarship opportunities
- a. Increase visibility in the community.
- b. Effectively promote Texas Exes programs.
- c. Enhance the image of your chapter.

### **7. Coordinate with other timetables or appropriate people.**

To be effective, you must be informed of what is happening within your chapter. Attend meetings, read communications such as emails and newsletters, and ask questions. Know

what your chapter has planned and know their timetable. You cannot communicate what you don't know about.

**8. Develop strategies and timelines.**

What strategies are required to achieve your communication goals? Develop a written plan that details actions needed, when. Prepare a PR calendar based on the chapter event calendar. Information should be sent to the media one to two weeks ahead of the event. Also, identify required resources and develop a budget.

**9. Implement the plan. Just do it!**

## HOW TO GET YOUR CHAPTER IN THE NEWS

- ❖ Look for a "hook" or a unique angle in a story. Reporters want to write stories about things that are one-of-a-kind or out-of-the-ordinary.
- ❖ Don't flood a reporter with reams of paper each week. Send items that are timely, interesting and newsworthy to the general public.
- ❖ Plan ahead. Send your news release to the media two weeks prior to your event.
- ❖ Telephone the day before the event as a gentle reminder. Ask for the assignment editor. Don't ask them to commit (they cannot), but just say you called to remind them and if they can cover your event, you'd be most appreciative.
- ❖ Respect a reporter's deadline. If he needs it by Monday, get it to him by Monday.
- ❖ Make sure your news releases are brief and concise; say what needs to be said, usually in two to five paragraphs.
- ❖ Radio is often overlooked. Talk/News radio stations are in great need of filling time. Contact them to see if your chapter president could do an interview on a morning show about an upcoming event, or if they would do a live remote from the location of your event. They may also want to be a media sponsor.
- ❖ Double-check your facts. It does no good if the media comes to your event on the wrong day or at the wrong time.
- ❖ Always be honest with a reporter. Lost credibility cannot be regained.
- ❖ Remember that every good reporter wants to get a story before the competition. To show that you're being fair with the timing of your news releases, distribute to all at the same time. Document when the releases were distributed.
- ❖ Tell a reporter when you believe he or she has done a good job on a story. Write a thank you note for coverage you received. Copy your letter to the general manager or the publisher.
- ❖ If your event is not "covered," attempt to gain post-event coverage. Modify your original release to summarize the activity. Again, specify who, what, when, where and why. Photos with captions and quotes by those involved help make the release interesting and increase its chance of being published. Send the photo electronically. Make sure you identify the chapter, date, event title and the names of who is pictured. Sometimes the photo will be published, but the release will not, so be sure that the caption can "stand alone."

## Sample Chapter Event Calendar

These are some events that a typical chapter might take part in during the year. Each one of these could garner publicity for your chapter and help to not only inform your community of what your chapter is doing, but also generate membership interest.

- ❖ **Game Watching Parties/Tailgates**
- ❖ **Scholarship Fundraiser**
- ❖ **Texas Independence Day – March 2**
- ❖ **Send-Off Celebration**
- ❖ **Business/Networking Events**

There are some really easy things you can do to get publicity for these events.

1. You can simply take a photo of your group and write a short caption for the photo then send it to your local paper. Many small town papers are looking for community news like this to share.
2. You can send out a news release prior to the event to try to get the media to come out and do a story on the event.
3. Even easier, you can simply make sure you post the event on any community calendars you can find so that people in your area know what you are doing.

We will be sending sample news releases out for these events throughout the year to help you get started on creating your own, so be on the look out!

## **Texas Exes Boiler Plate**

A boiler plate is a single paragraph that describes your organization and answers the basic questions like who, what, when, where and why. It is always the last paragraph in a press release and should always include your website. Below is the boiler plate for the Texas Exes. Please make sure it is at the bottom of every press release you send out. If you would like to include your chapter's membership number in there, you can do that as well.

The Texas Exes, the alumni association for The University of Texas, was founded in 1885. The mission of the Texas Exes is to unite, inform and involve alumni and friends for the purpose of promoting, protecting and preserving The University of Texas. Today there are around 90,000 members whom the association strives to connect to each other and to the past, present, and future of the university through career counseling, travel, reunions, continuing education, fellowship, legislative advocacy in support of higher education, and *The Alcalde* magazine. For more information on Texas Exes or to become a member, please visit [www.TexasExes.org](http://www.TexasExes.org).

## Quick Fact Sheet

The Texas Exes Board of Directors has created a set of six pillars that define our role as the alumni association for The University of Texas. All of our programs and activities work to support these goals. The Texas Exes will:

- 1) Keep all alumni connected to UT through communication and involvement.
- 2) Promote legislative advocacy on behalf of the university.
- 3) Enhance the student experience through scholarships and involvement.
- 4) Preserve and enrich the history and traditions of the university.
- 5) Provide a welcoming physical environment (alumni center) for all alumni, faculty, staff, students, and the Austin community.
- 6) Maintain alumni records.

Facts about the alumni association:

-The 2009-2010 President is Rudy Garza. Garza earned his MBA from The University of Texas at Austin and his BBA from St. Edwards University. Garza is a native of Austin and a recognized Texas leader in the technology start-up industry. He started G-51 Capital in 1996, which mentors and advises entrepreneurs while leveraging the firm's resources and networks to drive start-up company success.

-On June 17, 1885, 34 new graduates of the two-year-old University of Texas organized the UT Alumni Association, later renamed The Ex-Students' Association.

-In 1899, the Association awarded its first scholarship, supported by membership dues. Now the Association gives out more than \$2 million dollars in scholarships a year, including the coveted four-year, Texas Exes Awards for Scholarship and Leadership.

-The Alumni Association annually recognizes professors, teaching assistants, and advisors on the UT campus and offers various career services to members.

Current Membership status as of July, 2009:

AN	33,644
AS	3,178
LI	54,741
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,553</b>

Texas Exes Student Chapter Members: over 2,000

Want to know your chapter's membership numbers?

If your chapter has a website hosted by the Texas Exes, you can get your membership numbers by logging in to your website, and accessing the "Statistics" link in the lower

left hand side. Any coded chapter board member has access to the administrative section of your chapter website.

If your chapter does not have a website through the Texas Exes, contact Courtney Ratliff at [Ratliff@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:Ratliff@alumni.utexas.edu) to get your current membership numbers.

## 10 MEDIA RELATIONS TIPS

1. An interview is like a business meeting. Know what you want to accomplish before it begins. Develop three or four talking points and be sure you make them during the interview.
2. Learn what the reporter is seeking to accomplish and set ground rules before the interview begins. While it is inadvisable to speak off the record, if you plan to do so, make sure that it is stipulated clearly - and the reporter agrees - before you make off-the-record or background comments.
3. Learn to talk in brief sound bites, usually 25 to 40 words, and focus on the points you want to make – your key messages. Redirect negative questions to the point you are trying to make without repeating false or damaging assertions by the reporter or her sources.
4. Never hide facts. You don't have to volunteer information, but always be honest and forthcoming when you have the information requested.
5. Be aware of reporters' deadlines and schedules.
6. Familiarize yourself with the media outlets you wish to influence.
7. When on television, talk directly to the reporter -- not the camera.
8. If you don't know something, say so. You could either answer, “That’s a question for so-and-so.” or find the answer and get back to the reporter as soon as possible. If you don't, the story is almost certain to be published or aired without that information or, worse, without your explanation.
9. Create releases only for newsworthy items. When considering a topic for its news value, ask yourself the following questions:
  - ◆ Is it timely?
  - ◆ Is it local?
  - ◆ Is it important or interesting to the general public?
  - ◆ Does it have consequence, conflict or is it controversial?
  - ◆ Is it new, novel or different?
  - ◆ Are the people involved community leaders, high visibility citizens or ordinary people?
  - ◆ Does it have human interest? What makes it unusual?
  - ◆ How will it affect the average person?
  - ◆ Is it on the "cutting edge?" Is it something few people know about?
  - ◆ Is it odd, unusual, the biggest, the smallest or is it outstanding in some way, shape or form.
  - ◆ Does it relate to a "hot" news item? Is the media already interested in the topic?
10. There is no such thing as a dumb question. Don't talk down to reporters, don't demean their questions and don't act as though you are too busy to accommodate them.

## Tips for Interviews

### Prepare for the Interview

*The chance for a successful interview increases greatly when you prepare your key messages.*

- In your mind, develop the headline you'd like to read in the next day's paper.
- Develop messages based on the interests of your key audiences.
- Think in terms of benefits. That's what your audiences will understand.
- Make each message very, very brief. Use quick phrases, not long sentences.
- Test your messages: Do they urge the listener to arrive at your headline? Do they flow logically from one to the other? If the answer is no to either of these questions, reconsider and redraft your messages.
- If you have time, find a colleague and practice these messages against sample questions. Now you're ready for your media interview.

### About The Interview

**It starts the moment you see the reporter.** Just because you don't see a notebook, camera or tape player doesn't mean your comments aren't registering in the reporter's head.

- There is no such thing as "off the record." If you don't want to see it in print, don't say it.

**A media interview is not a conversation.** It is a stylized exchange of information where the reporter's job is to ask probing questions, and your job is to get 1 or 2 key messages across.

- Write these messages down and keep them in front of you

**Stick to your key messages and repeat them over and over** (it's surprising how long it takes for some key ideas to sink in)

- Stay professionally courteous
- Answer every question with a one-two punch:
- Answer every question with a direct, honest and concise response. For example, "yes," "no," "I don't know," or "that's not the issue," etc.,
- Deliver a key message or two **every time** you answer a question

**Remember: Unless it's live, reporters almost never run their questions, only your answers, so concentrate on giving the answers you want!**

{LOGO}

For Immediate Release  
September 4, 2006

Contact: Chapter President  
(Phone number)

**Austin Texas Exes Raise Money for Scholarship  
Fund at Annual Alumni Pride Event**

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Exes Austin Chapter will hold their annual Texas Pride event this Friday, September 8 at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum. The event will include live music from the Spazmatics, a visit from Bevo, a silent auction and appearances by some surprise UT celebrities. Profits from the event will benefit the Austin Chapter Scholarship Program and Neighborhood Longhorns.

Texas Pride 2006 will kickoff at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$50 at [www.texasexes.org/austinevents](http://www.texasexes.org/austinevents). Tickets may not be purchased at the door. The Austin chapter of the Texas Exes has the largest membership of any chapter and supports both the university and the Austin community through their events.

Texas Exes, the alumni association for The University of Texas at Austin, is one of the strongest and most active alumni associations in the country. Established in 1885, the organization's primary function is supporting education through scholarships, teaching awards, public policy efforts and conferences. Texas Exes communicates with and connects more than 70,000 members to one another and to the past, present and future of The University through career counseling, travel, reunions, continuing education, fellowship and *The Alcalde* magazine. For more information on Texas Exes or to become a member, please visit [www.TexasExes.org](http://www.TexasExes.org).

# # #



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 9, 2008

**Contact:**

Erin Huddleston

512/471-3805

[huddleston@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:huddleston@alumni.utexas.edu)

**President of The University of Texas at Austin to welcome  
incoming students in McAllen during send-off celebration**

AUSTIN, Texas - William Powers Jr., president of The University of Texas at Austin, will be in McAllen Monday, June 23 to welcome recent high school graduates who will become freshman students at the university next fall.

Powers also will meet with parents of the students as well as alumni and community leaders at the Texas Exes Chapter Send-Off celebration at 6:30 p.m. in the Museum of South Texas History's Courtyard Gallery, 121 East McIntyre.

Representatives from the Texas Exes, student government president, Keshav Rajagopalan, and various university officials will also be in attendance to answer questions during the "Longhorn Hook 'em Up" session regarding the Texas Exes, student housing, financial aid, student government, Camp Texas and campus life.

The event, sponsored by the Texas Exes, is part of an effort to enhance and expand the university's relationships with various constituencies in Texas. Similar send-offs will be held in Laredo, Brownsville, and El Paso.

The Texas Exes was founded in 1885 to praise, promote, and protect the university. Today there are nearly 85,000 members whom the association strives to connect to each other and to the past, present, and future of the university through career counseling, travel, reunions, continuing education, fellowship, and *The Alcalde* magazine.

# # #

{LOGO}

August 14, 2006  
For Immediate Release

Contact: Erin Crook  
Texas Exes  
512/471-3805

### **Media Alert: UT President Visits Incoming Freshmen at Camp Texas**

**What:** Camp Texas, in its 14th year, focuses on student leadership development but also provides an opportunity for incoming freshmen to establish friendships and learn some of the traditions of their new university environment. The University of Texas will welcome 450 incoming university freshmen at Camp Texas beginning this Wednesday for three sessions that will last through August 22.

**Who:** UT President, Bill Powers, will speak to the freshmen and visit with them through dinner. This is a rare chance to these young students to connect with the administration of the university on a casual one-on-one basis. Juan Gonzalez, Vice President of Student Affairs, Urton Anderson, Associate Dean of the McCombs School of Business, and Jim Boon, Executive Director of the Texas Exes will also be out at the camp along with several other university representatives.

**When:** The first session begins on Wednesday, August 16. The administrators will be visiting with these new students from 5:30 – 6:15 p.m. that day and will stay to eat with the students from 6:15 – 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Camp Texas is held at Camp Balcones Springs located in Marble Falls. Camp Balcones Springs is off of Hwy. 1431. The exact address is 104 Balcones Springs Drive.

**Why:** “Camp Texas is a fantastic program. It gives us the chance to welcome the newest members of our UT family in an informal and beautiful setting. And it provides an opportunity to meet fellow students, faculty members, and administrators. It’s a great way to kick off your years as a Longhorn and to begin making friendships that will last a lifetime,” Powers said. Camp Texas is sponsored by the Texas Exes in conjunction with The University of Texas. This year 87 campers are attending through scholarships from the Texas Exes and Texas Exes chapters.

**Publicity Report Form**

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of story:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Thank you for filling this out. Please attach a copy of the article to this form and either mail it or fax it to Erin Huddleston at:

Texas Exes  
2110 San Jacinto Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78712

Fax: 512-471-8096