



# *Founders Day* **PLANNING GUIDE**

Founders Day, one of the most honored Delta Gamma traditions, provides an opportunity for alumnae and collegians to come together, honoring our three Founders and rededicating themselves to the Fraternity’s ideals. It is a time to remember and celebrate Anna Boyd Ellington, Eva Webb Dodd and Mary Comfort Leonard. It is also a time to recognize and celebrate our sisters and their contributions to our sisterhood. Founders Day celebrates the past, the present and the future of Delta Gamma.

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### DG Style Guide Tip:

*Founders Day is always capitalized and never uses an apostrophe. Founder and Founders are also capitalized when referring to our three Founders.*

## **Who Plans Founders Day?**

A Founders Day Committee is responsible for planning Founders Day each year. This committee should be comprised of representatives from any collegiate chapter (including the chapter's vp: finance or designated director, along with the chapter's COA and director of rituals) and alumnae group that will be attending the celebration.

In some areas, where no collegiate chapters are nearby, the Founders Day Committee may comprise representatives from a single alumnae group. In other areas, multiple alumnae groups and collegiate chapters may need to work together on the planning. It is essential that all groups involved have representation on the committee and play a role in the planning. Members should be invited/appointed to the committee one year before the event.

## **When Should We Start Planning?**

When Founders Day concludes, planning for next year should begin right away. While the event is still fresh in the minds of attendees, the committee can assess what went well, what they would like to continue, and what areas are ripe for change or improvement. Committee members from all involved groups (collegiate and alumnae) should be invited to attend the first planning meeting. Ideally, an initial committee meeting should occur in April-May the year before the event, allowing collegiate representatives to be present before the school term ends. See the Planning Timeline on the next page for an idea of when certain tasks should take place.

## **When is Founders Day?**

Founders Day is to be celebrated as near to March 15 as is convenient. The date selected should be suitable for all groups involved (collegiate and alumnae). Weather, collegiate schedules, local school breaks, and holidays often dictate a group's celebration date. Picking a date for your next Founders Day as soon as possible will help with proper planning. For Founders Day celebrations including a collegiate chapter, the date selected should be verified by the chapter vp: programming and included in the collegiate calendar planning.

## Planning Timeline

### **April/May (the year prior)**

- Establish a Founders Day planning committee with representatives from any collegiate chapters and alumnae groups that will be attending the celebration. In larger metropolitan areas, consider inviting nearby alumnae groups and collegiate chapters for a combined celebration.
- Determine the budget, working within the established collegiate budget for the next fiscal year and at a reasonable cost per person.
- Select tentative dates that work for the collegiate chapters and alumnae groups.
- Begin reviewing possible venues.

### **June/July**

- Finalize the date and venue and add the event to chapter/group calendars.
- Brainstorm theme, speakers and entertainment.

### **August/September/October**

- Send "Save the Date" to alumnae.
- Divide specific tasks among committee members. See planning details below.

### **November/December/January**

- Send invitations.
- Continue to work on details and finalize plans.
- Verify Founders Day is correctly listed on the collegiate spring calendar.

### **February/March (Before Founders Day)**

- Finalize all plans.
- Verify food/beverage selection, noting any special dietary requests.
- Collect the cost per attendee and verify who will be attending.

### **Founders Day**

- Ensure the Founders Day committee knows when set-up begins. Bring all necessary supplies and decorations and great ready for your event. Today is the day!
- Verify volunteers at registration have name tags and a list of anyone who still needs to pay for admission. Registration volunteers should encourage (and take payment) for local and Per Capita dues for alumnae who have not yet paid. Volunteers should greet and assist older alumnae who may need help finding their seats (especially if steps are involved).

### **After Founders Day**

- Retain records of budget, attendees, venue, entertainment, etc., to reference for planning the next Founders Day.
- Consider sending out a survey to those that attended.
- Regroup with the committee to discuss what went well and areas for improvement.
- Start planning the next one!

## Who Should Be Invited to Founders Day?

All collegiate and alumnae members/new members within a reasonable geographic area should be invited to Founders Day. If a collegiate chapter is planning Founders Day and there is not an alumnae group nearby, the collegiate chapter should invite individual local alumnae (e.g., via personal invitations). Alumnae groups should extend invitations to all alumnae in their area, even those who may not be members of a local alumnae group. Do not overlook regional team members who may/may not live nearby or current/past Cabinet and Council members.

Founders Day attendance need not be limited to members only. For example, the spouse of a woman receiving an award may be invited or the guest speaker may not be a Delta Gamma. However, the Oath of Friendship and “Faithful and True” cannot be used when non-members are present and may not be printed in the program nor written down.

## Who Pays for Founders Day?

A budget for Founders Day should be determined early in the planning process. For Founders Day celebrations involving collegiate chapters, note that the chapter budget for the year is finalized each spring for the next year (a year in advance), so advance planning is crucial to allow chapters to budget properly. The approved budgeted number cannot be modified.

Collegiate chapters pay the cost for their members to attend, and alumnae pay individually. The committee must work within the budget and consider the cost for individual alumnae. Keep costs down by carefully selecting a venue and food, raffling off centerpieces, and avoiding unnecessary expenses. A group may decide to sponsor a guest speaker or donate the decor to further reduce expenses. To help you plan, use this [sample budget](#).

### **Cost Per Person Should Include:**

- Venue cost and fees (including any technology fees, if applicable)
- Food and beverage (including tax/tip)
- Decor
- Programming (guest speakers, gift for speaker, other entertainment)
- Printed materials (including name tags, programs, invitations, etc.)
- Guest speakers and entertainment
- Other items as determined by the Founders Day committee

*NOTE: All groups involved must be represented on the Founders Day committee. If a group is not represented, they may not be responsible for costs.*

**Additional Collegiate Chapter Costs:**

- Gifts or recognition for advisers, House Corporation volunteers or house director
- Collegiate awards (may include chapter-specific awards, scholarship recognition, scholarship honorees, senior recognition, for example)

**Additional Alumnae Group Costs:**

- Gifts or recognition for alumnae officers or individual alumnae group awards
- Costs associated with any Individual Alumnae Awards
- Recognition for membership milestones (25-, 50-, 60-, 70-, and 75-year members)
  - When a group's financial position allows it, 25-, 50-, 60- and 70-year members may be presented with specially designed pins from Executive Offices. Individual members may also order their own milestone pins. There is no designated pin for 75-year members, but members achieving this milestone should be recognized. A cream-colored rose is appropriate for recognition.

# Contracts & Deposits

Various services may require signed contracts, including the venue, caterer, and some entertainment. Ideally, contracts and deposits should be handled by the alumnae group(s) involved in the planning.

## Selecting a Venue

Selecting a venue is one of the most important choices of the Founders Day committee. It is important to select a venue that is available on the dates that work for the collegiate chapters and alumnae groups involved, can work within the budget set by the Founders Day committee, and can accommodate the number of guests expected. A banquet hall, hotel conference room, restaurant, or garden may all be appropriate venues.

Will food and beverage be provided by the venue or will you need to hire an outside caterer? What costs are included in the venue (technology, parking, etc.)?

Additionally, consider the location of the venue. Can members easily access this location? Is it too far outside your local area? Or is it in a congested part of the city with limited parking? For our older alumnae, does the venue require a lot of walking or stairs? Avoid holding Founders Day at a member's home. Members who do not know the host may feel unwelcome.

## Food & Beverage

The event budget determines the food and beverage served at the event. There is no meal requirement. Some groups prefer to have a plated meal, while others prefer to have appetizers. Working with your venue and caterer will help you find the best fit. Some suggestions include:

- Plated meal (brunch, lunch or dinner)
- Buffet
- Themed food items (tea party theme, for example)
- Appetizers
- Desserts

Non-alcoholic beverages should be provided, often water and iced tea. Coffee and hot tea are other popular items to have available.

Note: Delta Gamma policy states that alcohol should not be served at rituals, including Founders Day. Out of respect for our Founders and ritual, pre- and post-events should not serve alcohol, even if the events are only for alumnae. For more information on alcohol, view the [Collegiate Alcohol Policy](#) and [Alumnae Alcohol Responsibilities Guide](#).

## Planning the Program

When planning the program, it is important to keep timing in mind. Keep the program a reasonable length for your members and venue reservation.

### Suggested Program

- Inspiration/Grace/Blessing
  - See the [Rituals Handbook](#)
- Short memorial for deceased group members, if desired
  - See the [Rituals Handbook](#) for ideas
- Opening/Welcome
- Introduction of honorees
  - For example: current and former Council/Cabinet officers; advisory team members; charter members of chapters; house corporation board members; past officers; Foundation, Fraternity or local award winners
- Chapter roll call of **all** Delta Gamma chapters that have ever been in existence.
  - It is appropriate to read all chapters in founding order, even if there are no members in attendance that day or the chapters no longer exist. This tradition provides a broad scope of the Fraternity to members, as well as offers a history of the Fraternity. A current [Chapter Roll](#) call can be found in the Delta Gamma library.
- Songs or other entertainment by the collegiate chapter or alumnae group.
- Highlights of the past year and plans for the future (collegiate chapter, alumnae group and/or House Corporation)
- [Recognition](#) and Presentation of awards
  - Rose, Loyalty, Anchor, Shield, Oxford, Cable, Hope Awards
  - Local awards
  - Milestone recognition (25-, 50-, 60-, 70- and 75-year recognitions)
  - See the [Rituals Handbook](#) for award presentation
- Introduction of speaker and speaker's remarks.
- [Candlelighting Ceremony](#)
  - Found in the Rituals Handbook
- [Omega Toast](#) - no alcoholic beverages should be used during the toast
  - Found in the Rituals Handbook
- The Oath of Friendship and *Faithful and True* may be used to close Founders Day
  - The words are never to be printed and cannot be used with non-members present
  - See the [Rituals Handbook](#)



## Other Programming Ideas

- Installation of alumnae group officers (see the [Rituals Handbook](#)).
- Collegiate scholarship awards (see the [Rituals Handbook](#) for the [Presentation of Mu Chapter Lamps of Knowledge](#)).
- Senior recognition by the collegiate chapter.
- Recognize members abroad/who have studied abroad in the past academic year.
- Adviser appreciation by the collegiate chapter (see the [Rituals Handbook](#)).
- Other rituals, such as *In the Beginning... Our Founders* (to be read immediately before *Candlelighting Ceremony*), *By the Light of Delta Gamma*, inspirations, informal rituals or readings. See the [Rituals Handbook](#) for additional ideas.
- Other announcements or business from the alumnae group, collegiate chapter or House Corporation.
- Plan a networking event and/or resume-building event after Founders Day to give chapter members the opportunity to learn professional skills from alumnae in attendance.

## Printed Program

Consider printing a full program with the schedule of events and each speaker. To keep printing costs down, the full program may be available on an overhead projector for attendees to see during the event.

- Schedule of events, speakers and names of candle lighters.
- Recognition of 25-, 50-, 60-, 70- and 75-year members. All names should be acknowledged, even if the honoree cannot attend.
- If you have a guest speaker, consider printing a short biography in the event program.
- Past Individual Alumnae Award winners.
- Menu, if applicable.
- Words to Delta Gamma songs, toast or blessing, as applicable.

## Invitations

Alumnae members should receive a save-the-date notice the fall before Founders Day. Alumnae should be invited six to eight weeks before the event, and reminders should be included in communication to alumnae. The preferred method for alumnae to purchase tickets for Founders Day is through memberplanet. Some members may prefer to pay with cash or check, directly to the alumnae group. Here are some ideas for inviting alumnae members:

- Include event announcements in all newsletters and emails beginning in the fall.
- Have a flyer of events available at each event for members to take with them.
- Send an invitation through memberplanet when tickets are available for purchase.
- Invite members through alumnae group social media pages and encourage members to share with sisters who may not be included.
- Mail a postcard or invitation to all alumnae in the area.
- Send special invitations in the mail to honorees, such as 25-, 50-, 60-, 70- and 75-year members.
- Consider hand-delivering invitations with a cream-colored rose to honorees.

## Guest Speakers

Consider inviting a guest speaker such as a Fraternity or Foundation visitor or a local Service for Sight representative. When selecting a speaker, think of someone who may inspire your members or speak to a topic of interest.

If you do not select a Fraternity or Foundation guest speaker, consider contacting your Regional Alumnae Specialist (RAS) to obtain a copy of the official Founders Day speech to use during your program. This speech is updated annually, so be sure to request the latest version.

Ideally, the cost of a guest speaker is absorbed by the individual ticket prices. All groups involved should have a say in who the speaker is through their committee representative.

A guest speaker may have a variety of costs to consider:

- Meal cost
- The price of the speaker (if applicable)
- Lodging
  - Delta Gamma guest speakers may be a guest at the home of another Delta Gamma, but sometimes hotel arrangements are preferable.
- Travel (airfare, rental car, mileage, taxi, etc.)
  - A local Delta Gamma may pick up the speaker at the airport and drive to the event as a welcoming gesture and cost-saving measure.
- Meals during travel and stay

## Entertainment

Your venue may offer soft background music, or you may opt to provide your own. The collegiate chapter may wish to coordinate a song, or you may decide to arrange live music. Entertainment does not need to be extravagant, so keep budgets in mind and allow the planning committee to get creative.

Official videos can be found at [vimeo.com/deltagammaeo](https://vimeo.com/deltagammaeo).

## Name Tags

Consider identifying members with a sticker or printed symbol for various recognition including:

- 25-, 50-, 60-, 70- or 75-year members
- Founders Day committee and volunteers
- Alumnae or collegiate officers, chapter advisers, and house corporation officers
- Regional Team/Cabinet/Council member
- Past Individual Alumnae Award winners
- Foundation Scholarship/Fellowship awardees

## Additional Ideas

### Fundraising at Founders Day

Fundraising can be a great way to offset some costs of Founders Day or can be used as a contribution to the Delta Gamma Foundation.

Some fundraising ideas may include:

- Live or silent auction
- Centerpiece sale
- Raffle

Note: Only the Delta Gamma Foundation has a 501(c)3 designation. Donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible. Any funds to the chapter or alumnae group are not tax deductible.

### Seating/Mingling

- Consider offering members the opportunity to reserve an entire table with a group of sisters, encouraging reunions and increasing attendance.
- Consider mixing alumnae and collegiate members at tables to encourage networking, demonstrate lifetime engagement and connect alumnae and collegiate members.
- Conversation starter cards could be placed on tables to encourage members to get to know one another.
- Host a social hour before or include 30 to 60 minutes before your program begins for networking and mingling.
- Consider having a networking board where alumnae may post business cards and collegians may post resumes.