

PLANNING A VIRTUAL FOUNDERS' DAY

116 years ago, our founding fathers came together and formed the organization that we fondly refer to as “My Fraternity.” Acacia was founded at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor on May 12, 1904, since that time over 53,000 men have decided to call themselves Acacians. Your chapter may have been founded at a different university on a different date, but we all share a common bond through our ritual, the same ritual that was written and delivered by the fourteen men that had the inspiration to undertake the difficult endeavor of forming a national (and now international!) fraternity.

We know that the Coronavirus has impacted our chapters’ ability to hold their traditional Founders’ Day celebrations and wanted to provide a guide to holding a virtual Founders’ Day to celebrate the ties that bind us all. Just because you cannot gather in the same physical location does not mean that you cannot come together in brotherhood on this special day!

Here are some steps you can take with some explanation for each item:

1. Choose a Day

- Pick a day closest to May 12 that works for your key stakeholders. We recommend either Saturday, May 9 or Saturday, May 16, 2020. We believe that Saturdays may allow for the greatest amount of alumni involvement – but you know your alumni best or may know of other factors that would impact what day is best.

2. Create an Agenda

- Create an agenda for the day based on what you’d like to accomplish. Many chapters already utilize Founders’ Day to present awards or scholarships to Active and Alumni members. You should consider the following activities:
 - i. Awards and Presentations
 - ii. Scholarships
 - iii. Speeches from Key Alumni
 1. Report from Housing Corporation
 2. Report of the Active Chapter from the Venerable Dean
 3. Other Speeches
 - iv. Pass the Gavel
 - v. Singing a Song of Acacia (*We’re All Good Brothers* is most popular)

3. Determine a Time

- Based on the agenda that you have you will be able to determine how long you will need. We recommend that you at least do a Pass the Gavel. With the current state of Coronavirus restrictions, many brothers may greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly and to hear from brothers they haven't seen recently.
 - i. Depending on the size of your chapter and number of attendees, Pass the Gavel may impact how much time you will need to allocate for the event and you may need to set parameters on how much for each member to share. If you have a very large number of attendees, each one may need to just say their name and a very brief greeting (*"So Live"*, *"Proud to be an Acacian"*, *"To you who are my brothers"*, etc.).
- We recommend a maximum of 2 hours for the expected period of time. Members will have to be sitting in a chair at home and more than 2 hours may end up being longer than they can stay. One way to work around this time restriction would be to ensure that the "official" programming (everything but Pass the Gavel) takes no longer than 45 minutes and allow those that need to leave a chance to sing "We're All Good Brothers" together and then leave before Pass the Gavel starts. This will allow for about a 1-hour session which most all can make time for.

4. Determine a Platform

- We recommend Zoom as a platform, but there are numerous other platforms for videoconferences that you could pick from.
 - i. We recommend Zoom because it allows for a variety of presentation capabilities (Video, Screen Sharing, Polling, a Call in Number, etc.) and also allows for a large number of attendees at a very low price. It also has the capability to expand your number of attendees quickly and easily.

5. Send Invitations

- We think that sending an email and making phone calls are all that is needed, but if you would like to do a physical mailing you are more than welcome to do so!
 - i. Acacia Fraternity Headquarters is happy to be of service in sending out an email communication to members and providing information for phone calls or physical mail.

6. Prepare for the Day

- After you have picked a date, set the agenda, and sent invitations, it is time to prepare for the day itself. Be sure to let all the speakers and presenters know in advance that you will be calling on them and give them an amount of time that you'd like them to speak for. If you are giving awards or scholarships, consider getting them prepared so that you can show them off during the call. Treat this day just as if you'd be meeting in person – get awards made, prepare certificates, etc., and show them off on the video chat when you present them.
- Plan to send reminders of the day to those registered to be sure it is still on their calendar.
- Do a run through with the technology to help prevent any issues or transition delays if this is the first time using the platform for anyone involved.

7. The Day Of

- Send a reminder to everyone the day of the event and be sure to remind them of how to log in.
- Communicate with all of your presenters to be sure that nothing has come up last-minute and that they are aware of when to sign on.