



Project Excellence Awards are given for outstanding projects that chapters have executed. To be considered, chapters must meet the chapter minimum standards. Chapters either self-nominate or are nominated by section coordinators. A total of 97 outstanding projects are being awarded to 35 deserving chapters in 2014, with a small selection highlighted below.

Carson-Newman University

Trading Places: President-Student Swap Day

President-Student Swap Day allowed one senior to be Carson-Newman's president for the day, while President Randall O'Brien agreed to take on the schedule of a student. Students applied via paper application, and the committee chose four candidates who were given six days to fundraise. We raised over \$7,000 to go toward an endowed scholarship and BOOST, an afterschool program for children of Jefferson County.

Hope College

Wearing of the Blue Breakfast

The Wearing of the Blue Breakfast is an annual event for freshmen and sophomores on the Dean's List at Hope College. The goal is to recognize underclassmen for their academic achievements and encourage them to strive for membership in Mortar Board in the future. During the event current Mortar Boards mingled with attendees, answered their questions and encouraged them in their studies. The chapter president gave a presentation about Mortar Board, the selection process and how to strive for membership. The event also included words of wisdom from the Hope College president.

Kansas State University

Pen Pal Mentorship Program

The chapter started a Pen Pal Mentorship Program with 48 fourth graders at Lee Elementary School in Manhattan, Kan. Letters were written every two or three weeks from September 2013 through April 2014. Members also spent time together sending Thanksgiving cards to local nursing homes, making holiday ornaments to give to a shelter, reading books and playing at recess. All of these events were successful. Long-term friendships developed.

Knox College

Deborah Wing Kids Carnival

The Deborah Wing Kids Carnival started with a testamentary gift from Deborah O. Wing (Swarthmore College, 1937), a beloved dean. The chapter used the funds to create an annual event in her honor in the form of a kids' carnival that would welcome families across Galesburg to be a part of the Knox College community. Over 20 Knox College organizations participated. Each organization sponsored a booth. The carnival was free to the community and all donations collected went to Blessings in a Backpack, an organization that feeds underprivileged kids on the weekends.

Mississippi College

Smorgasbord

Smorgasbord is an appreciation reception for faculty and staff. Every Mortar Board member submitted two recipes and all were compiled into a cookbook. On the day of the reception, all of the Mortar Board members prepared the dishes from the recipes and brought them for enjoyment by the faculty and staff being appreciated.

Purdue University

Mortar Board Leadership Conference

The Mortar Board Leadership Conference, titled *Generation Why (Y)*, focused on both the generation (Millennials) and their propensity to ask questions. The breakout sessions were divided into those adapting to college life (freshmen and sophomores) and developing their careers (juniors and seniors). The opening keynote speaker was Haydn Shaw, author of *Sticking Points: How to Get 4 Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart*. Former deans Betty Nelson (Purdue, 1988) and Danita Brown Young (Kent State, 1996) were among several speakers at breakout sessions. The closing keynote was given by Keri Wright, Purdue alumna and CEO of Universal Asset Management.

Rocky Mountain Section 19

Garden of the Gods

The Garden of the Gods Park is a very large, city-owned park that receives very little monetary support. Therefore, much of the work necessary to keep this park in good environmental condition is done by volunteers. The willingness of the Mortar Board members from the Rocky Mountain Section to travel long distances to help indicates their view of the importance of this type of service to the community. This year, over 70 students from five Rocky Mountain Section chapters participated in the 11th annual section project at the Garden of the Gods Park in Colorado Springs. This year, the group primarily hauled dirt and gravel up a steep trail to help finish off steps that had been built in the trail by previous volunteers. The chapters represented were Colorado College, Colorado State University, University of Denver, University of Northern Colorado, University of Utah and University of Wyoming.

Salem College

CONNECT SALEM Database

The Arete chapter connected and established a relationship with The Salem College Alumnae Association to compile a voluntary database of alumnae who wish to be involved with current Salem students. The CONNECT SALEM database was created to facilitate alumna-student interactions. Through this database, alumni are able to indicate their desire to be involved and in what capacity while students can learn which alumni wish to volunteer to assist students in mentorship, internship opportunities, or housing opportunities.

San Diego State University

Granger Shadow Day

The Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter partnered with Phi Beta Kappa to bring 13 Granger Middle School students to campus. SDSU students met them at the bus and escorted them to the library where students from Mortar Board and Phi Beta Kappa talked to them. Mortar Boards and Honors Council members took the students to the bookstore, to lunch and on a tour of campus before their return to school. This is an event that the Granger students really look forward to and all are excited about going to college and academic achievement.

Texas Tech University

Bark in the Park

Bark in the Park was planned in collaboration with the TTU Athletics Department. Several chapter members are student volunteers at the Humane Society of West Texas. They noticed that their permanent volunteers were spending out of pocket money to save some of the rescued animals and wanted to help raise funds. Chapter members decided to partner with the Athletic Department for a FUNdraiser at a baseball game. For the first time in Texas Tech history, fans were encouraged to take their best canine friends to a major Texas Tech sporting event. The result was a big win for the home team, with 233 dogs in attendance and \$455 in donations for the Humane Society of West Texas. In addition, Mortar Board president Chris Shulman had the honor of throwing the first pitch with his dog Duke by his side.

The Ohio State University

All Ohio Mortar Board

The All Ohio Mortar Board Conference brought together members from Akron, Case Western, Otterbein and Ohio State for the purpose of networking, personal and professional growth, and meeting alumni. This year's conference involved one afternoon of sessions featuring speakers and discussion topics on the Ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service; a Mortar Board alumni panel and networking dinner; and a closing brunch. Nine members came from other universities and 15-20 Ohio State chapter members were present.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney

Fuel Around the Fountain

Fuel Around the Fountain was an effort to give back to all UNK students. On a cold Wednesday morning during "Dead Week," the last week before finals, Mortar Board members distributed coffee, hot chocolate and donuts to the students. Around 15 members worked the booth that was located in the center of campus. This effort was to provide the students with a study snack during one of the most difficult times of the semester. The group also promoted the chapter and its values to the students.

The University of Toledo

WrapUp America

WrapUp America is an organization founded in Toledo, Ohio, that provides blankets for those in need. The 3rd annual blanket drive was hosted at UT and operated by the chapter. The event consisted of partnering with various companies and organizations to gain support and promotional deals. Over 500 students came together at a blanket fort building event where all blankets were collected. The event was an incredible experience and resulted in the donation of more than 1,600 blankets.

Tulane University

Middle School Girl's Leadership Conference

The Sophie Newcomb Alpha Sigma Sigma chapter held their Middle School Girls' Leadership for students from ARISE Academy, titled "Loud and proud: Standing up for what you believe in." The day included icebreakers, a tour of campus, a discussion on the value of education, a "taking action" activity where the girls wrote letters to members of the community and a t-shirt making activity to conclude the day in a fun way.

The University of Alabama

Commencement Rose Sale

The Hypatia chapter conducts a rose sale at all commencement ceremonies held by The University of Alabama each year. They sell roses to graduates' parents and friends in order to raise money for student scholarships. Over the past year, the chapter has raised \$10,000+ to be given back to fellow students at UA in the form of scholarships.

University of California, Los Angeles

Bruin Leaders Project

The Agathai chapter held three workshops with the Bruin Leaders Project, conducting a variety of interactive tests to find out their leadership styles. They started with a personality test, discussed leadership styles, and reviewed strengths and weaknesses. It was a great learning experience to hear how people handle different situations. Each workshop was held for a limited number of students at multiple times throughout the year.

The University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Book Buddies

The Black Masque chapter takes pride in its participation in the "Book Buddies" program with the local Clinton Elementary School. Each week throughout the school year, chapter members travel to the elementary school to help teach inner city children, teaching various subjects including reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science.

University of New Mexico

Hanging on the Greens

Hanging of the Greens is the The University of New Mexico's oldest tradition on campus. Every year near the end of the Fall semester, the Maia chapter hosts and coordinates the event to provide various student organizations with enough sand, bags and candles to place over 13,000 luminaries around campus.

University of North Dakota

Turkey Basket Drive

The Turkey Basket Drive is the Quo Vadis chapter's largest and most successful project. They send letters to over 2,000 businesses asking for support and worked with high school honor societies and local nonprofit agencies to coordinate donations. This year, the baskets contained a turkey, vegetables, five pounds of potatoes, a pie crust and filling. They raised over \$20,000 to assist 1,250 families. With an average of four people in a family, over 5,000 people were able to enjoy their Thanksgiving dinner with their family, thanks to the chapter's assistance.

University of San Diego

Linda Vista Outreach Program

This project is a series of events throughout the year. In the fall, the chapter arranged a "College Essay Day" in which Mortar Board members visited Kearny High to help students develop their college personal statements. They also spent time with future Kearny students at the Halloween Reading is Leading Project. In the Spring, the chapter invited Kearny students to visit USD for a tour and Q and A. They then traveled back to Kearny for a First Generation Panel, where first generation Mortar Boards talked about their experience. Finally, they raised over \$1,000 for their STRIVE scholarship fund, awarded annually to two Kearny seniors who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership and service.

University of South Alabama

Tip of the Cap

This event was created this year to honor nonteaching staff members on South Alabama's campus. While the Azalea chapter hosts an event in the fall to honor teaching faculty, the members felt that it was necessary to honor staff members from all departments across campus. Each member nominated an outstanding staff member to receive a personalized certificate and roses delivered to their office by the Mortar Board member who nominated them. In all, they delivered 50 "Tip of the Cap" awards.

University of Vermont

NEDA Walk

NEDA, the National Eating Disorder Association, was a passion of Akraia chapter members, who decided to sponsor the first NEDA walk in Vermont. NEDA walks are fundraising events, but they center around a short (less than two miles) walk. The chapter held the first walk in Vermont, including snacks and a raffle with prizes donated by local businesses and organizations. They ended up with incredible donations and raised over \$7,500 for NEDA.

University of Washington

Excellence in Teaching Award

Tolo Chapter's Annual Teaching Award is a recognition given to a distinguished professor, as nominated by undergraduate students. The chapter received a record number of 73 nominations from students. The committee collaborated as a team to narrow down the nominations to five exemplary professors, who were presented to the entire chapter for final selection. The chapter then agreed and voted on one professor to receive this high honor.

Washington University in St. Louis

Young Storytellers Festival

For Mortar Board Week, the Keod chapter reached out to elementary schools in the surrounding area with a program called the Young Storytellers. Elementary school students submitted stories to be acted out by theatre, a capella and improv groups. The members had a fantastic collaboration with almost a dozen student groups, families from the community visiting the Wash U campus for the first time, children seeing their stories come to life and everyone having a wonderful experience. Many of the families had never visited the campus of Wash U. The students who contributed their stories were able to sit in the audience and watch their imaginations come to life through song and improvisation.