Use the Five Star Plan to Build Your Chapter

The Five Star Chapter Plan does much more than simply award chapters for their involvement and engagement; the plan is a roadmap for building strong chapters, which in turn creates strong members and a robust college campus.

“Students who are engaged are more likely to stay enrolled and complete their programs,” said Dr. Dan Phelan, President of Jackson College in Jackson, Michigan. “Phi Theta Kappa provides leadership opportunities for students both on campus and off campus. It provides students assistance with completing scholarship applications and support for completing an online portfolio for career and job enhancement.”

“Thus, having a strong chapter is not only important to the success of students in college, but it also demonstrates to students and the public that the college is college of free and achievement.”

The Five Star Chapter Plan puts the mission of Phi Theta Kappa into action through five levels of engagement that progress from local, campus involvement to regional and international involvement. Using the plan’s Student Guide to Success, chapter presidents enhance their working relationship with the college and to a greater extent, their interaction with the campus and in the community.

On a personal level, involvement in the program will guide chapter members in the importance of deadlines and organizational skills.

“The Five Star Plan is a barometer for Phi Theta Kappa and measures the engagement of our chapters,” said Jennifer Stanford, Phi Theta Kappa’s Chief Student Engagement Officer. “Participation at every level of the Five Star Plan is critical to fulfilling our mission, which is why we encourage all chapters to participate at the level that fits them best each year.

“Every chapter begins anew every calendar year, allowing chapters to have a fresh start and a challenging goal year after year.”

A breakdown of the plan can be found in the Chapter Leaders’ Guide to Success, which all advisors will be receiving soon. It includes a suggested timeline aimed at helping you complete your goal. New advisors and chapter presidents also will receive this helpful tool as they are reported to Headquarters throughout the year.

It all begins with setting a goal for the year. Advisors and chapter officers should use the Chapter Leaders’ Guide to Success to review the full list of requirements for all five levels of the plan and determine what level they are able to maintain based on their chapter planning for the year.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
The goal may be changed — raised or lowered — at any point based on progress throughout the year. Both advisors and chapter officers have access to update the progress report form for the chapter at any time during the year.

Chapters can check their progress any time at the Five Star Regional Overview page, which is updated nightly.

Mia Ramos-Shirley
Associate Director of Regional & Chapter Development Division III
Phi Theta Kappa

Happy New Year!

One of the beautiful parts about academia is the excitement of a new year...a new beginning. The beginning of the fall semester for many is the beginning of the new academic year and then in January we celebrate the beginning of a new calendar year and for many the start of a new academic semester.

For Phi Theta Kappa chapters, January brings new beginnings as well; the 2014-2016 Honor's Study Topic has been unveiled: Frontiers and the Spirit of Exploration. Before we get too excited about the journey ahead, we must remember that January is also the time to finish hallmark writing and complete the final review in the Five Star Chapter Development program. Headquarters graciously extended the usual deadline of December 31st to January 29th, 2014, for chapters to update their 2013 Five Star Chapter Development plan.

Chapter advisors and/or their designated officer must be sure to complete their chapter’s final checklist for the year. Even if your chapter forgot to set your goal for 2013, it’s not too late to both set your goal and complete the checklist of what your chapter accomplished. To complete this task,

- Visit the website www.ptk.org
- Log in with your email and password
- On the right side of the page, click on resources and services
- Scroll down to Five Star Chapter Development

Use this form to report your progress throughout the year.

Mia Ramos-Shirley
Associate Director of Regional & Chapter Development Division III
Phi Theta Kappa

Dr. Kari Kahler
Coordinator
Michigan Region
On Completion

December 12, 2013 was an exciting day for me…a journey that began more than a decade ago was completed. Many of you are aware I have been working on my PhD at Michigan State University and on that Thursday, I defended my dissertation “On Beating the Odds: A Study of Successful Community College Students.” My research involved studying 21 adult learners at our college who came in underprepared for the COMPASS placement test and yet had earned the credits and grades to be invited to join Phi Theta Kappa and/or our Honors Program.

I have long been intrigued on what had occurred in these students’ lives and knew that it was more than what the institution was providing (yes, I think we help), but I was convinced there was something more, something motivating these students to succeed, to persevere when so many things seemed stacked against them. I held a couple of focus groups, and the stories were rich and I was honored to be able to hear their hopes, dreams and fears.

There is another story about this journey and it also needs to be told. I almost didn’t complete what I had begun because I doubted myself. I let time slip away and didn’t commit to the research and the writing. I applied for an extension and one was granted, I made progress but not enough and had to fight for another extension. I shared in my request that I was preaching about the value of degree completion on community college campuses and I felt like a fraud to not be practicing what I preached and this time I knew I had to complete.

I am thankful for the opportunity to complete, for my family and the sacrifices they made when mom needed to go to class, to study, to research and to write. I am thankful for those who supported my journey, knowing when to ask about it and when not to ask about it and I am thankful for the students who shared their lives with me. Whether, I am a geek or a nerd...it really doesn’t matter, I am a completer and it feels great! Thank you for your support on my journey!

Dr. Kari Kahler
Coordinator, Michigan Region

We’re All in the Race…HiA

For the last twelve months we have all been planning for this last leg of the race. It has been a long journey with roads well traveled and new experiences/lessons learned. From that first research paper to the brainstorming sessions late at night, the coffee shops visited and the libraries we’ve closed down. It has been the ride of the year and we are only days away from the finish line.

As your team is sitting down to write your final results of all the hard work that you have completed, there are a couple things that you should always keep in the back of your mind. Write, read, analyze, edit and rewrite. Remember to always read with a judgmental mind, you have the rubrics, use them to your advantage. Another helpful hint, you are in college with a lot of incredible minds that teach every day. Befriend one of your Composition instructors and have them critique your hard work, listen to what they have to say and take it to heart. These are just a few things that you really need to do to assure that the year’s worth of work you have done culminates in a successful project.

During the next couple of weeks your teams will shine. Stronger bonds will be built, tension will build and sometimes feelings get hurt. When the latter two start to happen, stop, take a short break and remember you’re all part of the family. Always try to have fun with your work, when you stop having fun it starts to become overwhelming. If tension starts to build,
sitting back and telling jokes to lighten the mood or go out and have a snowball fight, that’s always fun. Over the last twelve months you have worked closely together on every aspect of your projects, you have spent more time with your teams than with some of your friends, relax, relax, relax and have fun with the final piece of the puzzle.

On January 29, 2014 a yearlong race will finally be over, but... there will be no winner announced, there will be anticipation, there will be hope and there will be dreams. We are all winners at this deadline; we have all had one heck of a year and have grown that much more for the projects that we have run. We have served our communities and helped those around us in a world that needs all the help it can get. Now the important part... REFLECTION.

Bill Lethig
President
Michigan Region

Hello Michigan Region! Happy New Year!!

Ah yes, the subject of College Fish returns!

I just wanted to take the time to just remind everyone that the College Fish initiative is in full swing! If you missed the information at the Leadership Conference or thereafter, here it is.

College Fish is being offered now to all college students at the two-year college and is no longer limited to just Phi Theta Kappa, which is a great thing!

How does one get involved and get this started at their college? The first line of travel would be to contact your CORE regional officer. They have the information and form for your college president and staff to sign. If and when they sign this paperwork, your college as a whole will then have access to an amazing tool!!

Just a brief review for those who may ask, “what exactly is College Fish, I’m still not sure what it is or what it can do for me.” Simply put, it’s your link from the two-year college to the four-year college with a bunch of amazing fillings between!

I always said that it’s like Monster Job meets E-Harmony. When you register online with College Fish, it will ask you for a fair amount of information, but don’t be intimidated; it takes you through the process painlessly. It will ask you questions like what is your major? Do you prefer a Christian college or do you like sports? What you input all of this information, it will link you to the colleges that best match your requirements. Once you complete this, your name is put into the virtual “Fish Bowl” and colleges will start looking for you! This is where the magic begins!!

As Kappan’s, we always want to see others succeed, and when we can, offer something like this to others rather than keeping it to ourselves. We have helped provide an awesome service to our fellow classmates and the chance for someone to gain access to something they may not have ever had before.

Follow up with your CORE Regional Officer; we are ready and willing to schedule a day to sit with your chapter and college president! Let’s get this done Michigan!!!

Who knows, Jennifer Blalock might even make an appearance if we make enough noise!!

If you’re not sure who your CORE officer is, please see the listing on the Regional webpage.

Sincerely,

Alan May
Vice President
Michigan Region
Hello Michigan Sister Chapters!

I usually start off by saying “Hello Michigan Region.”

Why the change? I want to use this section to touch on the subject of sister chapters.

Last year Bill Lethig wrote up a good section explaining what sister chapters are and what is expected of them. If you read it, it was a great overview with a lot of detail.

Being that we have started into another new year, I would just like to take the time to add some insight.

As you witnessed back in October at the Mini Honors hosted by Macomb, there were new sister chapters chartered. You all witnessed the pledge taken by those giving their support to another chapter. I use the word support because this really is the body of what a sister chapter is and what it encompasses.

Being a sister chapter isn’t just a title or something to proudly announce to others, but more of a support system. Here are some ideas that perhaps may or may not have crossed your mind.

- Have you ever asked a sister chapter to partner up on an HIA project?
  - Strength in numbers and the potential of more ideas not realized by each of the chapters.
- Have you collaborated on fundraising events? Maybe running one together or just helping each other brainstorm or share what works and what doesn’t?
  - Some chapters need fundraising to support the chapter events and travel. We have all held fundraisers that really worked and some that were just stinkers. Sharing this information with your sister chapter can only help the region as a whole.

- If anything, many new ideas will reveal themselves in a larger group brainstorming session!
- Ever partnered up with your sister chapter to help another chapter that may be struggling? It may be as simple as setting up a phone conference and verbally helping them, or at least showing support by a friendly call.
  - Nothing is more powerful than the spoken word and even more so, one with a positive message of encouragement!
- Have you collaborated with your sister chapter in a service event?
  - Think of the possibilities that can become reality when working with two or more chapters on a service project, especially when it’s done within the community or over the span of multiple counties!
  - There is strength in numbers and many hands make light work.
- Have you set up a fun night with your sister chapter during their induction, orientation or another chapter event?
  - Perhaps a fun night out with your sister chapter will help growth between the chapters. Obviously this can only be done within a reasonable travel distance, but perhaps you can meet at a mid point.
- Have you gone and visited your sister chapter for their induction, orientation or another chapter event?
  - Showing up at another chapter event really signifies your intentions to help and support them! Not only that, but you may also pick up some new ideas for your induction or event (hint, hint).

All too often we as chapters like to mention that we are a sister chapter with this college, but all too many times, the year goes by and we never contact them, why? If we pledge to help them in all worthy endeavors and to support them in need, why don’t we reach out more? We all have our moments of where we need help with something, but if we deny this, we are just fooling ourselves. Even if your sister chapter doesn’t call
you...call them. Ask how they are doing, ask them if they need help, or what projects they are working on, and just remind them that you're there should they need to call upon you for help. A lot of times we just get very busy and we forget, but we must not forget what makes this Region so special...the love, sacrifice, and determination of this great state of Michigan! They don't call us the Wolverine state for nothing, as we are a fierce group of determined people who don't back down from a challenge.

I have always said that Phi Theta Kappa should never be kept secret. The more we share, the more we learn about others, and the stronger the Region and we will be. As individual chapters, we strive to be the best that we can be and we certainly enjoy the rewards of our labor, but when any chapter in Michigan wins because of a joint effort, the whole Region wins!

Love you Michigan Region!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Alan May
Vice President
Michigan Region

Welcome back to another semester Michigan Region! Your Regional Officer team has been very busy participating in the Chapter Officer Regional Encouragement program (CORE) over the past several months. We have attended and participated in Induction ceremonies, Competitive Edge workshops, Five Star Chapter Development workshops, Service projects, C4 events, College Project events, Honors in Action events, and Fellowship events.

In my estimation, the CORE program is one of the most important things that the Regional Officer team does, because it brings us to your chapters where we are able to engage with you on a more personal level. It is our purpose as Regional Officers to help you succeed and grow as chapters and individuals; to maintain a unity among the Region's chapters, provide representation between the chapter and International levels, and offer our experiences and leadership abilities for this purpose. We are not Regional Officers because we are better, or because we like attention, we are Regional Officers because we love to serve, because we love to see you succeed as chapters and see you grow as individuals. It is an experience like none other that I've had to be able to serve in this way, and to meet so many powerful, amazing, and unique people. I wouldn't take back a single minute of the time I have spent in service to the Region.

Our duties as the CORE program is far from over, and we continue to receive invitations to your chapter events and meetings, during the winter and the spring! We are hoping to bring the College Fish Initiative to every community college in Michigan. This is something that we need you to do, and we are ready to make it happen. You may be aware that the Regional Officer team is also selling challenge coins and pins to raise funds for the Michigan Nathaniel Erickson (MI-NE) Oberndorf scholarship. We are able to sell you these well-made tokens of Regional spirit at any encounter.

The Regional Officer team can speak at your Chapter Orientations and Inductions, and offers the following workshops:

- College Completion (C4)
- College Fish
- College Project
- Competitive Edge
- Honors in Action
- Leadership
- Recruitment & Retention
- Teambuilding

Your CORE representatives are assigned as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Chapter/College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Lethig</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wlethig.ptk@comcast.net">wlethig.ptk@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>(586) 872-5725</td>
<td>Alpha Delta Omega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glen Oaks C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan May</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alanptk.mi@gmail.com">alanptk.mi@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>(586) 933-7409</td>
<td>Alpha Omicron Kappa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oakland C.C.–Highland Lakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denea Venoy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:deneavenoy.ptk@gmail.com">deneavenoy.ptk@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>(248) 238-9224</td>
<td>Alpha Nu Eta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kellogg C.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Owens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mnowens@midmich.edu">mnowens@midmich.edu</a></td>
<td>(989) 787-0671</td>
<td>Alpha Omicron Upsilon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Central Michigan College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are here to serve you,

**Michael Owens**
Public Relations/Historian
Michigan Region

---

**Who’s Next?**

**While in a leadership position** it is sometimes hard to think about who is going to take your place when you are done. The second semester is this time. Some of you are ending your community college career or just finishing your first year. Either way there is time for you to shine. In Phi Theta Kappa it is pretty much inevitable that leadership positions are a yearly duty of those elected. You have a year to do as much as you can without losing your sanity (for some this is easier than it is for others). Some find this as really easy because they love helping build others to be successful leaders. For others this is hard because they want to accomplish as much as possible with their time and leave a mark on the organization. Whatever way you think, there will always be elections for new officers.

As an officer you are a leader, a member of the top-third and a mentor. Knowing that being an officer only lasts for one year it is one of your unspoken duties to build new leaders that could possibly be the new leaders of your organization. Finishing strong not only in your semester but also in Phi Theta Kappa could pave the way for your chapter to continue or build on the success that you helped it gain. I challenge all of you to find a member of your chapter that could be the next officer and mentor them and share...
with them the knowledge you have gained. It is harder than you think, but I promise you in the end the reward is much better than the hard work that you put in.

For me, nothing was more fun during my time as president of the Xi Delta chapter at Delta College, than helping the new officers get ready to take on the new year in their new elected positions. A lot can be said about the feeling of knowing you are helping someone embark on a new leadership journey that will change his or her life. I know it can be hard but I challenge you (chapter officers) to think about who is next. Reach out to them and tell them you see potential that they could be a leader in this organization. It will change not only their life but your life as well.

Joshua Trader
Alumni Representative
Michigan Region

Creating the Spark

The smallest spark can become the greatest inferno, but where do you begin when building your membership? You should recognize that there are several key factors that will affect your numbers and how everything you do, and what you don't do, will yield the difference. Every college is different, along with its chapters. The Mu Tau Chapter had a 27% increase in membership last semester mainly due to working with our advisors and the college. Policy and procedures of the college had to become well known, networking with other student organizations and programs became essential, and learning to stand with courage of conviction made the difference.

The foundation of Phi Theta Kappa and the campaigns it sponsors can easily be endorsed by the chapters. Understanding the campaigns such as C4 and CollegeFish and for which they stand will help you receive administrative endorsements. Additionally, the Five Star Development Plan for your chapter will help you in establishing your chapter, creating and validating your brand and ultimately increasing your membership. Per the development plan, it calls for you to meet with your college president, who can help connect you to the school’s marketing team, academic advisors and other key players who can assist...
you in becoming a powerful presence on campus. Once endorsed by your college’s administration, you will find that several doors will open for you.

When Mu Tau became endorsed by the College President, we were able to contact our Honors Program, academic advisors, and work with our Provost. Their support allowed us to give presentations on Phi Theta Kappa, our chapter, and our campaigns. Within months, the image of Mu Tau was revitalized and is well known at Lansing Community College. Our understanding was strengthened by attending conferences and networking with the Michigan region. By utilizing our resources and attending the Leadership and Mini-Honors conferences, we united as an officer team, we empowered ourselves, and when I look at where Mu Tau was and where it is going, I, along with my executive board and chapter members, have accomplished that. We did something larger than ourselves, we’ve changed the culture of Mu Tau, and we created innovative ways to establish our chapter. Our future officer teams to come will have the foundation on which to stand and know what needs to be done to keep Mu Tau at Five Star Status. It was difficult, and the path to which the chapter stands has been paved with tears, sacrifices, compromises, and accomplishments; however, we learned to never back down, never surrender, and never to quit fighting for our goals. The spark to a revolution is within you, all you need to do is ignite the fire within you and change will steadily begin. You are capable of doing something amazing, you just need to believe in yourself and take action. Regardless of what happens, never dull the sparkle in your eyes.

Markus Davis II
President
Mu Tau
Lansing Community College
On December 6, 2013, Phi Theta Kappa Omicron Iota held their semi-annual Bowling Fundraiser Night at Merri-Bowl Lanes. It was a great time for friendly competition and fellowship with members, officers, friends, and family. Thanks to everyone who came out to support the chapter! That night, as promised, the winner of the Phi Theta Kappa T-shirt Design Contest was revealed. Surprisingly, it came to a draw! Congratulations to the winners of the 2013 T-shirt Design Contest: Jessica Kassis and Kate Mlinarich! Both designs were creative, spunky, and original. Kate’s artistic portrayal of the "nerd-tastic" Schoolcraft Ocelot along with the emphatic college vibes of Jessica’s ‘Phi Theta Kappa” logo were a perfect combination. Thanks to Jessica and Kate for contributing to an awesome design for this semester’s Omicron Iota t-shirt! The design is being finalized and prepped for order. Look out for updates on when Omicron Iota t-shirts will go on sale!

Blandelia Payne
Vice President of Communications
Omicron Iota
Schoolcraft College

SAVE THE DATE
Join the CollegeFish.org team for our 2014 Webinar Series

Jan. 21 at 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. CST
Jan. 22 at 2 p.m. or 5 p.m. CST

Back to School, Back to Basics
Learn how to navigate the turbulent waters of transfer using CollegeFish.org's tools! See live demonstrations on how CollegeFish.org works, including setting up your personalized profile and other splashy success resources. Special emphasis on the college and scholarship search process, financial aid, and the Course Planner.

To register, visit www.CollegeFishClasses.eventbrite.com.

866.286.8453 support@collegefish.org
www.collegefish.org
**Announcements**

**The Golden Key News Briefs** will now be sent to chapter and regional officers on a weekly basis. Chapter officers, please ensure that your advisor has you listed as a chapter officer on ptk.org to receive these weekly news briefs.

**All members** can now update their user profile and preferred e-mail on ptk.org

**Grand Valley State University** will be hosting their annual Leadership Summit on February 22. It was from this event that we obtained the Angry Birds lessons that we have in our Leadership Toolkit today, and also where some of you have first met Judson Laipply who was one of our guest speakers for the Mini Honors Conference.

**Construction on the new website progresses.** The Regional Board has reviewed a rough draft of the website and is very pleased with its progress. We are requesting that members return feedback: links to their websites and social media, their frequently asked questions, and testimonials, to include on the new website.

**If you are not yet** on the Regional e-mail listserv, you should be. Just send an e-mail to miregion.ptk@gmail.com requesting to join and we will add you. It is the best way to keep you up to date with important updates in the Region.

**The MRAA is planning** a Golf outing for the Region sometime this spring. We will keep you updated as the plans progress.

**Upcoming Events**

**2014 Regional Convention**
- **Why not** bring a friend to Michigan’s tour in your area. Please contact your PR/Historian mkalender@nmc.edu

**2014**
- **January 27:** Bill Lethig’s Birthday
- **January 29:** Hallmark Award applications due
- **January 29:** Five Star Chapter Development Plan due updated
- **February 11:** Early Registration for Annual Convention due
- **February 14:** Articles due for February Newsletter
- **February 21:** Mosal Award applications due
- **March 14:** Articles due for March Newsletter

**Your Turn**

What has your experience been as a member of Phi Theta Kappa?
What has your chapter been doing recently?
Does your chapter have an event that they would like to announce?
Do you have some words of wisdom, a short story, or piece of poetry to share?

**Any and all submissions are most welcome.** (Including photos and artwork)

You can send your articles to the Region’s PR/Historian at mnowens@midmich.edu to see them in an upcoming newsletter.

**Please note that all future article submissions will be due the second Friday of every month**

To celebrate the new Honors in Action topic the theme of the February newsletter will be based on Honors in Action; has your chapter selected a theme from the new Honors in Action Guide? How did they come to this decision? How does your chapter intend to conduct research for Honors in Action this year?

Additionally, we would like to revisit the subject of Service; has your chapter done for service this past semester? What have you learned from it? What does your chapter plan to do for service this coming semester?

In the words of Garrison Keillor, “Be well, do good works, and keep in touch.”