

Guidelines for Developing Chapter Histories

I. Written Histories

A chapter history is a valuable resource to the chapter membership and leadership. Histories of the chapter's development serve as useful references when special events, such as chapter anniversaries, Founder's Days, and new member orientations, are planned. Programming can be greatly facilitated when the chapter history is available and accessible to program planners.

Chapter histories should be written. Oral histories may be used to supplement the written histories. For practical purposes, written chapter histories should be approximately 1000-1500 words in length and presented in a narrative style. More extensive, detailed chapter histories also are valuable, especially for researchers and scholars. The length of the written history depends on the age of the chapter and the purposes for which the history is being prepared.

II. Oral Histories

Oral histories add a different dimension to an archive collection. When doing oral histories, planning is needed to assure that the interviews product the best results. Selection of the appropriate individuals to be interviewed is a key factor in producing an interesting historical record. Also, one needs to select people who are known to have the necessary personality characteristics and media experiences to handle the interview in the manner desired. In addition, the proper recording equipment and operators will need to be secured.

III. Elements of the Chapter History

It is suggested that a chapter history, include:

- A. The impetus for initiating the chapter
 1. Describe the germination of the idea and need for an honor society of nursing in your academic environment.
 2. What was the official academic framework into which this honor society fits? (i.e., department, division, school)
 3. What academic recognition within the college/university was accorded this new honor society? (inclusions in College or University bulletin letters of permission and support from University and School of Nursing to form honor society, etc.)
- B. Significant circumstances surrounding the establishment of the chapter and the date of establishment.
 1. Who and/or what was the motivating force behind the search for alliance with the international honor society of nursing? Provide anecdotal and illustrative background if possible.
 2. What administrative, community and other support was provided in the process of petitioning for a charter?
 3. Describe the first induction of members into the honor society. What academic representatives and community leaders were there? Include copies of the printed program, photos, etc.
 4. Describe the site visit, including the Sigma Theta Tau International representative, academic administration representative(s), as well as activities and publicity and audio/video tapes. List the first slate of officers.
 5. Reaction of chapter representative(s) when application received a favorable vote at the Biennial Convention.
- C. Individuals who were important to chapter development
 1. List the Steering Committee.
 2. State the guidelines for the selection process as outlined in the honor society and chapter bylaws.
 3. Provide narration on significant and/or potential chapter nursing leaders.
- D. Discussion of major activities and events that have occurred with the dates of their occurrence.
 1. Chartering of chapter
 - a. Who participated in the preparations for the chartering ceremony?

- b. Describe the setting for the activities surrounding the auspicious ceremony of chartering, induction of members and installation of officers. Include pictures of the event, programs, publicity clippings and audio/video tapes.
 - c. What academic and community representatives attended? What was their first role?
 - d. Who was the Sigma Theta Tau International representative who participated as the installing officer? Describe the position held by this individual as well as any background details.
 - e. Who received the charter and where can it be viewed?
 - f. List the charter members indicating students by class, faculty and community nursing representatives.
 - g. Identify the newly installed officers and include anecdotal and pictorial descriptions of them.
2. Evidence of continuance of leadership in newly formed chapter.
 - a. Discuss the new chapter's relationship with its mentor chapter.
 - b. Provide narration for ongoing recording of major chapter activities and events in relation to their role in achieving goals and purposes of Sigma Theta Tau International. Inclusion of financial statement will be helpful in demonstrating the chapter's values.
 3. Major trends experienced by the chapter.
 4. Future plans of the chapter.
- E. Format
1. Historical reports should be accurate descriptive narratives, supplemented by primary sources such as printed materials and photographs, rather than dry didactic outlines. The reports should be able to bring forth the facts and rekindle memories in the years to come.
 2. Include subheadings or divisions.
 3. Include glossy photographs or current historical events of your chapter and/or school.
 4. Consider having several older members involved in the early development write their view of the chapter(s) history or consider having someone audio/video tape these persons discussing their recollections, etc.
 5. Consider using videotape and/or slides to document your history.

It is recommended that chapter histories be updated biennially when the President and officers change. This update might occur simultaneously with the completion of the chapter self-evaluation process or with the submission of the officers' annual reports. Chapter activities should be summarized annually, but it may not be necessary to update the written chapter history more frequently than every five years.