

Guidelines for Celebrating Chapter Anniversaries

A significant historical event is a chapter anniversary. As a chapter continues to grow through the years, opportunities to celebrate the chapter's accomplishments will become apparent. Chapter anniversaries are occasions in which special events can be planned by the chapter for renewing old friendships and regenerating interest in the local chapter. While any anniversary can be special, certain anniversaries, such as every 10th and 25th are particularly meaningful milestones in many different ways. Chapters normally plan a variety of forms of celebration throughout the anniversary year. Suggestions for these celebrations are cited in the following sections.

I. Responsibilities of International Headquarters

- A. Identify Chapters with a forthcoming anniversary of every 10th or 25th year, one year in advance and send letter to chapter offices alerting them to the upcoming anniversary.
- B. Prepare sample press releases for chapters to use in an effort to increase the visibility of the chapter within the university and local community.
- C. Provide and distribute a special chapter anniversary Citation of Merit for chapters celebrating every 10th anniversary. Provide a special chapter anniversary plaque for those chapters celebrating 25th, 50th, and 75th anniversaries. These plaques will be presented by the outgoing president of Sigma Theta Tau International to chapter representatives at the Biennial Convention.

II. Chapter Activities

- A. Display historical items such as early newsletters, photos, brochures, and contrast them with current ones.
- B. Honor past presidents by inviting them as guests and asking them to relate a significant achievement or event during their terms.
- C. Write or update the history of the chapter. Distribute copies to members. Publish it in the chapter newsletter.
- D. Distribute press releases to local and university newspapers.
- E. Share statistics which are helpful and interesting to members:
 1. Total number of people funded for research and academic scholarships.
 2. Total amount of funds provided for scholarships.
 3. Titles of research projects funded.
 4. List of past programs, special speakers or events.
 5. Total number of members.
 6. Evolving eligibility criteria (e.g., essays from the 1960s are wonderful historical documents. They chronicle the priorities and draw a picture of nursing in the 1960s).
 7. List of past presidents.

8. List of important events in history of chapter (not a history, merely a chronicle; e.g., initiation of scholarships, special research days, etc.)
- F. Display early photographs in which people are not identified and ask members "Do you know these people?" These can be displayed at programs and publicized in chapter newsletters
- G. Identify famous chapter members. Invite them to speak at an anniversary event or solicit congratulatory statements. Invite all chapter members, past presidents, and chapter members who have held offices in Sigma Theta Tau International to celebrations.
- H. Reorganize archives. Based on organization or reorganization of archives, seek a Regional or International Heritage Award.
- I. Give special service awards for long time service to the chapter.
- J. Prepare a special chapter newsletter about the chapter's historical events or other modes of celebrating an anniversary. Include congratulatory messages and membership statistics/activities both then and now.
- K. Solicit congratulatory letters from dean/chair/director of collegiate nursing programs, mayor, governor, legislators, etc. (Government offices have staff who send these letters for officials. Sometimes they carry the seal of office and are very impressive.)
- L. Sponsor a special Distinguished Lecturer (perhaps co-sponsored by the nursing school) to celebrate the anniversary. Consider discussing nursing scholarship, leadership, history or accomplishments.
- M. Ask previous scholarship winners to briefly discuss how scholarships helped their work.
- N. Organize an historical scrapbook of activities, events or people. Have the chapter archivist (or officer/committee with archival responsibilities) locate reports, photos, and other material to use in the anniversary celebration. Contact charter members and ask them to contribute letters to a scrapbook of memoirs of the chartering year or of this anniversary year.
- O. Initiate an oral history project that records on audiotape older members and their reminiscences about early years, organization of the chapter, nursing history at the time the chapter was founded, etc.
- P. Plan a special event, such as a luncheon, dinner or reception. Invite to the celebration and recognize all charter members, all past presidents and all chapter members who have been international officer.
- Q. Provide some commemorative item to each chapter member; e.g., bookmark or pen. Give a gift to all past presidents.
- R. Initiate and possibly cosponsor projects to write the history of the nursing program.
- S. Co-sponsor programs with the school of nursing to celebrate its significant anniversaries.