



# Society for Collegiate Journalists

National Honorary Society of Collegiate Mass Communications

Founded as Pi Delta Epsilon (1909) and Alpha Phi Gamma (1919)

[www.scj.us](http://www.scj.us)

## National Council

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DeBartolo Hall  
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mearnhardt@ysu.edu

Dr. Mary Beth Earnhardt  
DeBartolo Hall  
Youngstown State University  
1 University Plaza  
Youngstown, OH 44555  
mearnhardt@ysu.edu

You recently expressed an interest in starting or reactivating a chapter of the Society for Collegiate Journalists on your college campus. On behalf of the National Council and our members I am pleased to respond.

SCJ is the Nation's oldest collegiate mass communication honorary. We have more than 80 chapters throughout the country on both large and small campuses. Our membership is open to all students who contribute to campus media. Some of our chapters act as student clubs, some as exclusive honoraries and others seem to blend both missions. At the heart of all our members is a desire to promote the goals and work of student media.

Many great universities and college media advocates were involved in the creation of the society, including Dr. Louis Ingelhart, Daniel E. Thornburgh, John David Reed, Glen A. W. Kleine, J. William Click, Wilford Kale, Syracuse University, Ohio Northern University, Eastern Illinois University, Cowley County Community College, Kingsborough Community College, and Ocean County Community College (for a complete history see <http://www.scj.us/constitution/index.shtml>). Last year we celebrated our 100th anniversary at our biennial convention at North Carolina State University.

We pride ourselves on being a student centered organization. Student delegates meet every two years to set the course of SCJ, and because of this SCJ offers many benefits to members including (for a complete list see our website at [www.scj.us](http://www.scj.us)):

- A national college journalism contest that is judged by professional journalists;
- A \$250 stipend for chapters to help bring a speaker to campus or host a media day;
- A close relationship with the Student Press Law Center (which we adopted as our national philanthropy in 2004);
- Merit awards which are available for each chapter to give to a deserving candidate;
- National awards celebrating the work of students, chapters and advisers.

I'm proud to say that we continue to provide member services through a modest student membership and initiation fee. Each student member makes a one-time dues payment of \$30. Upon receiving payment the student gets a membership certificate, an SCJ pin, a press card and a copy of the Constitution Handbook. The only other fee is a one-time payment of \$30 to become a chartered chapter or a \$15 reactivation fee if you want to reactivate a defunct chapter. We ask that each chapter find a minimum of three students to start their efforts.

This starter kit includes the materials you'll need to be successful. Please call me or email me if you have questions or concerns. I am happy to help with even the most minor of details.

Thank you,

Dr. Mary Beth Earnhardt  
SCJ Executive Director

[www.scj.us](http://www.scj.us)

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## Five EASY Steps to Getting your Chapter Started

**1. Find a faculty adviser and 3-4 interested students.** Here is what the National Constitution Handbook says about active membership:

**Section 3 Active Membership**

Active membership shall consist of any student enrolled in an institution where a chapter of the Society is established. Selection for membership shall be based on the following criteria: (1) the candidate shall be a student in good academic standing on a campus where a chapter of the Society exists, (2) the candidate shall have worked for an accredited communications medium, (3) the candidate's work should demonstrate a commitment to the ideals of the profession, and (4) the candidate will be selected by his or her peers in recognition of significant contributions.

When chapters are just getting established we usually make contact with a faculty adviser who will select a handful of students who meet the criteria above to be the founding group. After the founders are selected they usually write their own constitution and set their membership criteria.

**2. File your paperwork with the National Office.** After the adviser and students are selected you need to complete some forms. First up is the chartering form, this is called the Petition for Chapter Charter (a copy is enclosed with this packet). You fill out this form if you are starting a brand new chapter or re-establishing a chapter that has gone defunct. The adviser fills out this form and gets a check (\$30 for a new charter, \$15 to re-charter). When I receive this form in the National Office, I will create a Charter for your group and send it to you along with a copy of the chapter honor roll. However, there is one catch, I also need to receive initiation forms for 3-4 students. You can't have a club without members. The individual Initiation Report (5 copies are included with this kit) is filled out by each individual member of the group and then mailed to the national office with a check for \$30. The \$30 is the one-time dues payment for each new member. Students can send individual checks or the institution can send a check for all the students at the same time. When I get the check and initiation report I send the chapter a pin, press card, handbook and membership certificate for each new student member. So, to summarize I need each new chapter to send:

- A. A completed Petition for Chapter Charter form,
- B. \$30 for a new chapter or \$15 for a reactivation,
- C. At least 3 separate Initiation Report forms,
- D. \$30 for each new member who completed the Initiation Report form.

**3. Set up your initiation ceremony.** When planning your initiation make sure you send the forms to the office at least 2 weeks before you hold the ceremony (I need time to process them and get your materials to the adviser). The initiation ceremony can be very formal or informal, it's up to each chapter to create their own tradition. The ceremony is found in the constitution handbook and on the web at <http://www.scj.us/constitution/ritual.shtml>. I'm including the scripts I used when I was our local chapter adviser, so you'll get a feel for the ritual. I'm also including a copy of the letter I sent out to students inviting them to be SCJ members when we reactivated our chapter at Youngstown State. Feel free to use it as a template, or to use whatever type of invitation works for you.

**4. Initiate your members.** You're almost there. Now is the fun part. Get the students together and conduct the initiation ceremony (if some have to miss, they can sign the honor roll later). Give each member his or her certificate, pin, handbook, and press card. Buy a frame and hang the Chapter Charter on the wall and enjoy the good will that happens when you honor really hard working students.

**5. Hold elections.** Have a brief meeting to hold officer elections. Holding local office is great for your resume and it established the chapter as a presence. I always held my officer election immediately following initiation, it took about a year to get the chapter up and running, but now the chapter is strong and the officers plan the initiation. After this, you'll receive info from the National Office on our activities and your chapter can conduct its business at the local level. You're up and running.

\*NOTE: Your university may also require some approvals to start a student organization, talk to your student affairs office or Dean's office to make sure you meet these requirements.

# Society for Collegiate Journalists - Initiation Report

Name of School:  
State:  
Date of initiation:

Please type or print in ink the name exactly how you want it to appear on the certificate of membership. This form must be received two to three weeks before the initiation in order for pins, certificates of membership, and press cards to be processed and returned in time for the ceremony. All reports must be signed by a chapter officer or adviser. Each chapter should make a duplicate copy of all initiation forms for chapter records. The originals will be retained by the National Office at the address below. Report forms must be accompanied by all initiation fees before membership materials will be issued. Please send one single institutional check for all initiation reports submitted at one time; indicate the school and number of new members. The **thirty dollar (\$30)** initiation fee is for a lifetime membership. Most initiates apply for ACTIVE membership, however if a chapter would like to bestow HONORARY membership on someone who does not seem to fit in the active category the form is the same.

This is to certify that

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Middle Name Last Name

was initiated as an (Active or Honorary) member of this society on \_\_\_\_\_  
circle one Date of Initiation (please return this form and \$30 to National Office at least 2 weeks prior to initiation ceremony)

Home or Permanent Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street and Number City State ZIP

College Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street and Number City State ZIP

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Born

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year City State

The new member is part of the Graduating Class of \_\_\_\_\_

and is a Candidate for the following degree \_\_\_\_\_

List Publications/Media Service (Staff and Years) \_\_\_\_\_

If an Honorary Member, include info about business affiliation and degrees completed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation Street and Number City State ZIP

Degrees Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**As adviser or president I certify the above to be correct and request that membership be recorded.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Title of Certifying Chapter Officer

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter Adviser's Phone Number Chapter Advisers Email

Mail Completed Forms to:  
Dr. Mary Beth Earnhardt  
The Society for Collegiate Journalists  
DeBartolo Hall  
Youngstown State University  
1 University Plaza  
Youngstown, OH 44555

Phone: 330-941-1517 | Fax 330-941-2304  
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Revised 8/10

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## Petition for Chapter Charter

To The National Council of The Society for Collegiate Journalists:

1. Institution:

Name	State
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2. Name of Petitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name of Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_

4. SCJ Chapter Permanent Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Adviser Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. \*Size of Petitioning Group (number of members): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include an Initiation Report and \$30 lifetime membership fee for each student petitioner.

7. School size (approx. number): \_\_\_\_\_

8. List accrediting organizations vouching for standing of college or university:

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Campus journalism publications (newspapers, yearbook, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. List courses in print or electronic journalism in the school's curriculum: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Mail Completed Forms to:***

Society for Collegiate Journalists  
Dr. Mary Beth Earnhardt - Executive Director  
DeBartolo Hall  
Youngstown State University  
1 University Plaza  
Youngstown, OH 44555

# \*\*\*\*\* Sample Initiation Letter\*\*\*\*\*

The Society for Collegiate Journalists  
Founded as Pi Delta Epsilon (1909) and Alpha Phi Gamma (1919)



November 3, 2006

Dear Student Journalist:

I am pleased to inform you that your name has been submitted for initiation into the Society for Collegiate Journalists at Youngstown State University. You have been nominated because the work you have contributed to campus media has been substantial and significant, and your grades are above average.

This national honorary society is dedicated to the recognition and support of college media organizations and those students whose efforts keep the principles of journalism and mass communication alive. Our local chapter is reactivating this year. Membership in SCJ makes your work as a student journalist eligible for the National Contest. This is the only college student journalism contest that is judged completely by professional journalists.

Our initiation will be held *Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at 3:30 p.m. in 13 Fedor Hall*. The activities will include a formal initiation ceremony and a short business meeting. We hope that you are able to join us. Light refreshments will be served.

Enclosed is an initiation report form that you must complete and return to signify your acceptance of our offer of membership. Please complete the form, and bring it to Mary Beth Earnhardt in the English Department Office on the second floor of DeBartolo Hall by Monday, November 13, 2006. The fee for admission to SCJ is a one-time \$30 national fee which is paid to our National Executive Office. We ask that you enclose a check (for \$30) with your form. The check should be made payable to The Society for Collegiate Journalists. Please indicate whether or not you will be attending the initiation banquet on the RSVP. You may still accept the nomination even if you do not wish to attend the ceremony.

We look forward to hearing from you. Welcome to our honorary organization!

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Earnhardt, SCJ Youngstown Chapter Adviser

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## Youngstown State SCJ RSVP

I will attend the SCJ Initiation Ceremony on November 28, 2006.

I will NOT attend the SCJ Initiation Ceremony on November 28, 2006, but am enclosing my membership form and check for \$30.

# SCJ Initiation Ritual

## **Greeting (Presiding Officer):**

As Presiding Officer of this meeting of the Society for Collegiate Journalists, I greet with pleasure the candidates for admission.

You have been selected to be members of the Society for Collegiate Journalists because of your achievements in collegiate publications and broadcasting.

The Society, which is the nation's oldest honorary society for collegiate mass communications, admits as members only those persons who exemplify the dignity, personal freedom, and initiative that we believe are the hallmarks of excellence in collegiate communications.

As a national honorary society for men and women, the Society attempts to provide its members the opportunity to discuss the journalist's role and performance, to encourage the standards of good practice, and to enjoy the rewards of positive contributions to the betterment of mass communications and the public they serve.

## **Ethics and Practices (Other Officer)**

Never in the history of mass communications has the role of the journalist been more important than it is today. The primary world links are the reports and reflections of the media. These links serve as the life-blood in disseminating information and commentary to the public, whether on the campus or in the city, nation, or world.

The Society for Collegiate Journalists challenges you as its newest members to remain aware of the world around you and to hold high its standards of ethics and practices, embracing the working principle conducive to worthwhile and significant journalistic contributions. As a candidate for initiation you are to repeat the following standards that the Society believes you as a journalist should uphold:

Please rise and repeat after me:

I hereby pledge to...

Gather all pertinent news and opinions...

Concerning issues and events on the campus...

Striving at all times for accuracy and fairness...

And to safeguard the freedom of all campus media...

In order that they be able to serve the campus community...

Without dictation, coercion, or restraint...

You may sit.

In the judgment of the Society for Collegiate Journalists, these standards represent the highest precepts of enlightened and professional journalism.

# SCJ Initiation Ritual cont.

## **The Pledge (Presiding Officer)**

The Society now asks you to pledge to pursue only the highest ideals in one of the most demanding and most difficult professions of our time – journalism.

Will the initiates now stand and join with me in reciting the pledge.

I come before you seeking membership  
In the Society for Collegiate Journalists  
I have read and understand  
The National Constitution and Bylaws  
And pledge to uphold  
The ethical standards of the Society.  
I also pledge to subscribe willingly  
To the practice of freedom of expression  
And will guard against  
The abuse of this right.  
I understand that I am held accountable  
For the content of the printed page and broadcast,  
And must stand firmly by what I believe  
To be right and significant  
For the campus community.

You may be seated.

The Society for Collegiate Journalists therefore urges you to value collegiate mass communications. As a member of the Society, you shall stand on your honesty of purpose, your belief in the work of the Society, and your intellectual integrity.

As you sign the Honor Roll, we welcome you into our councils. (AWARD pins, press cards and Certificates and have students sign the honor roll).

## **Read Names:**

### **Student One**

### **Student Two**

### **Student Three**

Thank you for attending our ceremony. Will all members please stay for the election of officers and discussion of the contest.