



# Texas Independence Day Handbook

***Constitution of the State of Texas (1876) Article VII, Section 10:***  
*The Legislature shall, as soon as practicable, establish, organize and provide for the maintenance, support and direction of a university of the first class, to be located by a vote of the people of this State, and styled "The University of Texas," for the promotion of literature, and the arts and sciences, including an agricultural and mechanical department.*

*In 1900, the Ex-Students Association adopted a resolution which states: "Whenever two Texas Exes shall meet on March 2, they all shall sit and break bread and pay tribute to the institution that made their education possible."*



Texas Exes around the globe will be celebrating Texas Independence Day on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is a great opportunity to showcase The University of Texas and the Texas Exes, as well as your chapter. The following tips are designed to help you plan and promote your event.

***Texas Exes TID celebrations are an expression of pride in the state of Texas, which had the foresight to establish a “university of the first class” in the Texas constitution. They are not celebrations of Texas’ independence from Mexico.***

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work – we appreciate the many volunteer hours you put in to make your Texas Independence Day, and all chapter events, such a success!

- Catherine Flores, Chapters and Networks Coordinator  
[Catherine.Flores@texasexes.org](mailto:Catherine.Flores@texasexes.org), 512-840-5637

## Introduction

This handbook is designed to guide you through planning a successful Texas Independence Day Celebration. Every chapter’s event can look different as some use this as their largest scholarship fundraiser of the year while others have social events which include big celebrations to happy hours.

For reporting and questions, contact the Texas Exes at (800) 594-3937, or send an e-mail to Catherine Flores at [catherine.flores@texasexes.org](mailto:catherine.flores@texasexes.org).

## Why participate in Texas Independence Day?

- Great PR for the Chapter
  - Highlights Texas Exes and UT all over the country and world!
  - Celebrates “a university of the first class”
- Advocate for Higher Education
  - Invite state senators and representatives as guests. This is a unique opportunity to further connect your lawmakers with their constituents over higher education and celebrate Texas and the University.



## Texas Independence Day Suggested Steps

To ensure that your chapter's event is a success, consider following these steps:

1. Appoint an Event Chair to lead the chapter's celebration
2. Report your event to Catherine Flores ([catherine.flores@texasexes.org](mailto:catherine.flores@texasexes.org)). Include the date, location, short description of the activity, and an email contact.
3. Request an Event Kit from Texas Exes staff. The Event Kit process is detailed below in the Resources portion of this Handbook. Event Kits are first come first serve and will include a TID banner, additional name tags for the Chapter's use, and a jpeg image of the TID Graphic that can be used on sign-in sheets, email communication, social media pages, etc. Request an event kit by contacting Catherine Flores ([catherine.flores@texasexes.org](mailto:catherine.flores@texasexes.org)).
4. Begin marketing the event on chapter weekly emails, the [texasexes.org](http://texasexes.org) website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and any other social media channels/calendars. Many websites, chambers of commerce, and tourist commissions publish online calendars of events within the community. You can also spread the word at Game Watches, Chapter meetings, and any Happy Hour/Networking events leading up to TID.
  - Email Catherine Flores ([catherine.flores@texasexes.org](mailto:catherine.flores@texasexes.org)) for access to chapter website and emails to all alumni and friends of The University within the chapter's area.
5. Execute your event, and make sure to take photos.
6. Submit Post-Event Report to the Chapters Department with the number of attendees, the success of the event, and send any pictures from the event. We want to make sure that we highlight great chapter engagement



## Making Texas Independence Day a Success

### *Getting Started*

**PLAN AHEAD.** Determine what type of event works best for your chapter in March. Types of events entail, but are not limited to: happy hours, evening socials, weekend brunches, and large scholarship fundraisers. Allow plenty of time to develop, organize, and carry out your event. Establish timelines. Consider inviting state legislators as this is a good way to connect with your local legislator to show your advocacy and interest in protecting the University. If you would like to invite a legislator, please contact the chapters department. They will work directly with the Advocacy Department to make a formal request on behalf of the chapter.

Please contact the Chapters department if you would like us to email you a copy of the Speakers' Bureau List. This resource can help chapters come up with options for speakers at the event. If you plan on hosting a speaker, ask early!

**WEAR BURNT ORANGE.** Show your Texas Pride!

### *Social Media Promotion*

Take advantage of the variety of social media tools to promote your event. Decide the purpose of each message you send via your social media channels to promote your event. Here are some ways to use social media at every stage of your TID event. Choose what works best for you.

**PROMOTE YOUR EVENT.** Take a photo of your group before the event (or use a photo from the previous year's celebration) and send it in to the local paper with a media alert or news release. They may run a story letting people know about the event with the photo included! You can engage the social media outlets of the organization for which you are hosting the event as well as event sponsors.

**SHARE YOUR TID CELEBRATION.** After the event, share the story – the before-and-after photos, videos, and photos you took as it unfolded – in E-newsletters, Website, the *Alcalde*, etc. Send your Post-Event Report to the Catherine Flores ([catherine.flores@texasexes.org](mailto:catherine.flores@texasexes.org)) in the Chapters Department. Post videos to YouTube and provide a link to it from your chapter webpage or your other social media outlets.

**SOCIAL MEDIA 2021 UPDATE.** The Texas Exes Communications team has created a digital TID event kit with an updated design for 2021. This kit will include graphics for your chapter to share on social media and digital correspondence.



### **Postal Mailer 2021 Update**

*For 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19, Texas Exes will not be able to send out physical mailers to alumni. Instead, Texas Exes will send custom TID email invitations to chapters who are hosting in-person or virtual event campaigns.*

### **COVID-19 and TID Events**

*Similar to Project Worldwide, we understand that most chapters are not able to safely host their large scale TID events. This year, we recommend chapters host a virtual fundraising that celebrates our University of the First Class or a small in-person event (if the chapter is able to do so safely). Chapters who choose to host an in-person TID event must adhere to CDC, State, and local guidelines/regulations regarding COVID-19 and safety. Chapter leadership is responsible for communicating to alumni participants the safety protocols that will be in place the day of your TID event.*

### **Organizing the Day**

Now that you and your chapter have already planned your event and started promoting, it's time to focus on the details that will help ensure that your day runs smoothly. Here are some tips to help you make that happen:

**USE CHECKLISTS.** Create a list of roles and responsibilities. Also, consider providing specialized checklists to people who are helping event volunteers for registration, food, special activities, etc. to help them do their jobs well.

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.** Think about contingencies. Be prepared for early or late arriving participants, lower-or higher-than-expected participant turnout, weather problems, and technology difficulties.

**CAPTURE YOUR TID CELEBRATION.** It is important to keep detailed records of your service activity. It is a good idea to capture testimonials and photos from participants which will come in handy when planning and promoting future Texas Exes Project Worldwide activities. During your event, share your TID photos using on any social media posts.

**COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION.** Ask attendees who may be interested in volunteering with the chapter to fill out a signup sheet at the event that includes their basic information, name, address, phone number(s) and e-mail address.



Each TID Celebration will be different, but successful events typically have the following elements:

**KICKOFF CEREMONY.** Regardless of the size and scope of your activity, consider having a kickoff ceremony at the beginning of your day. This ceremony can be small and low-key. Highlighting the connection to the UT campus and showcasing the work of your Chapter can be a great use of this time. Perhaps even sing “The Eyes of Texas.” Keep the ceremony short and focused. See the “4 Top Suggestions Points” for the opening ceremony in the forms and resources section of this handbook.

**PICTURES.** Capture these great moments so that your chapter and the Chapters Department can share them afterwards. We encourage you to post photos to your social media channels and share them with the chapters department.

**SURVEY.** It is important to ask for attendees’ feedback on how they viewed their experience before they leave. Collect this feedback through conversations or have a form ready for them to collect this information.

**TIME FOR CLOSING REMARKS.** Consider concluding your activity by giving participants an opportunity to share their experiences, relax, enjoy themselves, and sing The Eyes of Texas! Use this opportunity to take a group photo with everyone in their burnt orange and chapter banner.

### ***After Your Event***

Even though your activity is finished, there is still work to be done. Below are some helpful tips to ensure your future events are even more successful.

**THANK YOUR EVENT VOLUNTEERS.** Without the help from your volunteers, your event could not be a success. It’s important to show your appreciation by thanking all those that were involved (volunteers, sponsors, partnering organization, team leaders/supervisors, and anyone else that played a role or contributed in any way).

**REVIEW & DEBRIEF.** Event coordinators should meet soon after the event to discuss the celebration’s successes as well as things that you could build on or do better next time. It might be helpful to gather input from the host site and to review any form of evaluation thoroughly.

**SHARE YOUR SUCCESS.** Submit press releases, articles, photos, and other information about your completed event to your local newspaper.



Texas Exes wants to hear the success stories that were shared by your participants. Be sure to also send the Chapters Department any of this information and upload your photos to your chapter webpage.

### ***Report Your TID Celebration***

It is important to send information about how many participants were involved, the success of the event, and any pictures from the event to the Chapters Department.

- Capturing photos of people participating in your service activity is a great way to document the impact your chapter is making in your area. Post your photos, comments, and videos on your chapter website and social media platforms.
- Send your sign-in sheets to the Chapters Department. After the events, the Chapters team will update the contact information based on the sign-in sheets. This is the best way to keep the alumni list in your area up-to-date.



# Resources





## Toast to Texas

This toast was written by Joe B. Frantz, two time UT Alumnus and Former UT Professor, in salute to his alma mater:

*To our State, whose founders made our education possible; To Texas Exes, who have provided generations of leadership to the State of Texas; and to the proud tradition of continued excellence of The University of Texas.*



## Check List

### Three Months before TID

- Appoint an Event Chair
- Select a service activity
- Register your event with Texas Exes staff
- Request a TID Event Kit with Texas Exes staff (Not applicable for 2021 TID)

### 30 Days before Event

- Recruit volunteers and team leaders
- Promote TID (Social Media, Weekly Emails, Website)
- Consider planning Kickoff Ceremony or Closing Ceremony

### 1 Week before Project Worldwide

- Provide a schedule for the day of the Texas Independence Day activity

### Day of Event

- Wear Burnt Orange
- Take Registration
- Take Pictures

### After TID Celebration

- Evaluate the activity and participant experience
- Thank Event Volunteers
- Spread the word of your success (Social Media, Weekly emails, Website)
- Report back to Texas Exes



## Top 4 Suggestions for Opening Ceremony

- Welcome everyone – give a huge thank you for attending
- Explain what Texas Exes' connection to Texas Independence Day
  - In 1900, the Ex-Students Association adopted a resolution which states:  
"Whenever two Texas Exes shall meet on March 2, they all shall sit and break bread and pay tribute to the institution that made their education possible."
- Tell the group about the local chapter, in case there are new people at the event
  - Include information about any scholarships awarded and weekly/monthly events, etc.
- Sing the "Eyes of Texas"