

Chapter 1: Getting Started

The Responsibilities of the Scholarship Chair and the Scholarship Committee

The success of any chapter program generally is dependent upon the existence of three conditions: (1) an enthusiastic, dedicated member organizing and coordinating activities, (2) other members helping the leader do the work, and (3) the support and involvement of the entire membership.

Take recruitment/intake for example. Every chapter needs a highly organized and energetic recruitment chairperson to plan and coordinate the recruitment program. There is too much work to be done by a single individual, so this person needs an equally committed recruitment committee. In the final analysis, however, the success of recruitment/intake depends on all of the members getting personally involved in the recruitment process.

The same principles hold true for scholarship. There must be a qualified and respected member in charge of the program, with a working committee to help with the implementation. The chapter's academic achievement ultimately depends on the ability of the Scholarship Chair and his/her committee to assist and motivate each individual chapter member to attain his/her own scholastic potential.

While this may seem basic, too many chapters have a Scholarship Chair who does little because little is expected of him/her. In such situations, Scholarship Committees are usually non-existent.

If scholarship is to be among the top priorities for your chapter, having a top chapter leader in the position of Scholarship Chair is essential, and the person must be supported with the assistance and financial resources needed to run a comprehensive scholarship program. Further, the importance and accountability of the position can be enhanced by making the Scholarship Chair an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee.

Selection of the Scholarship Chair

Consider electing the Scholarship Chair. This will increase the prestige of the position and communicate its significance. When a person is chosen by a vote of his/her peers, particularly when there is a contested election, he/she is more inclined to work harder to earn the trust placed in him/her. Further, the election process requires the candidates to commit to proposed goals and causes the chapter members to focus on the importance of scholarship in the development of the fraternity/sorority. If the Scholarship Chair is appointed, some of these benefits can be obtained by utilizing an interview process to select the Scholarship Chair.

There is a temptation for chapters to select the member with the highest grade point average to be the Scholarship Chair. Just as the chapter's best "partier" may be poorly suited to be Social Chair, the chapter "brain" may not be the most qualified person to be Scholarship Chair. On the other hand, the Scholarship Chair does need to at least be an above average student, since he/she is expected to be a role model for the remainder of the chapter. Good grades are an indication of an active interest in academic achievement, strong study skills and habits, and effective time management. In addition to a respectable grade point average, academic experience is a critical prerequisite for the job; therefore, an upperclassman is preferred.

Equally or more important, the Scholarship Chair must be a **leader**. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence the behavior of individuals or groups toward the attainment of specific goals, in this case academic achievement. A strong leader not only has the ability to plan, organize, and coordinate activities, he/she must also be enthusiastic and persuasive so that he/she can motivate others. In addition, he/she must be proficient in the art of delegation.

The Scholarship Chair also must sometimes be a teacher and a counselor. This person must be sincere and caring and willing to aid others in achieving their potential. This person must be respected, trustworthy, and able to respect confidentiality.

Responsibilities of the Scholarship Chair

The duties of the Scholarship Chair should be specified in the chapter's bylaws and should include the following:

- Promote a healthy chapter attitude regarding scholarship.
- Serve as chairperson of the Scholarship Committee. Refer to the responsibilities of the Scholarship Committee listed below.
- Call regular (weekly) meeting for the Scholarship Committee.
- Prepare weekly reports for the Executive Committee and make a report at every chapter meeting.
- Educate the chapter regarding the provisions of the chapter's academic standards, and ensure that the academic standards are constantly enforced. This requires determining academic eligibility for being initiated, voting, holding office, and participating in social, intramural, and big brother/big sister activities.
- Meet regularly with the Faculty Advisor. If you don't have one, then an additional responsibility is to recruit one!
- Maintain **confidential** academic records on members and compile statistical reports. Distribute and collect grade release cards.
- Consult the Greek Life Advisor and other campus officials for guidance and resources.
- Attend meetings of campus Scholarship Chairs arranged by the governing councils or the Greek Life Advisor. If such meetings don't exist, suggest that they be initiated.
- Prepare and distribute a written annual report at the end of the term of office, with recommendations for improving the scholarship program. Pass along all records and materials to the successor.

Composition of the Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Chair chairs the Scholarship Committee. It is recommended that four at-large undergraduate chapter members be appointed to the committee. One system to consider is to have one member elected from each class (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). This ensures a

diversity of experience levels and helps to develop future potential Scholarship Chairmen. In addition, it is essential that a liaison from the Pledge/New Member Education Committee, perhaps the Assistant Pledge/New Member Educator, serve on the committee to help coordinate pledge scholarship activities. It is recommended that the committee members be from a variety of academic majors, and all committee members should, of course, be in good academic standing. The Faculty Advisor and Chapter Advisor should serve as *ex officio* members of the committee. Progressive chapters appoint pledges or new members to serve on committees, and having a pledge or associate member on the Scholarship Committee is strongly encouraged.

Responsibilities of the Scholarship Committee

The responsibilities of the Scholarship Committee include assessing the chapter's strengths and weaknesses with regard to academic performance, formulating a program based upon that assessment, implementing the program, and evaluating its degree of success. More specifically, the Scholarship Committee should:

- Meet on a regular (weekly) basis. A consistent day, time, and location is recommended.
- Prepare a written scholarship program to be submitted to the chapter for approval no later than the second week of the semester. (Having the chapter review and adopt the plan is important. Remember, people support what they help create!) The plan should include specific goals for academic achievement, timetables, assignment of responsibilities to specific individuals, and a budget (5% of a chapter's total budget is a realistic figure).
- Recommend policies, such as quiet or courtesy hours, to be included in the chapter's bylaws or house rules, including a procedure for enforcement.
- Assist the Pledge/New Member Education Committee in establishing and implementing a scholarship program for the pledges. This should include a presentation to the pledges/new members and a system for regularly monitoring the academic progress of the pledges/new members.
- Assist the Rush Committee in evaluating the academic potential of recruits/members.
- Work with the Social Committee to ensure that chapter social activities are not scheduled during critical times on the academic calendar (e.g., mid-terms, the last two weeks of the semester, and final exams), and that weeknight events are limited and end at a reasonable hour.
- Review the academic performance of pledges/new members, holdovers, and initiates not in good academic standing. Establish individualized study programs to assist them. Utilize mid-term progress report forms.
- Coordinate an academic goal setting program, with individualized goals for each member, pledge/new member, and holdover. Monitor progress in attaining those goals, and recognize those who meet or exceed their personalized goals.

- Establish and coordinate a tutoring program to assist members, pledges/new members, and holdovers who need specialized assistance.
- Establish and arrange for the presentation of chapter awards and incentives for scholastic excellence.
- Inform the chapter about other awards, scholarship, and financial assistance available from the university and the national/international fraternity (e.g., loan programs, alumni-funded scholarships, awards programs, etc.). Distribute application forms and encourage qualified members to apply.
- Maintain the chapter library and study room(s) in proper order. Keep reference books up to date and add materials as needed.
- Maintain a chapter scholarship bulletin board. Post such items as the chapter's academic standards, information on scholarships and awards, campus academic policies, study tips, academic achievements and honors, graduate testing dates, campus fraternity/sorority grade point average rankings, etc.
- Establish or maintain course and instructor evaluation files. Distribute and collect the evaluation forms.
- Be familiar with campus resources, including offices providing counseling, career exploration and placement, study skills development, financial aid, and academic advising. Let members know about the services that are available, and make referrals when appropriate.
- Arrange for chapter presentations with campus officials and/or alumni speaking on educationally related matters such as time management, study skills, career development, etc.
- Conduct an evaluation of the chapter's program. Analyze grade point average data. Seek input from chapter members. Prepare recommendations for the Scholarship Chair's written annual report.