

MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

I. Pledge Ritual: The Pledge Ritual remains an effective statement of Fraternity policy regarding treatment of Pledges during their preparation for active Membership.

II. Initiation Ritual: The Initiation Ritual remains an effective statement of Fraternity policy regarding conduct of Members of Alpha Phi Omega.

III. Other Policies: In addition to statements in these rituals, it is the policy of Alpha Phi Omega that:

A. Membership shall be granted only by Brothers of an active chapter or by the National Board of Directors in the case of National Honorary Membership.

B. Because all people have the potential to be of service and to be leaders and friends, Active Membership is open to all students and should represent a cross section of the student body. Chapters have the right to determine their own Membership. Active Membership shall be granted only within the context of the National Bylaws, the Standard Chapter Articles of Association, and the rules and regulations of the school involved.

C. Chapter Membership requirements may be adopted that are not in conflict with state and local law, the National Bylaws and Standard Chapter Articles of Association of Alpha Phi Omega, or the rules and regulations of the school at which the chapter is located; and that conforms with the philosophy and policy of Alpha Phi Omega as outlined in the National Pledging Standards.

D. The purpose of a Pledge Program is to make it possible for Pledges to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to function as effective Active Brothers of this National Service Fraternity. Therefore, the ultimate aim of every pledging period is to teach the worth of human dignity, promote academic scholarship, instill a commitment to continuing service, provide opportunities to participate in leadership development experiences, and cultivate friendship among the Pledges and with the Brothers. Pledge Programs should also ensure that Pledges become thoroughly familiar with the principles, ideals, and heritage of Alpha Phi Omega.

E. All pledging activities must have an articulate and reasonable positive benefit, be consistent with the principles and spirit of Alpha Phi Omega, and involve no risk of humiliation or injury to any person.

F. Those preparing for Active Membership are representatives of Alpha Phi Omega. As such, they shall be treated with the same degree of respect as Brothers and shall participate in, or be asked to participate in, only those activities that are consistent with the Membership policies of Alpha Phi Omega.

Practices that may be inconsistent with the Membership policies of Alpha Phi Omega, depending on the facts and circumstances of each, include restrictive formation, dress requirements, and the manner in which Pledges are addressed.

Examples of Practices that do not meet this standard include:

- 1) *Subjection to physical mistreatment such as road trips, kidnapping, paddling, branding, beating, forced activity, and confinement of any kind;*

- 2) *Participation in activities not directly related to their preparation for Active Membership such as physical conditioning or personal services for Active, Advisory, Alumni or Honorary Members;*
- 3) *Participation in activities that restrict such normal social functions as eating, social contacts, or personal hygiene;*
- 4) *Subjection to mentally or emotionally stressful situations as an integral part of their Pledge activities;*
- 5) *Blindfolding, except as part of the Pledge or Initiation Rituals; and*
- 6) *Subjection to informal ceremonies, traditions, rituals or initiations that are contrary to the policies or Bylaws of Alpha Phi Omega.*

Of course, enumeration of these specific activities does not imply that all other practices are consistent with the Membership policies of Alpha Phi Omega. All Membership activities and pledging requirements must be measured against the criteria set forth in this Membership policy.

G. Active Brothers are responsible for maintaining Chapter Membership practices involving any Members of the Fraternity, including actives, in strict accordance with the policies of Alpha Phi Omega and its stated purpose in keeping with the principles of the Boy Scouts of America.

H. Advisory, Honorary, and Alumni Members of Alpha Phi Omega participate in supporting, but not dominating, roles to active chapters, enabling the active chapters to fulfill the purpose of Alpha Phi Omega. It, therefore, is not the function of Members other than Active Brothers to direct the supervision of Pledges or to direct the establishment of Pledge or active Member programs and policies in any chapter.

I. Chapters, Interest Groups and Petitioning Groups of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity shall not use or condone the use of alcoholic beverages as part of their Membership recruitment "rush" or Pledge education programs. A violation of this policy shall be deemed a violation of the Membership policies of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity.

IV. Enforcement: The National Fraternity, through its National Board of Directors, shall take appropriate action when inconsistencies or infractions of Membership policies occur.