

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

You have heard rumors of discontent among members and pledges about your pledge program. Younger members are disappointed that the program is too easy. Older members are less involved in the process and complain about the amount of time they have to give up. Pledges are complaining that the brothers/sisters are being disrespectful, and say “I didn’t expect that ‘brotherhood/sisterhood’ meant we couldn’t talk to one another.” As a result of these and other issues, tension is at an all time high. Rather than addressing the problem, members have begun to withdraw into cliques. Most recently this conflict erupted into a major public argument during a chapter event.

Your job is to build a stronger sense of camaraderie and unity among the entire chapter, including active brothers/sisters and pledges.

- ▶ What steps can you take to clear the air and rebuild the bonds of brotherhood / sisterhood in this situation?
- ▶ What could you do to put members and pledges on the same level?
- ▶ How do you break down the barriers that are being created during pledging?
- ▶ Discuss: what does “Chapter Unity” look like, and how is it different from “Pledge Class Unity?”

## SELECTING METHODS THAT “FIT”

The new members are having a hard time learning everything they need to know for initiation: the symbols, the creed, the founders and important dates. You gave them the manual and told them everything they need to know. You even hosted multiple study sessions, but they’re still not getting it.

Incentives and encouragement haven’t really worked. You threatened them with the consequences: that they don’t get initiated without knowing this information. This increased the sense of urgency, but test scores only improved slightly. Older members are disappointed that new members aren’t “learning their stuff” and are pushing you to increase the intensity so new members get motivated to learn this stuff.

- ▶ Why do you think new members have struggled to learn the information?
- ▶ What effect is motivation (positive or negative incentives) having?
- ▶ Are there other methods to help them learn?
- ▶ Identify 3-5 steps you can take to get the class back on track knowing the material.

## ALIGNING EXPECTATIONS

Pledges have a long list of tasks that they must complete during the pledge period. In reality, the full list is impossible to complete in such a short time. After only a few days into the process, they become overwhelmed and begin to accomplish less and less each day. Meanwhile, as they struggle to keep up, initiated members are doing very little to lead the chapter. Many are apathetic and a few are even missing in action. Pledges have discovered this pattern and have started to show signs of apathy themselves. Although they are working hard, their only motivation is the chance to relax, do nothing, cause trouble and order other people around once they are initiated.

You realize that members are setting a bad example, and that pledges are actually learning how to become apathetic. You decided that you need to act now to teach responsibility, or else your new members will just continue the trend.

- ▶ At the bare minimum, name 10 expectations that every brother, sister and new member needs to uphold.
- ▶ Identify at least 5 behaviors which are unacceptable from members and new members alike.
- ▶ What, if any, expectations should be different for members versus new members?
- ▶ What steps can you take to correct the situation above?

## SETTING CONSISTENT CONSEQUENCES

Your chapter is having a huge problem with accountability. Over half of the membership is behind in paying dues, including 5 members who owe more than \$2000 each. There has also been a huge dip in involvement and attendance. You have tried to confront those who are delinquent, but they are hard to track down and ignore threats of being fined, punished or kicked out.

On the other hand, your new members are not permitted to continue the new member process without being current. Except for 2 individuals who are up to date on their payment plans, everyone is paid in full. New members are required to show up at every meeting and event, as well as all their classes. So far, only 3 new members have missed a requirement. They were confronted one-on-one when it happened and have not missed anything since. New members have also noticed that while they get harassed and ridiculed for stereotypical frat-boy antics, members are encouraged and praised to joke about the same behavior.

- ▶ What effect is this scenario having on the health and success of the chapter?
- ▶ What are new members learning here? What are members learning?
- ▶ Fast-forward into the future. How do you think this chapter will be performing 3-4 years from now? Why?
- ▶ What steps should you take to address this accountability problem?

## REMOVING HARM

Pledges are required to attend every meeting, go to class, get involved on campus, and keep up with their personal, work and family life during the pledging process. They are also required to complete additional pledge homework on the side, as well as a physically taxing pledge class project. As a result, they become increasingly sleep deprived over the course of the semester. They are struggling to stay awake in class, and some have even overslept for tests. They show physical signs of stress and two recently came down with colds. They struggle to learn the information they are supposed to memorize, and their friends and family are becoming worried.

- ▶ In what ways is this situation harmful?
- ▶ Identify at least 10 things that could go wrong as a result of this situation?
- ▶ What small changes could you make to make the situation less harmful?
- ▶ Discuss: what is the responsibility of a brother or sister when one of our new members is struggling physically, emotionally, spiritually or psychologically?