

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS TO ALPHA PHI OMEGA

As featured on APO IMPACT Guides at www.apo.org

A student's decision for whether or not to join Alpha Phi Omega is based largely on whether he or she believes the Fraternity will meet their personal needs. A prospective brother must feel that membership offers them something they want; whether it is friendship, leadership development, or the opportunity to serve.

This means that to recruit, your chapter must be able to promote its programs throughout the campus. No one will join a group that they have never heard of or that does not appear to do anything. At the same time, you do not want to develop an image of doing nothing but work. You also must let people know that you enjoy what you do and have fun doing it.

Think back to why you joined APO. Was there a person who was influential in your decision? I bet there was! Personal recruitment can be one of the most influential techniques. The committee must select recruitment events that will allow you to make as much personal contact as possible. This will allow you to "sell" the Fraternity directly to the prospective members and to answer their questions. Prospectives must have the feeling that they are wanted by the chapter and will belong once they join.

Some examples of activities your chapter could do are:

- Information booths in major campus buildings
- Knocking on dorm doors
- Open service projects to which the student body is invited
- Fellowship events, such as going to an athletic event as a chapter, and so on.

The possibilities are endless!

Having recruiting events with activities can give everyone at the event (actives, alumni, advisors, and even pledges) a common experience. The common experience can help make everyone comfortable with each other, and can be a great opportunity to get to know one another.

As a committee, brainstorm ideas for recruitment events the chapter would like to hold. The events could be ones your chapter has a tradition of holding, or they could be brand new ideas! Take those ideas and formulate your chapters' recruitment calendar. In planning your calendar, keep in mind the other important dates of activities in your chapter, school and community. It may not be the wisest decision to plan a service project in the next town over on the same day as the first home football game. Or if everyone in the chapter has class on Tuesday nights, planning an informational meeting for a Tuesday may mean you have a lower attendance of brothers. Once you have brainstormed ideas and developed a plan, analyze it carefully. Would you be attracted to APO by it? Another consideration is whether the chapter has the resources to carry out the plan.

Once the plan is agreed to, everyone in the chapter must understand it and be able to follow it. You should explain the recruitment calendar fully, and train your chapter at a meeting. You also could hold a recruitment clinic for your chapter to help develop each person's recruitment skills within the chapter.

So as a recruitment committee you are responsible for:

- Brainstorming for recruitment events
- Planning for the recruitment calendar
- Organizing the recruitment events
- Training your chapter to participate in the recruitment events
- Evaluate and revise the outcome of the recruitment events

In the end it is not only the membership committee's responsibility to recruit prospective members, but that of the entire chapter. Emphasize that it is the entire chapter's responsibility to recruit prospective members. As a membership committee, you also will need to equip them with the tools available, and support them in their efforts to recruit more members, doing more service, on more campuses. Finally, recruiting is a leadership developing process that everyone in the chapter is responsible for. Your program should be structured so you are constantly developing a list of prospective members and building contacts with them.

RUSHING

When you mention "recruiting" to most APO brothers, the first reaction is "Rush". Rush is the period during which the chapter conducts an extensive campaign to recruit new pledges. This should be the culmination of your recruiting, not the entire process. Recruitment is an on-going process of finding prospective members continuously through out the semester. A successful approach would be to use a combination of both strategies.

Once your chapter has established a continuing recruitment effort, rush becomes less stressful and more productive. The recruitment coordinator then begins with a list of prospective new members at the beginning of each semester and the goal is to add to them, instead of starting from scratch.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITING EXPERIENCE

As a membership committee, to help each member of your chapter be the best recruiter they can be, coming up with a 30 second "sales pitch" or "elevator speech" can help some members know what to say when they approach prospective members.

Select one or two people from your committee to act as the recruiter. Tell them they will be expected to use the "sales pitch" developed by the committee to persuade a prospective member to join.

Then, select three other people to act as the prospectives. Ask one to act totally uninterested in joining, the second to be very interested, but in a social fraternity, and the third to be curious but not excited.

Have each discussion take place in front of the chapter. Then ask for suggestions on how to improve the approach. Keep in mind that your purpose is both to polish the "pitch" and to explain it to the rest of the chapter.

For more information on recruiting members, or for more information on other chapter responsibilities, visit the APO IMPACT Guides on www.apo.org or register for an APO IMPACT Live webinar.