



TBTM SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

SCHEDULING THE AWARDS BANQUET & RESERVING A VENUE

Begin planning for the awards banquet 4-6 months in advance - consider the dates, times, and venues available.

Ideally, the awards banquet will take place between two days and two weeks prior to the beginning of formal recruitment or, if your campus does not have formal recruitment, within the first three weeks of classes. If it is to be effective, the awards banquet should occur prior to the beginning of formal recruitment. This allows for a clear distinction between the scholarship and formal recruitment. If local IFC bylaws or university restrictions pose a challenge to this, discuss it with your Chapter Operations Staff Member.

Decide what time of day and day of the week is best for your banquet. Consider class schedules, your chapter schedule, time commitments of members and, most importantly, the schedules of your guests (parents, faculty, staff, finalists, and alumni). Whether you choose a weekday evening, weekend evening or weekend brunch, be sure that your choice will maximize attendance.

Finally, you should find an appropriate venue for the awards banquet. In most cases, an on-campus banquet room is the best option. It will be a convenient location for finalists, members, and university guests. Registered student organizations can often reserve on-campus rooms at a significant discount. Make sure the room is the right size for your anticipated attendance. Discuss meal and setup options with the venue. A plated meal is the most appropriate and effective way to serve food at this type of banquet. Alcohol should not be served or consumed during, prior to, or after the banquet - even by those who are of age.

FINDING & SECURING A KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Secure a keynote speaker 3-4 months prior to the banquet. The best speakers tend to be very busy people, so you will need to get onto their schedule in advance. Start by making a list of possible speakers. People to consider include prominent members of the university or local community, notable alumni of the university, successful Alpha Sig alumni, sports coaches, faculty, or people with an engaging story to tell. The speaker doesn't need to be an Alpha Sig, but they should be able to speak about something relevant to the values of Alpha Sigma Phi.

Be prepared to explain Alpha Sig and the To Better the Man Scholarship to your potential speaker if he or she is not already familiar with it. It may take some work to convince a high-profile individual that your banquet, scholarship, and organization are worth their time.

INVITING GUESTS

Send invitations to distinguished guests three to four months before the banquet. Within the limits of your venue and budget, you should include as many members of the university community as possible. This includes faculty members, fraternity and sorority life staff, the dean of students, the president or chancellor of the college/university, parents of members, your regional director, the district governor and alumni who volunteer with the chapter. A separate batch of invitations will have to be sent out to each finalist and his parents once the finalists are chosen.

Invitations should be printed on formal invitation cards and either hand-delivered or sent by mail. In the case of university staff, it may be helpful to include a brief letter describing the purpose of the scholarship. Indicate on the invitation that attire for the event is coat and tie.

BANQUET TICKETING

There are costs and benefits that should be considered when deciding who, if anyone, is required to purchase a ticket to your banquet and how much it should be. Requiring tickets can increase revenue and provide a more accurate count of those who will attend. On the other hand, associating a cost with the banquet could lower attendance. The only two groups you should ever consider requiring to purchase tickets are undergraduate members and alumni. Finalists, parents, volunteers, faculty, administrators, and other distinguished guests should be invited for free.

Also, don't forget to inform the chapter of the date, time, location, and dress code for the awards banquet well in advance. If there is a cost for members to attend (typically this is under \$15), be sure to make the payment deadline at least one month prior to the banquet. It may be easiest to collect this payment along with chapter dues.

AWARDS SCRIPT

See the [To Better the Man Scholarship Banquest Script](#).

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

There are several groups of people you should recognize at the awards banquet. In the welcoming remarks, recognize and thank all of the parents and volunteers in attendance. Also recognize and thank, by name and title, each of the faculty and staff members in attendance.

The main group you are there to recognize is the finalists. Take the time to recognize each finalist, individually, prepare a brief biography for each, listing their top accomplishments. They will be grateful for the recognition and the group's accomplishments should impress everyone at the banquet, including the finalists. Framed certificates or plaques should be presented to the scholarship recipients. Printed certificates or gift certificates should be presented to the other finalists. Do not send anyone home empty-handed. **Note: Do not announce scholarship recipients in advance.**

Finally, take the opportunity to recognize chapter members at the awards banquet. Presenting awards such as outstanding freshman/sophomore/junior/senior, highest GPA, most improved GPA, etc. will make exemplary members feel appreciated. More importantly, this will showcase the accomplishments of the best and brightest chapter members for the finalists and other guests – which will make them more likely to join. If there are funds available, make scholarships part of these awards.

FINAL BANQUET ARRANGEMENTS

Begin finalizing banquet arrangements two to four weeks in advance. Follow up on any outstanding RSVPs by phone. Remind chapter members of the date, time, location, and dress code for the banquet. Confirm the banquet details with your keynote speaker and get a biography to read in their introduction. Once you have a final head count for members and guests, confirm it with the venue to ensure there are an appropriate number of place settings. Next, use your RSVP list to make a seating chart for the event. Sit finalists and their families with members, alumni, and faculty who share their interests. Sit a chapter member between each finalist and his parents. Be sure to play to the strengths of your best recruiters.

Print a program for the event, a seating chart, the banquet script, and name placards for place settings. Have a check-in table outside of the banquet room where TBTM committee members will greet guests and chapter members and guide them to their seats.

Many chapters choose to add a personal touch to this event. Some best practices include:

- Add Alpha Sig decorations to the banquet facility. Place a table near the entrance with awards, trophies, and pictures. Other ideas include a podium sign, centerpieces, a recent composite, an Alpha Sig flag, etc. Be sure your decorations are in good taste and not tacky or overstated.
- Educate your guests on Alpha Sig. Include a chapter “fact sheet” at each place setting boasting the accomplishments of the chapter. Play a slideshow during the banquet displaying appropriate pictures of brothers and fun facts about Alpha Sig.
- Make your guests feel welcome. Include a rose at the place setting of each female guest.

Instruct members to arrive at least 30 minutes early for the banquet. Arrive with your committee at least 60 minutes in advance to set up and rehearse the banquet script.

BANQUET FOLLOW UP

Some chapters choose to invite finalists and their families to tour the chapter house after the banquet. This can be another opportunity to impress a finalist and his family, provided the chapter facility is presentable.

Following the banquet, send hand-written thank you notes to the parents, faculty, staff, and alumni who attended the banquet as well as the venue and keynote speaker. Make sure that you have paid all bills for the event and have given the scholarship recipients their checks. Collaborate with the President and CCA to take notes on what went well and what could have been done better. Save these notes for the next banquet planner. Ensure that members who sat with finalists send notes about their conversation to the Vice President of Growth.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do we do if we don't have sufficient funds to host an awards banquet?

You have two options: secure more funds or cut costs. To find more funds, look for extra money in the chapter and endowments – this money can be replenished once TBTM recruits begin paying dues. Alternatively, you can charge a small fee for members to attend the awards banquet to defray the cost. To cut costs, it is appropriate, but not ideal, to change the banquet into a small reception with hors d'oeuvres or a morning reception with coffee and bagels.

Can we invite dates to the awards banquet?

Including dates or other undergraduate women will not only distract the members, but will also distract the finalists and confuse the message of what the fraternity is about. It will increase the cost of the banquet and could make it awkward for finalists who are there with their parents. The TBTM banquet is not a social event.

Is the awards banquet a recruitment event?

Technically, no; practically, yes. The awards banquet is just that – an awards banquet for a scholarship. On most campuses, this does not fit the definition of a recruitment event. It should not be scheduled during formal recruitment to avoid this confusion. You should, however, take this and every other opportunity to build relationships with potential new members and their families.