



MEN OF PRINCIPLE SCHOLARSHIP

MPS Awards Banquet Best Practices

1. Scheduling the event and reserving the venue

The MPS process should end with a celebratory dinner or banquet to recognize the winner(s) and thank all of the applicants. This is also a great opportunity to formally introduce applicants to the Fraternity and generate positive PR.

First, 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, staff, finalists and alumni).
- Whether you choose a weekday evening, weekend evening or weekend brunch, be sure your choice maximizes attendance.

Next, you should find an appropriate venue for the event.

- In most cases, an on-campus banquet room is the best option as it will be convenient for finalists, members and university guests. Registered student organizations can often reserve on-campus rooms at a significant discount or even free.
 - A great alternative is a private meeting room at a local restaurant. Call ahead to discuss seating, AV, and a set menu for the event.
- 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.
- Be sure to follow all risk management guidelines. Alcohol should not be served or consumed during, prior to, or after the banquet – even by those who are of age.

2. Finding and securing a keynote speaker

A good keynote speaker can leave a great impression and build a bridge between your scholarship application and the recruitment process. The best speakers tend to be very busy people, so you will need to get on their schedule well in advance.

- Start by making a list of possible speakers. People to consider include prominent members of the university or community, notable alumni of the university, successful Beta alumni, sports coaches, faculty, or brothers with an engaging story to tell.
- The speaker doesn't need to be a Beta, and doesn't have to speak long, but they should be able to speak about something relevant to the values of Beta Theta Pi and what it means to be men of principle.

3. Inviting Guests

Send invitations to distinguished guests at least three 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



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advisors, your district and regional chiefs and your housing corporation volunteers. A separate batch of invitations will have to be sent out to each finalist and his parents once chosen.

Invitations should be printed on formal invitation cards and 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 MPS. Indicate on the invitation that attire for the event is formal and include a way to RSVP.

Some chapters can plan for the option for guests (family, alumni, volunteers) to purchase tickets to attend to help offset the cost of the event.

4. Awards Banquet Script

Complete the awards banquet script at least three weeks prior to the banquet. The script should include all remarks to be made by the master of ceremonies (head speaker) and all other speakers, aside from the keynote. This will ensure that presenters have prepared their remarks in advance and gives you the opportunity to rehearse the script to ensure seamless execution.

Your script should include:

- Welcome remarks
- An invocation for the meal
- A description of the scholarship and how it relates to the fraternity's ideals
- Keynote Speaker introduction and speech
- Recognition of finalists and scholarship recipients
- Recognize outstanding chapter members
- Closing remarks.

Divide the speaking roles between the MPS chairman, president, a Beta parent, a distinguished alumni and/or chapter counselor. Rehearsing the script is essential.

5. 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 obtain 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, the banquet script and name placards for place settings. Have a check-in table outside of the room where MPS committee members will greet guests and chapter members and guide them to their seats.



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

- Add Beta decorations! Place a table near the entrance with awards, trophies and pictures. Other ideas include a podium sign, centerpieces, a recent composite or a Beta flag. Be sure your decorations are in good taste and not tacky or overstated.
- Educate your guests on Beta. 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 Beta.

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 script.

6. Awards and Recognition

There are several groups of people you should recognize at the awards banquet. In the welcoming remarks, recognize and thank all 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 and prepare a brief biography, 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 in attendance. Do not send anyone home emptyhanded.

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.

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 a chapter facility is available. 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 you have paid all bills for the event. Collaborate with the MPS committee and recruitment advisor 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 recruitment to add to recruitment tracker.