

Chapter Communication Chairs and Presidents:

The Texas Exes Chapter PR Toolkit provides the tools necessary for you to publicize your chapter and will answer questions you might have about media relations and the steps involved in a comprehensive public relations strategy. Publicity increases community awareness of your chapter in your local area and leads to growth in pride, membership and participation.

“Developing relationships with local media benefits both the chapter and the media. People enjoy seeing their friends and family in the newspaper. Demonstrating that Texas Exes give back to the community through projects and activities increases the pride of former UT students and encourages them to join in the fun and become involved. When editorial, photos and/or both appear in the newspaper, attendance to meetings and events, as well as membership increases. Even doing something small like providing a short article and photo with caption (known in the world of journalism as “cutline”) saves the media time and energy with their limited editorial staff.”

-Beth Ann Black

PR Committee Member, Principal for B.A. Black Public Relations

This kit contains an explanation of what PR is, tips on how to get your chapter publicized, reference information for the Texas Exes, and more. If you are a communication chair for your chapter, we hope this will assist you in your efforts. If you are a president for your chapter, we hope you will consider adding a communication chair to your board or using this toolkit yourself to assist you in your publicity efforts.

I sincerely hope that this kit assists you in having a successful year in your board position. Thank you for all of the hard you do on behalf of your chapter, the Texas Exes and The University.

Sincerely,

Erin Huddleston

Director of Communications

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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
- ❖ Social media: blogs, social networking sites, etc.
- ❖ 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

10 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!

10. Evaluate & Measure.

Identify how you will track and measure your success so you can learn for the future. It is easy and free to use a tool like Google Alerts to help you find media clips.

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. Also make sure to do your research and make sure you are targeting the right reporter. Reporters change positions frequently.
- ❖ 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 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 at Austin. Today there are about 95,000 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 the Texas Exes or to become a member, visit 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 2011-2012 President is Machree Garrett Gibson. Gibson lives in Austin and is a partner for Graydon, Gibson & Brown, and a lobbyist with the Graydon Group, which represents a broad range of clients including business corporations, trade associations, governmental entities and other organizations in legislative and administrative matters before the Texas Legislature and various state agencies. Gibson, a native of Austin, graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BA in 1982 and JD in 1991.

-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 through the Texas Exes Scholarship Foundation. The foundation also supports the new Forty Acres Scholars Program, which began this year with 10 recipients.

-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 2011:

AN	35,805
AS	3,799
LI	60,873

TOTAL 100,477

***Note that this total fluctuates and that our membership number we will use for the year is 95,000.**

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 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!



{DATE}

Contact: {CHAPTER PRES}
{CHAPTER NAME}
{PHONE #}

For Immediate Release

{CITY} Area Student Receives Prestigious Scholarship

{CITY}, Texas – {CITY} area student, {RECIPIENT NAME}, has been selected to receive the {SCHOLARSHIP NAME}. {RECIPIENT NAME} attended {HIGH SCHOOL NAME} where she {ACTIVITIES, for example: was captain of the volleyball team and president of the school’s community service organization, Interact Club.} {RECIPIENT NAME} was also very involved in {ACTIVITIES, for example: the Waxahachie community, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, the Special Olympics and numerous other organizations.} She will enter The University of Texas at Austin in August and plans to study {RECIPIENT MAJOR}.

The {SCHOLARSHIP NAME} is given to {# OF STUDENTS} each year and is funded through the {CHAPTER NAME}. The {CHAPTER NAME} have given {# OF SCHOLARSHIPS} to students entering The University of Texas at Austin over the years. To find out how to contribute to the scholarship fund, visit {CHAPTER WEB ADDRESS}.

{RECIPIENT NAME}, along with other chapter scholarship recipients, will be presented with the scholarship at a dinner to be held in the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center on the University of Texas at Austin campus in September. This year the Texas Exes will award more than \$2 million in scholarships to 716 students.

The Texas Exes was founded in 1885 to praise, promote, and protect the university. Today there are more than 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, and *The Alcalde* magazine.

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{DATE}

Contact: {CHAPTER PRES}
{CHAPTER NAME}
{PHONE #}

For Immediate Release

{CITY} Area Students Receives Prestigious Scholarship

{CITY}, Texas – The {CHAPTER NAME} has selected {# OF STUDENTS} to receive the {SCHOLARSHIP NAME}. This year’s recipients include: {RECIPIENT NAMES & HIGH SCHOOLS}. Recipients of the scholarship will enter The University of Texas at Austin in August.

The {SCHOLARSHIP NAME} is given to {# OF STUDENTS} each year and is funded through the {CHAPTER NAME}. The {CHAPTER NAME} have given {# OF SCHOLARSHIPS} to students entering The University of Texas at Austin over {# OF YEARS SCHOLARSHIP HAS BEEN GIVEN}. To find out how to contribute to the scholarship fund, visit {CHAPTER WEB ADDRESS}.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today's Date

Contact:

Chapter president name
Chapter president phone
number with area code
Chapter president email

Washington D.C. Texas Exes Hold Fundraiser to Celebrate Texas Independence Day

WASHINGTON D.C. - The Washington D.C. Chapter of the Texas Exes, along with Congressmen Lamar Smith and Lloyd Doggett will be hosting the 2006 Texas Independence Day Celebration and Fundraiser. The celebration will take place Thursday, March 2, 2006 at Finn Mac Cool's from 6 to 9 p.m.

The Texas Independence Day celebration began at The University of Texas at Austin in 1897. In 1900, March 2nd became the day Texas Exes observe the holiday. In that same year, a resolution was adopted by the Ex-Student's Association: Whenever two ex-students of The University of Texas meet on March 2, they shall sit and break bread and pay tribute to the institution which made their education possible.

The celebration will have live music, provided by Honky Tonk Confidential, food, drinks, and a silent auction. Texas Exes members are also eligible for a special raffle at the event. All proceeds will benefit the Barbara Jordan and James Decherd Scholarship Fund. "This is a great opportunity for University of Texas alumni to make new friends, share memories, and have some fun while supporting the next generation of students," said Joe Smith, president of the Washington D.C. Chapter of the Texas Exes. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. For more information, visit www.dctexasexes.org.

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January 5, 2011
For Immediate Release

Contact: Courtney Ratliff
Texas Exes
512/475/9352

**Media Alert: Texas Exes Host Event with University of Texas President
at the Stafford Opera House**

What: The Texas Exes will host an event welcoming University of Texas President Bill Powers for UT Alumni and friends from Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca and Wharton Counties.

Who: William Powers Jr., is the 28th president of The University of Texas at Austin, a position he has held since February 2006.

When: Saturday, February 5, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Stafford Opera House, 425 Spring Street, Columbus, TX

Why: During the event, Jim Boon, Executive Director of the Texas Exes Scholarship Foundation will conduct a Question and Answer Session with University of Texas President Bill Powers to discuss the current state of the University, the upcoming legislative session, and initiatives of both the Texas Exes and the University of Texas.

Background: 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 93,000 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, visit TexasExes.org.

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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