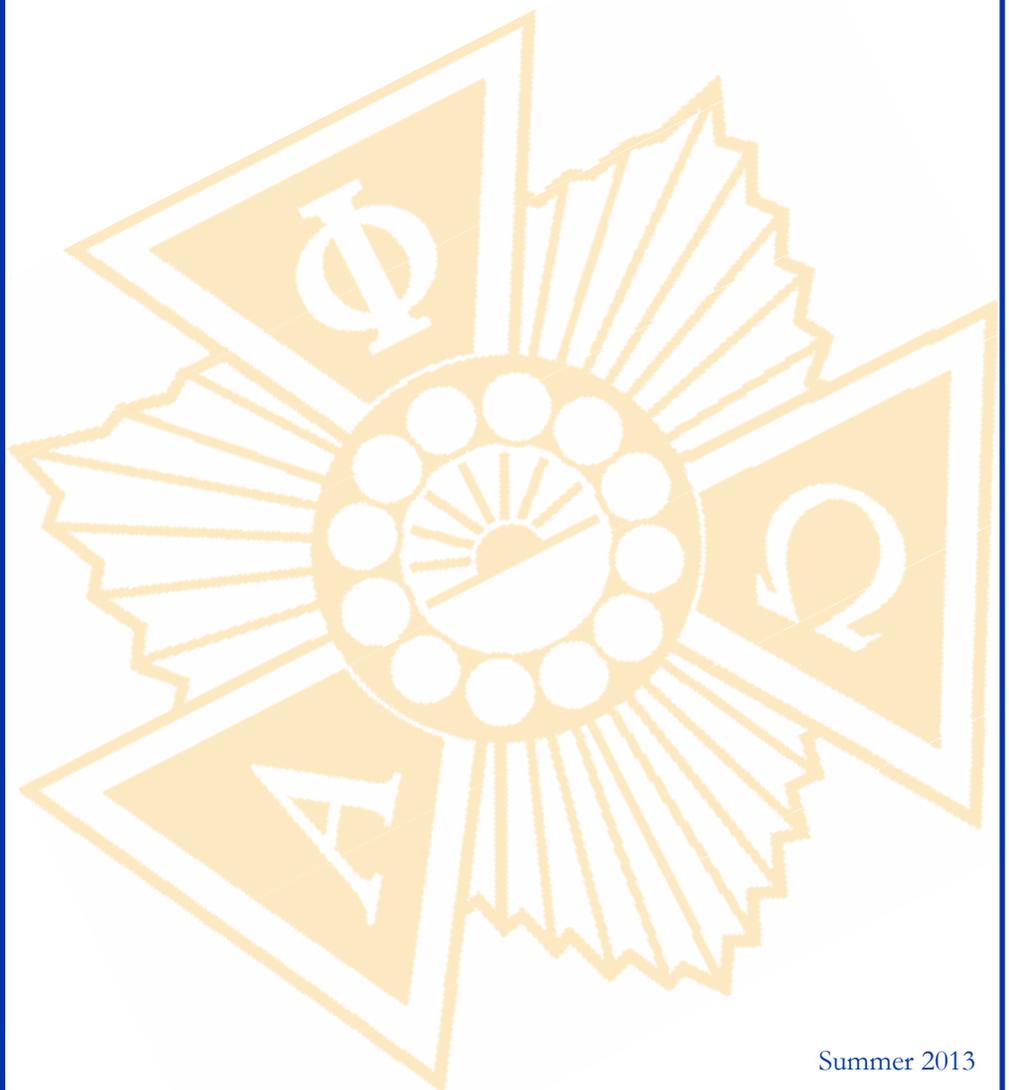


Alpha
Phi
Omega



GROWING PAINS



14901 East 42nd Street South
Independence, MO 64055

Phone: 816-373-8667
Fax: 816-373-5975

www.apo.org

Summer 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- Chapter 1 FIRST STEPS
- Chapter 2 CHAPTER MEETINGS
- Chapter 3 PLEDGES
- Chapter 4 CHAPTER OFFICERS
- Chapter 5 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

APPENDIX A: How to Write a Concise Email

APPENDIX B: Brainstorming Worksheet

APPENDIX C: Blank Event Signup Sheet

APPENDIX D: Sample Chapter Agenda

APPENDIX E: Ice Breaker Resources

APPENDIX F: Sample Pledge Syllabus

APPENDIX G: Sample Pledge Lesson Plan

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be a quick reference tool for brothers and chapters that are suddenly experiencing Growing Pains, as well as for brothers and chapters trying to adapt after the initial onset of a large pledge class. As you go through these pages you will notice that each chapter is comprised of 4 distinct sections:

1. A Worksheet that can be taken by an individual brother, an Executive committee or the chapter as a whole.

The Worksheet helps to assess the current state of a chapter.

2. Essential Questions that are a great tool to encourage innovation in the creation of new ways to work through these Growing Pains.

The Essential Questions assess what the chapter might like to see/do.

3. A bulleted list of Guiding Steps that concisely outline some of the steps you could take.
4. A full explanation of the Guiding Steps that goes into more detail regarding how you could work through the Growing Pains.

The Guiding Steps present information that a chapter could use to implement the changes they might like to see.

The Worksheet and Bulleted Guiding Steps are recommended for chapters needing a “quick-fix”.

If your chapter can spare the time, the Essential Questions are the second most important item.

The full explanation of each of the Guiding Steps are definitely important, but don't get bogged down unless you truly have the time to review them, or are trying to be Proactive.

Ultimately, this guide is NOT a be-all guide to solve your chapter's struggles. It is in fact a tool that can help you to find the right answers – just remember that often the right answer is the answer that works best for your chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Do you feel overwhelmed by the sudden rapid growth your chapter may be experiencing? Are your meetings becoming difficult to manage as a result? Does it seem like some of the older brothers just aren't participating as much anymore? Does it feel like there's so much to do that you don't know where to begin? If so, your chapter has just encountered one of the best problems that a chapter could possibly have. It is the very nature of Alpha Phi Omega to attract new brothers who believe in the common goal of providing selfless service to others, and naturally we occasionally see periods of time when college students around the nation are stirred by this call to arms.

Throughout this guide, you need to stay focused on the positive nature of growing pains. Your chapter has now become larger and your potential to do service has just increased. Imagine the possibilities – larger events, easier networking with campus organizations, greater fellowship and brotherhood, etc. As your chapter grows your connection to the fraternity and your brothers will strengthen, and you will find Alpha Phi Omega to be much more rewarding. Of all the obstacles you could encounter in Alpha Phi Omega, growing pains are one of the most desirable.

Now, with change there can be often be friction. Some people don't like change and will resist the urge to continue growing numbers within the chapter, and this is a perfectly valid perspective. Change is difficult. Change can be frightening. Change is unbalancing. Make sure to always consider these perspectives with your brothers, and as a chapter you should be deciding whether you would like to return to a smaller size or try to continue this amazing growth. Make sure to weigh the costs and benefits of both sides, especially since a conscious effort of returning to a smaller can sometimes lead to chapters having less than 15 brothers and getting into real jeopardy.

Growing Pains are something that every chapter will experience throughout its life, and the ways of managing these situations will vary from chapter to chapter – there is no “miracle cure”. As you go through this publication you will notice that there are several tools made available to you – use them the best that you can, in a way that best suits your chapter's needs. To help you along the way there are worksheets to complete, questions to ask of yourself/chapter, guiding steps to create a plan, as well as several appendices to fill in as many of the gaps as possible. No one section of this guide will solve all of your problems, so you should also make sure to get advice from your local volunteer staff members – Advisors, Section Chairs/Staff, Region Staff, other chapters with recent growth, etc.

CHAPTER 1

FIRST STEPS:

Look at the bigger picture

FIRST STEPS:
Look at the bigger picture

Hypothetical Situation 1 –

You've just inducted 60 new pledges into a chapter of 15. What do you do first?

Take a step back, breathe and assess the situation. Use this worksheet to help you get a clear and objective perspective of what exactly your situation might be:

1. On a scale of 1-5, rate the level of brotherhood within your chapter before you brought in these new brothers:

1 2 3 4 5

2. On a scale of 1-5, rate the level of brotherhood within your chapter AFTER you brought in these new brothers:

1 2 3 4 5

3. What were the chapter's general feelings towards gaining so many new members?

4. Identify and prioritize the 3 biggest concerns/challenges facing the chapter:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. What steps have you (aka the chapter) taken to relieve the stress of growing pains?

6. What resources are available to you that could help you through this transition?
(Circle all that apply, AND fill in their names)

Advisors

Section Chair

Section Staff

Region Staff

FIRST STEPS:
Look at the bigger picture

For the rest of this guide, we'll continue our hypothetical situation of 60 new pledges to a chapter of 15 –

Your first task is to take a step back to see the bigger picture. Remember that change is scary, and tends to put us into a state of “fight or flight”. With all the extra adrenaline we often find ourselves rushing head first into a situation, usually resulting in a “bull in a china shop” situation. Take some advice from your favorite flight attendant – “in the case of an emergency, place your own oxygen mask first”. If everyone in your chapter is trying to help everyone else, action plans won't be devised, leadership will collapse, and messages will be miscommunicated.

Now that you've caught your breath, look at what your chapter has achieved. Either through the execution of a great recruitment program or sheer luck, you have managed to greatly increase your chapter size. Think of all the amazing things your chapter could now accomplish; think of all the new service projects and contacts you could make; think of the new friends you will make through the common bonds of service. No matter how stressful the situation may seem, this is an amazing opportunity that has been presented to you and your chapter. The chapter will be drawn together by the common goal of growth

Consider the following essential questions, and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Discuss them with brothers one-on-one or as a whole chapter – make sure that any major decisions are well supported by the chapter. If you feel that any discussions might become heated, feel free to seek out a 3rd party to facilitate these discussions, such as an advisor, Section Chair, or other volunteer staff your chapter has a relationship with.

Essential Question:

- What other positive things can come out of this type of growth?
- What new service ideas could be implemented?
- What new fellowship ideas could be implemented?
- Who can you turn to for help/advice?
- Will you let the pledges know that you were caught off guard?
 - Make a pro-con list for this last question
- How did the chapter manage to successfully recruit so many new brothers?
 - Is it reproducible?
 - Is it something your chapter wants to reproduce?

FIRST STEPS:
Look at the bigger picture

Guiding Steps:

- *Communication* (Leadership & Fellowship):
 - More regularly
 - More clearly
 - More effectively
- *Delegation* (Leadership):
 - “Growth Officer”
 - Form a welcoming committee
 - Be flexible
 - Rapid prototyping
- *Need for inclusion* (Fellowship & Service):
 - Don’t forget your chapter brothers
 - Form a think tank

Communication:

Communication needs to happen more often, more clearly and more effectively to ensure the happiness of your fellow brothers. Your chapter is in a period of major transition, and your brothers will want to know what is going on. Find a way to keep everybody in the loop, but DO NOT spam them. Regular communication will set up clear expectations for when brothers should expect to hear about things. Clear and effective communication will convey to everyone that you respect and value their time by not wasting it with frivolous words.

Delegation:

There are no roles in Alpha Phi Omega that can be completed by one person alone. Consider creating a “Growing Pains Officer” dedicated to what is going on during this period of transition. Their responsibilities could include listening to everyone, finding answers to questions, evaluating the process of growth and providing feedback along the way to the appropriate parties. A welcoming committee with the sole purpose of welcoming the pledges at any and all events can help to disguise any chapter fears or concerns from the pledges – the pledges will probably think that you planned to have this amount of growth, and are completely prepared for it. Being flexible is part of being a great servant leader – If something isn’t working, don’t be afraid to change what you’re doing, or to find a replacement for a task you’ve already assigned.

FIRST STEPS:

Look at the bigger picture

Rapid prototyping is important because it allows you to think about each roadblock as you come across it, and to find a way around/over it. It is the process of coming up with new ideas and implementing them quickly. It also involves tweaking those ideas along the way whenever you notice something that isn't working too well, hence the term "rapid"

Rapid prototyping involves:

- Coming up with an idea
- Implementing the idea
- Evaluating it along the way
- Making tweaks along the way

Always ask yourself "Is this the best way to go, or should we try something different now that we're part way through the journey?"

Need for Inclusion

It can be very easy to lose sight of what you have when you are presented with something new, especially when you are confronted with 60 brand new pledges. It is important to not lose sight of your fellow brothers during this transition – they deserve the same amount of attention in fulfilling their needs as brothers as you give to your pledges. Make sure that you are providing them with the leadership, fellowship and service opportunities they want, and that you are meeting their needs to keep them happy. A great idea is to form a think tank – getting to discuss about APO challenges and come up with creative solutions is a great opportunity to give to your brothers. You can make it as formal or informal as you would like, and then put the ideas into place.

"Brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want something badly enough. They are there to keep out the other people."

- Randy Pausch (1960-2008)

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER MEETINGS

CHAPTER MEETINGS

How do your chapter meetings run? Use this worksheet to assess where you are, and where you would like to be:

1. How long is an average chapter meeting?

0-20mins 20-40mins 40-60mins 1-2hours 2+ hours

2. Do you have to quiet the brothers down often?

YES NO

3. Circle what you see most of in your brothers during a chapter meeting:

Paying Attention Doing homework Staring inattentively Side conversations

4. On a scale of 1-5, rate the amount of time spent on officer reports:

(Little Time) 1 2 3 4 5 (Lot of Time)

5. On a scale of 1-5, rate the amount of time spent developing brotherhood, or other activities:

(Little Time) 1 2 3 4 5 (Lot of Time)

6. Identify 3 things that your chapter does that contribute towards successful chapter meetings:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

7. Identify 2 things that could be done to make chapter meeting more interesting/appealing:

a. _____

b. _____

8. Is there a pre-planned agenda for each meeting?

YES NO

9. If you could sum up the atmosphere of your chapter meetings in one sentence, what would you say?

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Running an effective chapter meeting under the best of circumstances can be tricky, let alone during a period of transition. It takes a skillful hand to balance the tedium of chapter business with elements of fun and enjoyment that engage your brothers in meetings and fellowship. For many chapters, this meeting is the only regular time when all the brothers come together and as such it is a time that should not be wasted. Chapter business is a key component of all chapter meetings, but brotherhood is just as important and is often not planned.

When it comes to rush periods, or fellowship events we come up with great ideas to build brotherhood, but often we leave fellowship at chapter meetings up to chance. Take this growth as an opportunity to do something exciting during your next chapter meeting; something to engage your brothers with each other; something to get them talking or moving around; something to encourage new friendships amongst your brothers.

Now that we've established the importance of chapter meetings, let's think towards how they relate to growing pains. Consider the following essential questions before you continue:

Essential Questions:

- Do you have enough space?
 - If not where else can you have meetings?
- How will important information be disseminated?
- What about brothers that can't attend?
- What about brothers who have to arrive late or those that have to leave early?
 - How will they catch up?
- Will chapter meetings need to be longer because there's more information to share?
 - How will the brothers react to this?
- More brothers = more friendships/cliques... How will side conversations be managed?
 - Streamlining is necessary
- How will you track attendance?
- How will you keep everyone engaged?

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Guiding Steps:

- *Communication* (Leadership & Fellowship):
 - Chapter PR
 - Event Signups
 - Calendars
 - Chapter meetings
 - Room size/shape/layout
- *Delegation* (Leadership):
 - Streamlining
 - Organization
 - Pre-Planning
- *Need for inclusion* (Fellowship & Service):
 - Door greeters
 - Engaging your audience (your brothers)
 - Committee Structure

Communication:

As a small chapter you might be used to planning every event at a time convenient for everybody, but with a larger number of people that isn't always possible. Simply telling people when the event is going to take place is no longer enough. Event signups are an excellent way to fill service events, or do a head count to order food for a fellowship event. Just like there are four areas of Service, there are 4 areas of Publicity – the chapter, the campus, the community, and the nation. We often overlook publicizing things to the brothers of our own chapters because we take their participation and motivation for granted – after all they joined the fraternity with the common goal of providing service to others. The brothers in your chapter are your most valuable resource; don't overlook them; make them aware of every opportunity you have available for them; get them excited about attending the events you have planned – you'll find that a little PR goes a long way when growing and sustaining programs of Fellowship and Service.

Time is a commodity very valuable to us all and our schedules can fill up very quickly, which is why we need to plan ahead. Taking some time at the end of each semester, or during breaks to plan out the upcoming semester will solidify dates of major events in everyone's calendar (CAPS is a good time for this). The more forewarning your brothers have of upcoming events, the better – they can mark their own planners and schedule around them when other organizations host

CHAPTER MEETINGS

events. Basically, make sure that you are planning ahead as much as possible, and letting everybody know about it.

When considering communication during chapter meetings we need to think about some logistical elements – How is the room laid out? Can everyone hear the speaker? Should you use a projector and create PowerPoint presentations? Do you need to print an agenda for the brothers or email one out in advance? All of these elements are things to consider when planning effective chapter meetings, but it is by no means an exhaustive list. Earlier we mentioned being clear and concise in communications with your brothers, and it is doubly important to clear and concise when communicating in person. Each officer who speaks during a meeting should be prepared, should be able to project their voice, and should be able to engage your brothers during their portion of the meeting. For lack of a better term, “Classroom Management” is another element that needs to be considered – how will you ensure that your brothers are focusing on the material being shared? Often times brothers will police each other, but there are occasions when the Sergeant-at-Arms or President may need to put their foot down to quiet the chapter, or to rule things out of order.

Delegation:

Streamlining is necessary with large chapters simply because there is more stuff to get done – more service events, more fellowship events, more supplies to be purchased, more, more, more. If you’re ever in doubt, remember the K.I.S.S. method – Keep It Stupidly Simple. This goes for streamlining, organizing, and pre-planning. If you feel that too much time is spent talking, and not a lot is being done, then you are probably going too deep in your train of thought. Streamlining is all about keeping things organized and simple. Planning an effective chapter meeting is a lot of work, but it doesn’t need to be done by one person. Delegate some of the responsibilities away from the President and give it to other officers. Not only is it a great way to engage and value your officers, but it is an excellent way to develop leadership by giving them additional responsibilities. Chapter officers can report what they have been doing since the last chapter meeting, or when upcoming events are, or can lead discussions, or can facilitate a game/activity – the possibilities are endless.

Sometimes we see leaders try delegating responsibilities in this way and it just doesn’t seem to work, and it usually boils down to one of two reasons. The first reason is that chapter leaders are doing some form of micro-managing. Micro-managing often conveys to the officers a lack of trust from the president, so they feel undervalued and incapable, and with those negative feelings performance suffers as well as the chapter’s strong programs of leadership, fellowship and service. On the other end of the spectrum there are leaders who are more than happy to give their officers more responsibility, however they sometimes pass this responsibility along without

CHAPTER MEETINGS

any guidance or direction. Without a direction, chapter officers can feel lost and unsure of what they are supposed to be doing. The president should be regularly checking in with officers to get updates, to provide support, and to answer questions along the way. Give your officers a task, tell them when you want it done, and maybe a rough idea of how you might go about it. If you can do these things, then your delegation of tasks will work well.

Need for Inclusion:

The most important thing to remember when thinking about Inclusion is that brothers who feel valued for their opinions and contributions are brothers who will share their opinions and contribute to the betterment of the fraternity. When it comes to chapter meetings, it is easy to overlook the commitment your brothers are demonstrating by attending – we can sometimes think “they’re supposed to be here!” This could not be farther from the truth. Every brother of your chapter has made a conscious choice to attend the meeting; has made a conscious choice to participate in your chapters’ activities; has made a conscious to choice to be a brother of this fraternity. This should not go unnoticed.

A simple “Hello” or “Great to see you” from a brother assigned to be a door greeter can go a long way. If you were greeted at the beginning of each chapter meeting, wouldn’t you feel welcome? Wouldn’t you feel a little brighter? Wouldn’t you feel like you are valued? And most importantly – Wouldn’t you feel like coming to the next chapter meeting might make you feel these same positive emotions? It doesn’t take much to welcome each brother as they come to a meeting, but the benefits you will reap are unfathomable.

When it comes to the real meat of the chapter meeting we can look back at streamlining – are we engaging our audience? If you can answer the following questions, you can begin to plan effective and inclusionary chapter meetings:

- Why should I come to the meeting?
- How will I benefit by attending?
- Is there something important going on this time?
- Is there a point to this meeting in particular?

If you begin to plan each chapter meeting with the focus of inclusion you will find that your attendance will steadily increase from meeting to meeting. Engage your audience with different speakers spaced out through the meeting; with Q&A sessions to invoke thoughtful discussion; with candy/snack treats to reward brothers participating in discussions; with weekly awards that recognize small things like offering to drive to a service project, or picking up pizza for the last fellowship event. The brothers in your chapter are your greatest resource, and you must remember to value them and their potential contributions.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Small chapters suddenly becoming large chapters often find themselves with a large body of brothers who don't feel as connected to the chapter because the chapter officers are usually ones doing all of the planning. This isn't a bad thing; after all, you've been doing it that way for as long you were a small chapter. But now things are different. There are a lot more people to plan for, and a lot more people with ideas to bring to the table. Remember your greatest resource? Unlock the potential of those brothers not currently serving as officers – form committees in the chapter. Each of the main chapter officers could foreseeably lead a committee of brothers. Each committee would then be delegated responsibilities by the officers and your brothers become much more invested in the chapter because they have a tangible purpose for their participating.

To give you an example, on a Fellowship committee you could see:

- Each brother being assigned to plan a small fellowship event;
- All of the brothers coming together to plan a LARGE fellowship event such as a formal, or community field day;
- Brothers giving officer reports during chapter meetings, thereby developing leadership;
- Brothers brainstorming ideas for future events;
- Brothers voicing opinions on what events they would like to see, thereby providing a sample of the chapter larger than a single officer;

The possibilities when using committees are endless. Once you begin to fully utilize a committee and delegate tasks (while providing guidance and direction) to your brothers, you will see amazing growth in the strength in your chapter that parallels your growth in chapter size.

“...because our organization has grown so much and in so many different ways, the delegation process places responsibility and authority on the shoulders of people you can watch grow and watch the way they treat others.”

- Vince McMahon (1945-.....)

CHAPTER 3

PLEDGES

PLEDGES

Pledges are the future of any chapter, which is why it is important to make them feel welcome and valued. Put yourself in their shoes for a moment – Do you feel confident or hesitant about joining a new organization and meeting new people? Remember that change is difficult, and your pledges are going through a period of major change. Treat them respectfully and show them the best that your chapter has to offer. Pre-planning is crucial when it comes to working with pledges. If your chapter is not even partially prepared for this influx of new voices, they will sense it. Remember that Rapid Prototyping can help you through this – come up with an idea and try it out. Think through the essential questions to gain an understanding of how to revamp your pledge program for this new class.

When a chapter is used to seeing small pledge classes, they usually have a pledge program in place that has proven itself time and time again. Now that you have a much larger pledge class that same pledge program is usually not rigorous enough to suit the needs of a larger class. Ultimately it all comes down to what the chapter thinks is important for the pledges to know and learn. To help you along that path we recommend focusing all learning activities towards one single concept – “The purpose of a pledge program is socialization.” Nine times out of ten if you follow this concept your pledge program will be a success.

What is socialization? At a superficial level it involves making the pledges feel welcome and that they are part of the group. You should incorporate them into the chapter so that they feel like fully invested brothers when they are done with the program. Deeper than this superficial level it involves teaching the pledges about the purpose and meaning of Alpha Phi Omega. It is through this deeper understanding that our pledges can learn what it means to be a good and responsible brother of our fraternity.

Use these essential questions to challenge and push yourselves to develop a pledge program that will meet the needs of both the chapter and the pledges.

Essential Questions:

- What is the purpose of the pledge program?
- What should the pledges know coming out of the program?
- What should the pledges be able to do coming out of the program?
- How will you teach these things to your pledges?
- How will they bond together or get to know each other as brothers?
- How will you manage the LARGE quantity of pledges, AND educate them well?
- What will motivate/engage them?
- How will you/they know that they have fulfilled the requirements to be an active brother?
- How will they incorporate within the chapter?

PLEDGES

Guiding Steps:

- *Communication* (Leadership & Fellowship):
 - Chain of command
 - Pledge Educator assistant(s)
 - Ice Breakers
- *Delegation* (Leadership):
 - Pledge-class Officers
- *Need for inclusion* (Fellowship & Service):
 - Stay as one large group, or split into two smaller groups
 - Competition
 - Socialization

Communication:

During such a period of transition it is great to delegate tasks and to diversify officer positions to include new tasks, but you should realize that it can also make the decision making process more difficult. These difficulties are seen when brothers don't know who is in responsible for the various different aspects of chapter life. This is why it is important to lay out a chain of command both to the brothers and to the pledges. The pledges, more than your active brothers, need to know who can answer their questions, which makes it important to have one person responsible for the pledge program. Not only does this convey a sense of order and preparedness to the pledges, but it also develops leadership in your Pledge Educator. To continue developing leadership (and also fulfilling your brothers' need for inclusion) you can often appoint/elect assistants to help the Pledge Educator.

While it may seem a great idea to appoint several assistants so that a pledge meeting can be broken up into smaller groups, you must remember that only one person is the decision maker – the Pledge Educator. Having assistants can confuse the chain of command for the pledges unless you clearly outline the responsibilities of the assistants, and identifying those responsibilities is entirely up to you and your chapter. However, one of the main responsibilities of the assistant(s) should be to assist with group break-out sessions during pledge meetings.

The connection between ice breakers and communication is fairly apparent, but it is too important not to discuss some of nuances . The first thing you should realize with any pledge class is that most of them don't know each other, which is where ice breakers come into the picture. Ice breakers are an extremely important part of any pledge program, especially when used correctly. In the beginning, ice breakers games can start to break down some of the social

PLEDGES

barriers amongst your pledges. When used correctly, ice breakers can develop a high level of social communication and bonding that comes from these shared experiences. These are crucial to the success of your pledge program, and also when incorporating them into the chapter as active brothers. It is easy to simply lead an ice breaker activity, but the real learning comes afterwards when everybody can step back, think briefly, and discuss what they gained/learned from participating in that activity. It is these moments that we show the pledges that we value them and their opinions, which then allows them to develop further as leaders.

Delegation:

Pledge class officers are crucial to any large pledge class. If you look at the requirements for the Pledge Program Of Excellence (PPOE), you see that pledges should either elect pledge class officers or should participate during chapter planning meetings. For a large pledge class joining a small chapter it is extremely difficult to incorporate so many new people, especially when they are still trying to learn what it means to be a pledge in our fraternity. This is why it can help to think of the large pledge class as its own chapter. The pledges should elect their own officers to give them the experience of running portions of meetings, creating agenda, planning events, coordinating groups of peers, leading committees, handling money, and generally developing their leadership skills through hands-on experiences. Don't limit your pledges to the standard offices of President, Fellowship, Service, Secretary, etc. Allow you and your pledges to create unique officer positions – this conveys a sense of trust in the pledges and lets them take ownership over their own learning. Be mindful that you are not unduly pawning work off onto the pledges, but that you are guiding them through the education and integration into the chapter. By placing responsibility and leadership in the hands of the pledges it turns their focus inwards, and the pledges will overlook any of the concerns about growing pains that may be floating around the chapter.

Need for Inclusion:

Pledges come together through leadership as officers and work together focusing inward through responsibility, which begs the question – “should we split the pledges into two smaller groups, or keep it as one large group?” When it comes to building a pledge class, you need to remember exactly that – it is ONE pledge class. By splitting the class into smaller groups you can cause fractures amongst the pledges, which will result in different experiences that ultimately divides the pledges when they become active brothers. By maintaining one large pledge class you certainly come across more challenges such as room size, room layout, material preparation, and crowd control. On the other hand, the benefits include greater unity among the pledges, an identical shared experience, only having to “teach each lesson” once. It may be difficult, or even

PLEDGES

seem impossible to keep all the pledges as one large group, but to work through these growing pains you are going to need every ounce of unity that you can muster.

Now that you've got this mass of pledges, and newly elected pledge class officers how will you occupy their time outside of learning the fundamentals of Alpha Phi Omega. The root of all answers can be summed up in one word – COMPETITION. Competition is a motivating factor in many of our lives and it would be a shame to pass up this opportunity to monopolize on one of human nature's strongest motivators. Challenge your pledges to do better than any pledge class before them; give them service hour goals to strive for. Challenge your pledges (as individuals) to get to know each other; to get to know the brothers in the chapter. With any good competition there is an objective system to track how well each person does, and to ultimately determine a winner. Give your pledges this same opportunity – challenge them AND offer a prize that will encourage them in friendly competition. Always remember that competition breeds excellence.

Finally we dive into socialization. This term is very broad in its meaning, but if there is one area to focus on it is this – “Form, Storm, Norm, Perform”. In any group the members will go through each of these four stages. The goal is to reach the “Perform” stage quickly and efficiently, without skipping any of the three earlier stages.

- FORMING – When a group comes together they spend time getting to know each other, and learning each other's strengths and weaknesses
- STORMING – The group is now given tasks to perform, and conflict arises as leaders emerge and personalities collide
- NORMING – The group has now learned how to work together under its leaders and has learned how to work with the various differing personalities in the group
- PERFORMING – The group is now given major tasks to undertake, which it can do with ease.

In practice, socialization can look like a two-step process where you bond the pledges together, then bond and integrate them into the chapter. If you skip the first step of bonding the pledges together they will be overwhelmed with all of the content they need to learn along with all of the people they need to meet.

“Coming together is a beginning.

Keeping together is progress.

Working together is success.”

- Henry Ford (1863-1947)

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPTER OFFICERS

What does your chapter's leadership structure look like? Use this worksheet to assess where you are, and where you would like to be:

1. On a scale of 1-5, rate how well the chapter's Fellowship needs being met:
(Barely) 1 2 3 4 5 (Completely)

2. On a scale of 1-5, rate how well the chapter's Service needs being met:
(Barely) 1 2 3 4 5 (Completely)

3. On a scale of 1-5, rate how active the general chapter is:
(Barely) 1 2 3 4 5 (Extremely)

4. What is the role of the Executive committee?

5. Identify the three most important characteristics of the Executive committee:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

6. Do your officers feel overwhelmed?

YES NO

7. Does your chapter feel connected to the Executive committee?

YES NO

8. How could the Executive committee be improved?

CHAPTER OFFICERS

At a basic level, the smallest chapter can function with only five officer roles – President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer and Sergeant-at-Arms. Positions beyond those fundamentals are at the discretion of each chapter. Medium sized chapters would also have some of the more common positions including Membership VP, Fellowship VP, Service VP, Historian, and perhaps a Pledge Educator. When chapters start to reel in large pledge classes, the brothers (especially the more experienced ones) will need more leadership opportunities to keep them focused and engaged in chapter. However, more leadership in the form of more officers is not without its own difficulties.

The biggest pitfall that can happen when expanding the size of the Executive committee is the committee becoming disconnected from the chapter. At its root the officers are a committee, and we need to always remember that chapter committees are created to serve the chapter. Committees are meant to be a cross section of the chapter so that all voices and perspectives are taken into account when any decisions are made.

Being an officer takes time, energy, and can be a drain both mentally and emotionally. When your officers are overworked their productivity reduces, which leads to a downward spiral. While it is their responsibility to lead the chapter, it is the chapter's responsibility to support them both in their responsibilities, but also as brothers. During a time of growth and transition it can be easy to turn all of your attention to the pledges, but that can take away from the inner strength of the chapter. Brothers and officers still need the same care and attention that we instinctively give to the pledges.

Use these essential questions to challenge and push yourselves to discover what support your officers need, as well as what your officers need to do to support the chapter.

Essential Questions:

- What is the role of Executive committee, and will/should it change?
- What are the characteristics of a good Executive committee?
- How do you build a strong(er) Executive committee?
- What does your chapter need, and how can you give it to them?
 - More service events?
 - More fellowship events?
 - Greater brotherhood? Etc.
- Are the officers meeting the needs of the chapter?
- How is conflict managed amongst your officers?
- What role do advisors play when working with your officers?
- What role *should* advisors play when working with your officers?

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Guiding Steps:

- *Communication* (Leadership & Fellowship):
 - Teamwork
 - Synergy
 - Prevent burnout
 - Conflict Management
- *Delegation* (Leadership):
 - Leave egos at the door
 - Know when to ask for help
- *Need for inclusion* (Fellowship & Service):
 - Expand the committee structure
 - Officers serve the chapter
 - Don't isolate the officers
 - Reach out and get input from the chapter

Communication:

Your officers are skilled at leading their own committees, but are they good team players? Just like with any large chapter, a large Executive committee may begin to form cliques, which will only hinder. Often the role of bringing together an Executive committee falls to the chapter president – after all, the president is technically the chair of the Executive committee. There are a myriad of resources, ice breakers and team building exercises available through a brief internet search, and if all else fails you can always turn to advisors or local staff members, specifically the Section Chair.

After teamwork, the next step in developing a synergistic Executive committee is to reduce the possibility of burnout. Burnout can happen in many different ways – getting closer to graduation, heavy course loads, never ending chapter to-do lists, etc. The best way to manage burnout is to be proactive by developing a sense of camaraderie and fellowship among your officers. The reasoning behind this is that in creating a strong social connection between your officers they will be comfortable voicing their concerns to each other and to their leader – it's much easier to solve a problem if we know that one exists. Unfortunately being proactive isn't always an option, so we need to be reactive in those situations. Burnout can manifest in events not being planned, emails/communications being ignored, negative attitudes towards the chapter and/or its activities. When these situations arise we need to consider some conflict management techniques.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

During any state of change friction is inevitable, which can lead to issues in the area of conflict management. Depending on the situation the conflict can be worked out with your burned out officer very easily, but other situations may require a third party to intervene. Ideally you want to catch and resolve the burnout as soon as possible, but it is also important to recognize when you might be out of your depth and need help from an advisor or local staff member. No matter what the situation turns out to be, it is always a wise step to keep your Section Chair in the loop if only to keep them informed of the progress you are making towards resolving any burnout.

Delegation:

Finding a balance between being a leader/delegator and being a friend is a difficult task for some, which is why we offer one piece of advice – Check your ego at the door. The chapter's leaders were entrusted to act in the best interests of the chapter, which is why brothers should be supportive of their leaders and not be constantly undermining or second guessing the officers. Conversely the officers should not be so prideful as to not be willing to listen to their constituents, or to take them in a direction they are unwilling to go. As brothers we need to realize that in order to have leaders we must also have followers.

In becoming an officer we are often excited about bringing our vision and ideas for programming to the chapter, but there is one key factor that we are rarely told – we have to be able to lead and direct our friends in a way that is not detrimental to the pre-established bonds of friendship. Delegation can be difficult if committee members are close friends with the leader – they may expect to simply be given all the “best” tasks the committee can offer. This goes hand in hand with checking your ego, with the end goal of strengthening our current leaders and developing future ones.

Need for Inclusion:

In a nutshell we need to make sure that every brother in the chapter feels included and valued. In most situations brothers feel valued when they are recognized by being given a task or responsibility. In the early stages of chapter growth it can be difficult to come up with a task for each brother to take on, which is why we lean on the committee structure. Chapter officers in small chapters tend to do most of the planning and organization by themselves. However in a growing chapter their workload has increased exponentially, while the amount of time they can allot to the fraternity remains the same. Creating committees allows your officers to learn a deeper level of leadership – trust and delegation – and allows the other brothers to share the workload and gain experience towards becoming future officers.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Once you have committees up and running, you need to make sure that they don't lose sight of why they were created in the first place. Their role is not to unilaterally take the chapter in one direction, but to bring to the table insight of what the chapter may want/need. If the committee is unsure about something, it is certainly ok and even encouraged to send members out to gather input from the other brothers in the chapter. Ultimately, we need to make sure that the committees (just like the officers) are doing their jobs in a way that benefits the chapter and the chapter's wishes.

*“People will forget what you did...
People will forget what you said...
But people will never forget how you made them feel...”*
- Dr. Maya Angelou (1928-.....)

CHAPTER 5

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Questions to be asked now:

- Do any officers feel overwhelmed?
- Are everyone's needs being met?
 - Hour requirements, etc.
- Are everyone's wishes being met?
 - Are events at convenient times?
 - Are they the right kind of events, or are people not attending? Etc.
- Are brothers feeling displaced?
- Are pledges bonding to the chapter?

Questions to ask later:

- How did we accomplish this amazing boost in recruitment?
- Can we repeat it?
- Can we handle a 2nd rapid growth?

Chapter Programming – Leadership, Fellowship, Service, etc.

- Family competitions
 - Competition is a GREAT motivator
 - FRIENDLY Competition is fun
 - Families earning bragging rights tend to spur on other families to be more involved
- Big/Little relationships
 - Bonds brothers together
 - Dedicate a week as “Big/Little” week
- Recognize achievements
 - Big and/or small, achievements should be recognized
- More people = more complicated coordination
 - “Plan” (or host) impromptu fellowship events more often
 - More events = more brothers being reached by the fellowship program

Communication:

- How will important information be disseminated?
 - Facebook events
 - Google Calendars
 - Remind101.com (free group text messages)
 - Other digital resources

APPENDIX A: How To Write A Concise Email

1. **Consider the number of sentences.** Start with a 5-sentence rule, and expand if needed. Ask yourself “How many sentences are needed to communicate what I’m trying to communicate?” or “How few sentences can I get away with?” Cut it down to that number, and no more. That ensures that you’re not wasting the time of the recipient, and that your email actually gets read (people tend to put off reading longer ones, and might even delete them).
2. **Get to the point right away.** Don’t write a long introduction, telling your life story, or any story for that matter. People aren’t interested. They just want to know what you want. So state that, in the first sentence. Skip the niceties. Don’t make the recipient wade through 10 paragraphs to find what action is needed for the email.
3. **Write about only one thing.** If you write about multiple things, with multiple requests, you do two things: 1) make it likely that your email actually won’t be read or acted on; and 2) make it likely that even if it is acted on or responded to, the recipient will only do one of those things. Instead, stick to one subject, with one request. Once that’s done, you can send a second one, but don’t overwhelm the recipient if at all possible.
4. **Leave out the humor and emotions.** These simply don’t come across well in an email. Even if you use emoticons, there’s just no way to express tone, inflection, etc. Unless you know the person well, and you know they’ll understand that you’re joking, leave out humor. It’s a risk that you don’t want to take.
5. **Use “If ... then” statements.** Email is a back-and-forth method of communicating, and it can take a day or more for a response. you want to limit the number of times a message has to go back and forth. To do that, use “if ... then” statements, anticipating the possible responses to your question. By anticipating the possible responses, and giving a desired action for each possible response, you’re cutting a lot of wasted back-and-forth time. For example – “If you received my last email, please go ahead and do...”
6. **Review for ambiguity and clarity.** Once you’ve written an email, take a few seconds to read over it before pressing the Send button. Read it as if you were an outsider — how clear is it? Are there any ambiguous statements that could be interpreted the wrong way? If so, clarify.

APPENDIX A:

How To Write A Concise Email

7. **Revise for conciseness.** As you review, also see if there is a way you can shorten the email, remove words or sentences or even paragraphs. Leave nothing but the essential message you're trying to communicate.

APPENDIX B: Brainstorming Worksheet

Ground Rules to Follow:

1. Every idea is valuable. At this stage, don't concern yourself with finding the perfect solution. Your group/team should be engaged in thinking outside of the box and lateral thinking. This can be a fun exercise especially when your team members begin to play off each other's ideas.
2. Don't shut down any ideas. This is not the time to discuss details, or for ego. Make sure that no one person is trying to promote their idea as superior to someone else's.
3. Be team players. Remember that brainstorming should be about building ideas upon ideas. Let the creativity flow, and encourage the teambuilding that can develop from building upon each other's ideas.
4. "Quantity over Quality!!" The point of brainstorming is to be creative and to consider the many different courses of action you could take. This could even become a game to see who (or whose group) can come up with the most ideas.

Planning the Brainstorming Session:

- What do you expect to come from this brainstorming session?
- Where will the team meet?
- Who needs to part of the brainstorming team?
- What materials do you need to conduct the brainstorming session?
- Who will lead the brainstorming session?

APPENDIX C:
Blank Signup Sheet

ΑΦΩ Event Report

Submitted by:

Project Name:

Project Type:

Date:

Time:

Site Contact Person:

Number Attending:

Name	Time-In	Time-Out	Hours:

* * * *Comments* * * *

APPENDIX D:
Sample Chapter Agenda

I. Old Business

- a. Something from last chapter
- b. Something else from last chapter

II. Officer Reports:

- a. Officer X
- b. Officer Y
- c. Officer Z, etc.
- d. President

III. BREAK (maybe an opportunity for brothers to sign up for events?)

IV. New Business

- a. Discussion of something
- b. Voting on something

V. Announcements

- a. Brothers have communicated their intention to make an announcement to the President so that their name can be added to the agenda

VI. Wrap-Up

VII. Toast Song

APPENDIX E:
Ice Breaker Resources

- <http://www.reslife.net/html/icebreakers.html>
- <http://www.residentassistant.com/one/index.php>
- The Big Book of Humorous Training Games
- The Big Book of Icebreakers: Quick, Fun Activities for Energizing Meetings and Workshops
- The Big Book of Presentation Games: Wake-Em-Up Tricks, Icebreakers and Other Fun Stuff

APPENDIX F:
Sample Pledge Syllabus

- Wk1 - Icebreakers
- Overview of Pledge Expectations & Requirements
- Pledge Officers
- Overview of Families & Bigs/Littles
- Interview Time
- CHAPTER Traditions
- Wk2 - Cardinal Principles
- Review Bigs & Littles
- Interview Time
- PLEDGE Officer Elections
- PLEDGE Committee Time
- Wk3 - PLEDGE RETREAT
- Purpose is to bond pledges together
- Wk4 - BROTHER presentations about Fellowship
- PLEDGE Fellowship reflection/discussion
- Interview Time
- PLEDGE Committee Time
- Wk5 - BROTHER History presentation
- CHAPTER Traditions presentation
- Interview Time
- PLEDGE Committee Time
- Wk6 - Conferences & Conventions
- BROTHER presentations about Service
- PLEDGE Service reflection/discussion
- Interview Time
- PLEDGE Committee Time
- Wk7 - BIG/LITTLE Reveal
- Wk8 - Chapter Officers prep pledges for chapter elections
- NATIONAL History
- Colors & Symbols

APPENDIX F:
Sample Pledge Syllabus

- Wk9
- Closed Meeting
 - Brother Transition
 - Final Q&A
 - Initiation Q&A
 - Overall Reflection

APPENDIX G:
Sample Pledge Lesson Plan

- **Goals / Objectives / Desired Outcomes**
 - *By the end of this pledge meeting, the new members will:*

- **Standards / Content / Lesson Description**
 - *The following subjects will be taught during this pledge meeting:*

- **Procedures**
 - *The instructor(s) will use the following methods to present this material:*

- **Materials**
 - *What materials will be needed to teach this lesson?*

- **Assessment**
 - *How will we know if the new members have learned what we wanted them to learn?*

- **Modifications / Accommodations**
 - *What may I have to change in order to accommodate students with special needs?*