

SIGEP PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDE

Working with local and campus newspapers

One of your best opportunities as Vice President of Communications is sharing stories with news outlets that may want to feature your chapter. This could include your campus newspaper, city and state media and your university's news outlets.

Though there are many ways to pitch a story, one traditional and proven way is to share a press release, which is simply a standardized way to communicate your news with an outside news source.

Examples of stories you could tell include:

- Your chapter completes a major service learning or community service project that benefits campus or the community.
- Your chapter hosts an event that's open to more than just Greeks.
- A member of your chapter is selected to attend the Tragos Quest to Greece or Ruck Leadership Institute.
- Your chapter wins a Buchanan Cup or other prestigious award.
- A member of your chapter breaks an academic or athletic record or receives recognition for athletic or academic excellence.

The most important thing to consider when writing a story for an external publication is what type of story they're interested in telling. If you're writing for your campus newspaper, submit a story that shows how your chapter is impacting your entire campus.

If you're struggling to understand what a particular news outlet cares about, just write the story to the best of your ability and be courteous when making your pitch. Many times a news outlet may not run a story exactly as you've written it, but your pitch may spark ideas that will lead them to cover the story in a different way.

Note: Besides writing and pitching formal press releases, you can share your chapters stories on your website, blog, social media channels and alumni newsletter.

General Media Relations

- Establish yourself as a resource for the stories reporters want to cover. This is the best way to increase your chances for positive coverage of your chapter's events, activities.
- Know which community reporters cover your school and which campus reporters cover Greek life.

- Introduce yourself via phone or e-mail and ask what types of stories they want to cover related to college life. Tell them what your publicity plans are for the semester and see if they are interested.
- Share observations and story ideas that may help them with an article whether it directly involves the chapter or not.
- Be brief, to the point and LISTEN.

Events and Activities Publicity

- Connect your activities and events with broader messages of appeal.
- Connect your activities and events with a timely theme like a holiday, an activity that the community is involved in or a social trend.
- Treat your messages and releases as articles. The more work you do for the reporter, the more likely they will pick up your story.
- Post detailed information on your own website or Facebook event page and drive reporters to that link in a brief, well-written release.
- Follow up. Send a release via e-mail and then follow up to be sure it was received, answer questions and identify additional information or contacts that may help your story get covered.
- Use online news and/or events submission options.
- Invite reporters to your events.

Scholarship and Leadership Publicity

- If you are one of the chapters that run a Balanced Man Scholarship program, you have a story. Promote the scholarship availability and events on campus and locally. Announce the winners and offer good photos or video clips of the event.
- If your chapter has a participant in Tragos Quest to Greece or the Ruck Leadership Institute, promote it locally. The Headquarters staff can give you template content, but it must be localized by you to get local attention.

Crisis: When Media are coming to you

- Chapters that have relationships with the media before a crisis occurs have a better chance of getting their message across accurately than those that have never dealt with the local media.
- If you have a fire, a death, a member incident or other fast-moving situation of high interest, contact the SigEp Headquarters staff before speaking with the press.
- In crisis situations, direct all media inquiries to an official contact person appointed by your executive board and Headquarters staff. Avoid using the phrase “no comment,” and instead explain that you are not authorized to address certain points and will need to redirect inquiries to the appropriate person