

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this publication is to acquaint you with your role as a chapter advisor. One principle value of Alpha Chi Omega lies in the experience that we provide for our members – experience that must permit mistakes as well as successes. An advisor has an obligation to point out successes and errors in thoughts and actions. As chapter advisor, it is your obligation to lead and develop the members to keep the errors from recurring and becoming excessive. The chapter advisor must realize and acknowledge that she is a guiding – not ruling – hand. In order to affect such a successful non-directive relationship with the chapter, the chapter advisor must have certain personal characteristics.

You must possess a genuine and lasting interest in young people – their problems, their objectives and their limitations. You will be working with a group of sensitive young women who respond to genuine interest and who are perceptive in identifying perfunctory and apathetic performance. You need to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the sociological and psychological changes that are taking place on a particular campus, as well as campuses throughout the country.

Advising requires an infinite amount of patience to understand young people and even more patience to forgive the many errors that are a consequence of their dynamic learning experiences. People are impulsive and manifest a distinct desire to experiment with programs and policies that are frequently undesirable. As a chapter advisor, you must guide and direct this total learning process as it relates to the management and operation of the sorority.

Why Advise?

It is highly desirable that you maintain a clear sense of purpose and direction. You must develop in your own mind a personal philosophy concerning the role you will play and the impact it will have on your own life and the lives of those you serve. Here are some great reasons why many enjoy serving as a chapter advisor:

- You can gain satisfaction from seeing the chapter become successful and the students develop self-confidence, character, trust, and responsibility.
- You have the ability to make a significant difference in lives.
- You have the opportunity to learn from students and from being on campus.
- You have the opportunity to see students implement and grow from what has been learned in the classroom and through their Alpha Chi Omega experiences.
- You have the opportunity to serve Alpha Chi Omega in a valued volunteer role.
- You have the opportunity to continue developing your skills while honing your abilities as a volunteer.

(Revision Date: 05/15/2013)

Level of Involvement

The relationship that exists between an advisor and a student gives that student a chance to apply the knowledge she has obtained in class and real-world situations as well as an opportunity to develop leadership skills, ethical decision-making skills and creativity. The level of involvement of the advisor is an individual decision. You should determine your level of involvement in collaboration with the executive board officers you are advising. Different chapters require different levels of commitment and oversight.

The preferred method of advising chapters is not to create a “one-woman show,” but rather to establish a team of individuals who can spread the responsibilities and the benefits of advising an undergraduate group.

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Chapter Advisor Position Description

Purpose

- To provide advice and counsel to an assigned collegiate chapter
- To chair the advisory board
- To educate the chapter regarding National Fraternity and campus policies, best practices, and issues

(Revision Date: 05/15/2013)

Selection

A province collegiate chair (PCC) or assigned specialist is responsible for appointing chapter advisors for the collegiate chapters she oversees. All appointments are subject to approval by headquarters staff. Each collegiate chapter and outgoing chapter advisor are given an opportunity to recommend candidates for chapter advisor to the PCC or assigned specialist.

(Revision Date: 01/09/2019)

Term of Office

The chapter advisor serves a two-year term, beginning June 1 in odd-numbered years. The chapter advisor should first contact the PCC or her assigned specialist, if considering leaving her office before her term is up.

(Revision Date: 12/10/2018)

Volunteer Supervisor

The chapter advisor reports to her designated PCC or assigned specialist.

(Revision Date: 01/09/2019)

Qualifications

Alumna member in good standing and/or a non-member appointed by a national representative; belief in the Fraternity's purpose; desire to work with undergraduate women; ability to educate and motivate others; sense of fairness and objectivity

(Revision Date: 05/15/2013)

Vacancy in Office

When a chapter advisor vacancy occurs, the PCC or assigned specialist serves as interim chapter advisor until a successor is appointed.

(Revision Date: 01/09/2019)

Attributes of a Chapter Advisor

Possession of certain attributes will lead to a successful and rewarding experience as an advisor. These attributes will make your role easier and more enjoyable.

- She must be a real, strong woman.
- She must be real and genuine in her relationship with the chapter and its members, not formal or distant.
- She should be a good, active and interested listener.
- She must have the respect of all persons with whom she will be associating.
- She must have a tactful and authentic approach, for most of her duties will be accomplished by influence and not by decree.
- She should have a firm belief in the fraternity and sorority community, and yet be aware of its deficiencies and of the criticisms leveled at it.
- She must have respect for the principles and objectives of the organization.
- She should have an enthusiastic interest and a strong belief in college students and their abilities.
- She should be willing to give of her time as needed. She must be balanced against the many other demands on her time; the duties of an advisor must carry significant weight in that balancing.
- She must be able to maintain an impartial attitude toward each of the members and in her dealings with the active organization and outside interests.
- When action is necessary, she must be strong and not easily swayed by wounded feelings.
- She must be patient.

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Chapter Advisor Responsibilities

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Delegate advisory responsibilities to other alumnae in the area through appointment of positional advisors to the advisory board.
- Call and conduct regular meetings of the advisory board.
- Confer weekly with the chapter president.
- Attend executive board meetings as often as possible.
- See that the VP public relations and marketing maintains the chapter's membership roster and membership forms that are required by the Fraternity.
- Serve as a resource for chapter officers who may not have other advisory board support available to them.
- Attend as many of the regularly scheduled chapter meetings as possible.
- Attend the chapter's goal-setting sessions and retreats.
- Ensure that the chapter is implementing MyJourney and additional headquarters programs.
- Review and approve the chapter's plans for all activities relating to the use of the Dedication, new member orientation, the new member ceremony and initiation.
- Work with the PCC who heads the province team composed of all chapter advisors in the same province. A chapter advisor may work with her assigned specialist if the chapter is not currently operating in the province structure.
- Assist chapter in execution of a domestic violence awareness event within their local community.
- Attend province or state day gatherings, if applicable.
- Follow the policies and procedures that relate to collegiate chapter operations and programming.
- Verify that the collegiate chapter's membership reports, budget and bylaws are accurate and sent to headquarters by the due date.
- Attend national convention.
- Attend Fraternity conferences, programs, meetings or other assemblies that offer advisor education and training.
- Communicate with the campus' fraternity/sorority advisor and/or university officials.
- Attend any Panhellenic advisor meetings.
- Work with Pearl Stone Partners to successfully manage employees who support the chapter and facility, if applicable.
- Each chapter may further specify individual advisor responsibilities.

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Chapter Advisor Roles

Consultation

The advisor should expect that she would be consulted regularly by the officers concerning their plans for group activities or programs. She should know what projects or events are being planned and should offer her ideas and suggestions freely, but should be careful not to determine program planning. The advisor should also expect that she will be consulted by members of her advisory board regarding their position and work with their assigned officer.

Providing Continuity

Providing continuity is an important responsibility. The transition of officers and members in a chapter is continual and often the only link with the immediate past is the chapter advisor. The advisor can orient new officers and members to this history and help them build on it.

Continuity also implies a link with the future, and the advisor can play an important role in helping to develop long-term plans for the future of the chapter and communicate these plans to succeeding generations of members.

Policy Compliance

The advisor is in the position of ensuring chapters are compliant with policies of Alpha Chi Omega. She should, therefore, see that her chapter and its officers know what the policies are, why they exist and the channels to be followed to obtain clarification of these policies.

Providing Financial Advice

While each chapter should elect its own VP finance, the advisor will need to spend some time in supervising the financial records and the VP finance's work. She may find it necessary to teach the VP finance the elements of simple bookkeeping and the intricacies of the chapter's record system.

The chapter advisor should appoint a finance advisor to do the following (If a finance advisor is not available, the chapter advisor should assume these responsibilities):

- Be aware of the nature, extent and pattern of the chapter's expenditures and income and introduce corrective measures when necessary.
- Particular attention should be paid to the accounts receivable, the current balance and the prompt payment of bills.

Chapter Meetings

The advisor should attend all regular and special meetings of the chapter in order to keep informed. Also, the advisor should be available for consultation or to introduce ideas and suggestions.

Chapter Records

The advisor should see that at least the VP finance and VP public relations and marketing maintain adequate records and minutes of the chapter's activities and that the files and records of the chapter are in a central, easily accessible area. Because committee reports and other group records are an important part of the chapter's history as well as contain information of value to future officers, they should be protected from loss. The chapter historian should be involved in preserving the chapter's history.

Social Activities

The advisor should provide guidance to chapters as they plan social activities and events involving alcohol. The chapter advisor should utilize Alpha Chi Omega's risk management philosophy as she guides chapter officers and members in the area of risk management. It is expected that chapters are compliant with Alpha Chi Omega's risk management policies.

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The Many Hats of an Advisor

Role Model

This is the hat you wear 24/7. The members need to see that a real, strong woman is honest, up-front in relationships, empathetic to her sisters, and finds ways to draw inspiration from and apply the Ritual to everyday life. It's not enough to just use the right logos and colors and repeat the tagline. Being a role model at its core is about walking the walk.

Mentor

One expert has identified five qualities that characterize good mentors: successful in their own professions; behave in ways worthy of emulation; supportive of subordinates; not afraid to delegate with support and praise; and provide periodic, detailed and honest feedback. However, recent research indicates that, for college women, what matters most in mentoring relationships are: mutual engagement, empathy, authenticity and empowerment. These qualities contribute to high self-esteem and, from there, high achievement.

Supervisor

There are times, particularly with the executive board, where you will act more like a supervisor and provide directions, oversight or instruction. These times may include: team building (planning a workshop or retreat for the next executive board), goal-setting, communication (when, to whom, how most effectively), ensuring policy compliance, recognition of and willingness to deal with serious situations, and ensuring national and campus deadlines are met.

Teacher

What would this year's officers like to learn to do more efficiently or effectively? How can you help them with that? It is also true that your best "teachable moments" could arise from failure. If the chapter finishes the year in a financial deficit, what are the lessons to be learned *and applied* for next year? If an event fails, do the analysis on why it failed and what you would do differently the next time. If risky behavior is prevalent in the community, bring in someone to talk to the chapter about the potential penalties and fallout. These may be the only moments that students are open to the teacher; be there for them! ("When the pupil is ready, the teacher appears.")

Leader

In *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Pozner identify five fundamental practices of leaders. Leaders:

1. *Challenge the process* by seeking ways to improve the organization.
2. *Inspire a shared vision* by creating an image of what the organization can become.
3. *Enable others to act* by involving students on committees and task forces.
4. *Model the way* by setting standards and assisting others through their problems and concerns.
5. *Encourage the heart* by recognizing members for their achievements and by motivating members to accomplish their goals.

You can both teach and model these practices!

Follower

It's important to spend time not just with the leaders but with chapter members, as well. You can help the leadership understand who they are and what motivates them.

Expectations

What Chapters Can/Should Expect from Chapter Advisors

- The advisor is a good example of who we are as Alpha Chi Omegas; she is honest, firm in her beliefs and convictions, approachable and sisterly.
- The advisor shows belief in the chapter and the enthusiasm necessary to help the chapter reach its potential.
- The advisor shows understanding of the chapter, awareness of its purposes and assistance in formulating goals.
- The advisor aids in the development of procedures and methods for maintaining an effective chapter.
- The advisor shows understanding of campus / chapter / local / state laws.
- The advisor provides assistance in matters of campus procedures.
- The advisor provides assistance in improving leadership skills.
- The advisor serves as a liaison with the university when necessary.
- The advisor provides guidance in planning activities and programs.
- The advisor provides encouragement and support in periods of conflict or crisis.
- The advisor shows willingness to address difficult or uncomfortable issues as they come up and in a timely manner. She doesn't avoid conflict or confrontation, but rather encourages and models healthy communication skills.
- The advisor serves, when needed, as an impartial observer.
- The advisor participates in the meetings and events of the chapter to the greatest extent possible without actually making decisions or setting policies for the chapter.
- The advisor maintains appropriate personal borders with the students (i.e., no illegal activity, no drinking with collegiate members, etc.).

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What You as a Chapter Advisor Should Expect from the Chapter Officers

- Keeping the advisor informed about chapter activities, meeting times, locations, agendas, outcomes and programs.
- Honesty and follow-through
- Regular meetings with the advisor and discussions of plans and problems
- Good records and sound financial procedures
- Minutes of meetings, as well as any other materials that are sent to members
- No commitments will be made for the advisor without her consent.
- Not assuming the advisor will continue to serve as advisor for the succeeding year unless the advisor has agreed to this

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Relationship with Headquarters

Headquarters Support

Please remind the chapter that Alpha Chi Omega headquarters is there for the chapter's benefit. It is important that these sentiments are conveyed to chapter members to further foster positive relationships between headquarters and the chapter.

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Headquarters Contacts

Collegiate Experience Department

Oversees the collegiate membership experience including chapter operations; membership recruitment, risk management and policy education; and leadership of Fraternity that involves members, staff and volunteers

Chapter Consultant

A headquarters employee who will make one or more visits per year to provide support to the chapter and perform various functions pertinent to the activities of the chapter; provides the chapter with ongoing coaching support as needed

Encourage Learning and Growth

It is also essential for active members to gain more knowledge of the Fraternity on a national level. Encourage members to attend conferences and leadership seminars and have them report back to the chapter on what they have learned. Oftentimes during these conferences, there are alumnae events and programs as well. This could be something you may want to consider taking advantage of, not only to learn more about your position, but to establish a networking base among other chapter advisors.

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