
Alpha Phi Omega

NATIONAL SERVICE FRATERNITY



Advisor's Guide



BETTER COMMUNITIES TODAY – LEADERS FOR TOMORROW



The leaders of tomorrow are today’s college students. For students to be successful leaders, they need more than strong academic programs. They must acquire the ability to effectively work with and motivate others, utilizing organization, communication and other leadership skills. To fully prepare for participating citizenship, it is critical that students learn the importance of and experience the benefits of volunteerism.

Alpha Phi Omega provides an excellent opportunity to achieve these objectives on campuses nationwide. Our programs provide students with opportunities to serve those in need, develop leadership skills and build lifelong friendships.

To develop leaders of tomorrow and to enhance service to campuses and communities, each chapter needs a core group of volunteer advisors to help the chapter’s membership grown and excel.

INTRODUCTION

Alpha Phi Omega is an organization fulfilling two roles:

- I. It provides service to the campus, the community, the nation, and the Fraternity through college students.
- II. It is part of the educational opportunity that provides practical skills and leadership development.

APO has provided service, developed leadership and promoted friendship since 1925. A key factor to the long-term success of each APO chapter is the service and dedication of its chapter advisors.

The Advisor's Guide introduces APO and summarizes the duties and responsibilities of chapter advisors. While this guide is intended for new advisors or persons considering becoming an advisor, it can also be a resource to readers who are already involved.

If you are already an advisor, we thank you for your time and effort to encourage service to others and to develop tomorrow's community leaders. If you are considering becoming an advisor, we welcome you to join our program of service!



OUR ORGANIZATION

Alpha Phi Omega is a national service fraternity with active chapters at more than 365 universities/colleges nationwide. The Fraternity was founded in 1925 based on the principles of the Boy Scouts of America. Scouting affiliation is not a requirement to join the Fraternity; however, many chapter service programs include activities with Scouting organizations.

Membership is open to all enrolled students and is as diverse as the college population itself. Each chapter, operating under the National Bylaws and Standard Chapter Articles of Association, recruits its own membership, selects its leadership and develops its service program. University or college approval is required for each chapter to be in good standing with the National Fraternity. Accordingly, APO charters are presented to the college or university, not to groups of students. Nationally, APO is governed by a biennial convention composed of student delegates from each chapter. Voting delegates at each National Convention consider legislation, elect the Board of Directors and set fees and priorities. The National Office in Independence, Missouri, provides supplies and other resources and coordinates educational programs, such as leadership development workshops, service exchanges and national programs.

The Fraternity is administered at three levels. First, the Fraternity is governed between the Conventions by the Board of Directors. Second, there are eleven geographic regions, each led by a regional director who serves a two-year term on the Board of Directors. Each is responsible for supporting and promoting activities within his or her region. Regional conferences are held every two years to provide interaction between chapters and to promote motivation, idea sharing and leadership development.

Third, within regions are sections. Each section elects a sectional chair to serve a one-year term and usually holds one or two conferences per year. Both sectional chairs and regional directors can be helpful resources to chapter advisors.

ADVISOR DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

The role each chapter advisor plays depends heavily on the advisor's background, availability and what the chapter desires. Chapters are required to have at least two faculty/staff advisors, one Scouting or youth services advisor, and one community advisor.

Successful chapters tend to have advisors who provide:

- A long-term perspective and commitment to a constantly changing membership.
- Motivation, counseling and arbitration in the right dosages.
- Participation in enough meetings, projects and/or activities to know chapter leaders and programs.
- An open door and open phone to the chapter (being approachable).
- An ability and willingness to initiate contact with chapter leadership when communication wanes.
- Participation in chapter, sectional, regional and national activities.
- Participation in chapter ceremonies, banquets, etc.
- Encouragement in the effective planning of individual projects and at least an annual review of chapter service, fellowship and leadership development opportunities.
- A shared knowledge of opportunities and past activities to encourage chapter pride and awareness of history.



- Alertness to warning signs of potential problems (declining membership or participation in projects, excess share of seniors, inadequate planning, etc.) and the ability to counsel chapter leaders on the need to improve.
- Full adherence on the part of the chapter to school and fraternity requirements.
- Encouragement to members to assume responsibility and learn new skills.
- Attendance at advisory committee meetings. These are chaired by an advisor and may involve the chapter president.

There are many things advisors should NOT do. They include:

- Running meetings or projects for active members.
- Providing too many answers or too much direction (Advisors guide, they do not direct).
- Limiting change as membership and community needs change. Today's projects may not be appropriate tomorrow.

Finally, we recognize that an advisor has other priorities that must come ahead of APO, such as family and careers. Thus, we understand that the commitment of an advisor must be one that is consistent with other priorities.



CHAPTER FUNCTIONS

Each chapter determines its own programs. Chapters typically have several leadership positions whose duties and titles vary somewhat by chapter. Typical officers and their duties include:

PRESIDENT: Responsible for running meetings, encouraging and motivating members, promoting coordination among other officers, and monitoring activities and following up as necessary for desired results to be achieved. He or she is the major contact between the chapter and other organizations and the Fraternity volunteers.

VICE PRESIDENT OF SERVICE: Responsible for organizing a service program which meets the needs of the membership, coordinating this service program, finding, motivating and directing project chairs, and for ensuring successful projects through effective leadership.

VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBERSHIP: Responsible for locating prospective members, implementing training programs for pledges and maintaining participation of active members, and directing fellowship activities. The latter is often the responsibility of a separate Vice President of Fellowship position.

Other typical officers include: **SECRETARY** (takes minutes of meetings and handles official correspondence), **TREASURER** (collects fees/dues and forwards them to the National Office, manages budgets and controls chapter funds, promotes fundraising), **SERGEANT AT ARMS** (parliamentarian at meetings) and **HISTORIAN** (maintains scrapbooks, etc., of chapter).

Chapters typically meet either weekly or biweekly during the school year to plan projects, vote on business, share information, and encourage interaction among members. One of the needs an advisor can fill is to work with chapter leaders to improve meetings.

Most chapters supplement chapter meetings with periodic executive committee meetings of chapter officers, advisors and others. This is an effective way to plan and coordinate activities, brainstorm, settle disputes and review the chapter's programs.



Pledge meetings are also held separately to provide pledges an opportunity to learn about APO's organization and history. During the meetings they may also plan a service project and other activities.

Pledging in APO provides a chance for prospective members to learn more about the group to determine if they wish to join. It allows them to demonstrate their commitment to the organization

by meeting chapter-specified participation requirements and to learn about fraternity history and traditions. In APO, there is no place for hazing of pledges or members, and chapters committing such offenses are dealt with severely by the Fraternity.



CHAPTER OBLIGATIONS

Chapters are required to file a roster annually by November 15 and to submit Annual Active Membership Dues (AAMD) by the same date. Pledges are required to pay a pledge fee and, later, an initiation fee in a timely fashion. These fees are determined by the National Conventions and are submitted to the National Office to defray the costs of membership materials, mailings to chapters, national programs, maintenance of membership lists and other administrative costs. All members receive certificates and membership cards. Chapters may impose local dues to pay for local activities. Chapters must maintain permanent mailing addresses.

Chapters are encouraged to conduct planning sessions at least annually, and a Chapter Assessment and Planning Session (CAPS) is provided annually to accomplish this. Chapters are also encouraged to attend conferences and conventions along with leadership workshops. Information on these are sent (about monthly) during the school year to each chapter.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Publications available from the National Office:

- Visit our Web site at: www.apo.org
- Pledge Manual (requirements and fraternity history)
- APO IMPACT Guides (describe duties of key officers)
- National Bylaws (legal structure of organization)
- Starter Kits (for schools without active chapters)
- *Torch Topics* Chapter E-Newsletter
- *Torch & Trefoil* quarterly fraternity magazine
- Merchandise, membership materials, order forms and brochures

For information of how to become an advisor or to find out what chapters are in your area, contact:

- National Office
- Regional director or sectional chair
- Existing advisor or chapter president

NATIONAL OFFICE INFORMATION

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