

ROAD MAP

FOR VIRTUAL CHAPTERS

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Brothers,

It is safe to say that most are unlikely to forget spring 2020 and how quickly the world changed as a result of Covid-19. Your life on campus and learning environment transitioned swiftly to say the least and your willingness and ability to adapt and change your plan has been inspiring to watch. You are all doing a fantastic job adjusting and thriving.

At the same time, so many of you continue to uplift those around you and find ways to give back to the four fields of service in a new, socially distant world. The brothers of Alpha Phi Omega continue to be a beacon of light in uncertain times. Thank you for the ways you are improving and inspiring the lives of those around you. Doing our part in this effort will be a tremendous service to our campuses, to our communities, and to each other. Now more than ever the APO spirit of resilience and service is needed all across our nation.

Times are certainly uncertain, however the constant of the APO community we have built as brothers is something we can rely on and embrace. Alpha Phi Omega has been a defining part of the collegiate experience for our members and a support system that continues beyond college. These relationships sustain many of you when life is hard and times are dark. These are some of the people on whom you lean for support and they will continue to be essential as we navigate the near future.

The Fraternity's staff and volunteers are here to help you continue to find ways to connect with and support each other during these unusual times.

Over the past few weeks, the Fraternity has received numerous questions and calls for support from members wanting advice for how to move forward as a chapter or extension group and what "chapter" looks like in the interim.

This Virtual Chapter Road Map was created to give a baseline to how this might look until you can all be side-by-side in the circle of fellowship once again. This plan is flexible and can — and should — be adjusted to fit the needs of the students of your chapter based on what is available to them. Work together as brothers to find something that works and allows you to remain connected as a chapter and support system. Be nimble and be patient. The work you do now will pay off for the chapter and the students when you are back on campus.

There is no perfect way to do this, however there are volunteers and staff here to help you as you navigate today and tomorrow. If you are struggling with any particular area, have questions or need advice, please reach out to chapter_services@apo.org.

We are in this together and will find ways to navigate through whatever is put in front of us today and tomorrow.

Fraternally,

Bob London, CAE
National Executive Director
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MAINTAINING YOUR APO COMMUNITY

Don't miss out on APO family time while everyone is living the life of a virtual college student. Scheduling time to connect one-on-one and as a full chapter will help everyone take a break from the chaos of life and recharge their brotherhood battery. Maintaining and connecting with your collegiate community will serve your mental health well.

Alternatively, the energy you put in to the chapter now will help to sustain you during this wild time, and will also ensure that the chapter retains the strength needed to thrive in the future. Chapters depend on connection, engagement, and recruitment to survive. The less these are upheld during the COVID-19 pandemic, the harder it will be for the chapter to regain footing when everyone comes out the other side and heads back to normal campus life.

Chapter meetings provide members the opportunity to connect, discuss and brainstorm in one or multiple sessions. Similar to in-person chapter meetings, virtual chapter meetings will keep the chapter connected and engaged. This will also allow brothers to support each other as they navigate the unusual circumstances they are in right now.

The first step to hosting a successful chapter meeting is to narrow down the platform in which meetings will be conducted. When doing so, be sure to consider accessibility and the needs of the chapter. Platforms like Zoom or Facebook Live can easily be accessed from a mobile device if members don't have a laptop or desktop computer. Each regional chair of APO was given a host license for Zoom so chapters could use the paid version of the platform to collaborate and connect. Check with your regional chair for details on accessing this resource.

Platforms like FaceTime might be appropriate for one-on-one meetings or smaller group discussions, however users are limited to having an Apple device. Visit the Chapter Officers area of the APO website for a more comprehensive list of common platforms that have been used to host APO meetings.

Separate from meeting logistics, members must be informed for a chapter meeting to run smoothly. The date, time and web location should be communicated to participants at least one week prior to the scheduled time. And, at all costs, try to avoid changing the time and platform. While the date will naturally change from week-to-week, keeping a consistent schedule may be more important now that student's schedules have changed.

Continuing to build connections during chapter meetings will help diversify and improve the chapter's support system, as well as increase the chapter's opportunities to have a positive impact on the world today and tomorrow.

TOP FIVE ELEMENTS OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- 1. SCHEDULE MEETINGS AT THE SAME TIME AND DAY OF THE WEEK TO ACCOMMODATE AS MANY ATTENDEES AS POSSIBLE.**
- 2. COORDINATE AN AGENDA WITH ALL OFFICERS SO EVENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION CAN BE EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED TO THE ENTIRE CHAPTER. BE SURE TO STICK TO THE AGENDA.**
- 3. ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES TO CHAPTER LEADERS INCLUDING A MEETING MINUTE RECORDER, TIME-KEEPER AND FACILITATORS; NO MORE THAN 2-3 FACILITATORS.**
- 4. ESTABLISH MEETING EXPECTATIONS THAT ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS AND ALLOW MEMBERS TO REMAIN ENGAGED THROUGHOUT. COMMUNICATE MEETING EXPECTATIONS TO PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO, OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING.**
- 5. HAVE FUN! PICK A THEME FOR EACH MEETING LIKE FUNNY HATS OR BRING YOUR ANIMAL TO CHAPTER. THIS IS A TIME TO HAVE FUN AND TRY NEW THINGS WHILE YOU CONNECT FROM A DISTANCE. ASK MEMBERS WHAT THEMES THEY WOULD LIKE TO TRY TOGETHER!**

THE BASICS OF VIRTUAL CHAPTER MEETINGS

At minimum, the chapter should aim to connect once a week or every other week. Regular chapter check-ins will keep everyone on the same page with important updates and will sustain a sense of normalcy amidst a period of change. Continuing to stay connected will be good for the mental health of members, as well as retention for the chapter come fall.

Your chapter can provide service in new and innovative ways, conduct virtual ceremonies that welcome new members, deliver online education, continue to develop leadership, and build connections among your chapter. While unexpected, virtual chapters offer students a unique opportunity and experience that they will carry with them beyond their collegiate years.

Modern technology grants the convenience of staying connected even while apart. For your chapter, it's important to narrow down the methods of communication that will be used chapter-wide, and how they will be used to your chapter's advantage. The way your chapter communicates day-to-day will likely look different than how chapter meetings and other group sessions are conducted. Now is the time to be patient and flexible so the members of the chapter can continue to connect and work together.

As the spring academic calendar comes to an end, chapter officers should create a plan for summer engagement and activities should social distancing and isolation continue beyond spring. Staying connected as a chapter, checking on each other and continuing to serve and develop members will be much needed for students stuck inside and unable to conduct their usual summer activities and travel. At the same time, this will strengthen the bond of the chapter for the future.

As you work through what all of this looks like for the chapter, be sure to reach out for advice from the chapter advisors. Advisors can provide a sense of stability, help think of things you may not have already considered, and, particularly campus advisors, connect you to the suite of resources many schools have put into place.

To help your chapter determine the most effective and efficient way to communicate while operating virtually, consider the suggestions below for avenues of online communication, and select the option that works best for your chapter:

CHAPTER MEETINGS - ONE A WEEK OR EVERY OTHER WEEK UNTIL BACK ON CAMPUS



ZOOM

WHEREBY

FREECONFERENCE

GOOGLE HANGOUTS

ONGOING COMMUNICATION - AT LEAST THREE TIMES PER WEEK



APO MOBILE APP

DISCORD

GROUPME

WHATSAPP

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN & HOW OF CHAPTER MEETINGS

WHO

DETERMINE WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING OF THE CHAPTER MEETING

- These people may be all or part of the executive committee, and may also include chapter advisors or a sectional chair
- Do you want or need to bring in guest speakers?
 - Ask your institution's counseling center if a counselor can join
 - See if local orgs you partner with have time to share how your service has impacted them, as well as what their needs are now
 - Are there any alumni of the chapter you'd like students to get to know?

WHAT

DECIDE WHAT YOUR PRIORITIES ARE FOR EACH MEETING

- Do you have any urgent chapter business?
 - Voting: bylaws, elections, etc.
 - Ceremonies
- Do you need to make sure brothers are doing and feeling ok?
- Do you have traditions that you were previously planning?
 - Large service events, formals
 - Toast Song

CREATE AN AGENDA

- An agenda can be as simple as a list of topics and as detailed as a robust set of slides
- Remember to keep your meeting priorities in mind for each part of the meeting
- It is a good idea to start with establishing meeting norms
 - Set the meeting up so that everyone automatically is on mute until they are ready to speak
 - Figure out how questions and feedback should be handled during calls so people are not unintentionally talking over each other.

ASSIGN ROLES

- Who will be in charge of the content for each section?
- Who will verbally run the meeting (often the president)?
- Who will handle the logistics of meeting virtually?
 - Who should receive questions for the speakers?
 - Who will monitor attendance?
 - If you are voting, who will see the results and how?

KEEP IT INTERESTING

- Make sure to alternate between 1 or 2 people talking and brothers and pledges being able to all interact with one another
 - Products like Zoom have features like breakout rooms where you can create small groups within a larger meeting
- Find ways to infuse fun!
 - Themed outfits
 - Trivia
 - Family/Big Little updates and activities

(CON'T) WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN & HOW OF CHAPTER MEETINGS

WHERE

WHICH ELECTRONIC MEETING METHOD WILL YOU USE?

- Does your institution already have a system set up such as Zoom or GoToMeeting?
- Alpha Phi Omega is providing a few Zoom rooms that can hold up to 300 attendees at a time

HOW WILL EVERYONE KNOW HOW TO JOIN?

- Make sure everyone has easy access to instructions on joining the meeting
- Open the meeting electronically early so folks have time to test their connection before the meeting starts

WILL YOU MANAGE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS VIRTUALLY?

- How will you handle excused/unexcused absences?
- How will you deal with students who don't have access to reliable internet?
 - Many schools are trying to make sure all their students have internet access away from campus. If one of your members is having trouble connecting, encourage them to reach out to the institution for help. Start with your school's IT department.
- Have a designated person for folks to contact during the meeting if they are having technology issues

WHEN

WILL YOU KEEP YOUR REGULAR MEETING TIME AND DAY? DOES IT NEED TO BE ADJUSTED?

HOW LONG WILL YOUR MEETING BE?

- Students may need to coordinate private time with the other members of their households — not everyone has their own room or an internet connection that can handle more than one video chat at once
- Communicate to your participants how much time they can expect to spend in the meeting
- Stick to time limits in the agenda

HOW

PRACTICE!

- Make sure everyone who has a role during the meeting has a chance to test their connection and technology ahead of time

GO WITH THE FLOW!

- It may be awkward at first, but it gets easier the more you do it
- Things are going to come up that you haven't thought of yet. Don't panic! It will be ok and you will work through it.

ASK FOR HELP!

- Reach out to your chapter advisors, sectional staff, and institution staff and faculty -- many full-time professionals have had experience with running online meetings with many members at once
- Contact the team at the APO National Office! The professional staff is available to help answer questions, understand how to effectively leverage technology, brainstorm and create possible solutions, and work with you to support the chapter today and tomorrow.
- Utilize your institution's resources. Many have set up resources and tutorials for students, faculty, and staff to help them work from home. Check your institution's COVID-19 info page and other communications for resources.

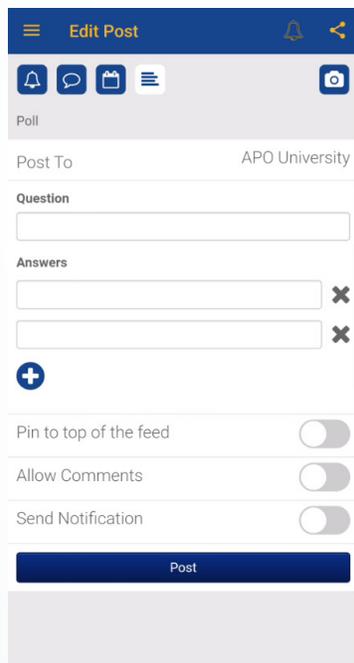
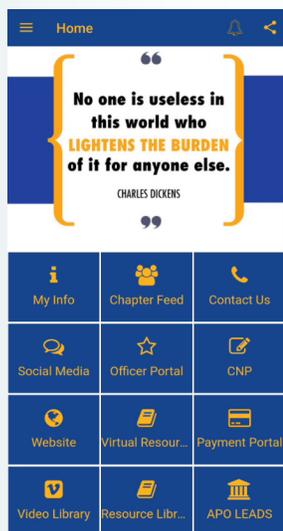
TIME TO VOTE?

ARE THERE DECISIONS THE CHAPTER NEEDS TO MAKE BY VOTE WHILE OPERATING VIRTUALLY? NOT A PROBLEM. VOTING CAN TAKE PLACE BY UTILIZING CHAT FEATURES IN THE VIDEO CONFERENCE SOFTWARE OR THROUGH POLLING AND SURVEYING APPS. BELOW ARE A FEW TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU WORK THROUGH WHAT VOTING LOOKS LIKE FOR THE CHAPTER.

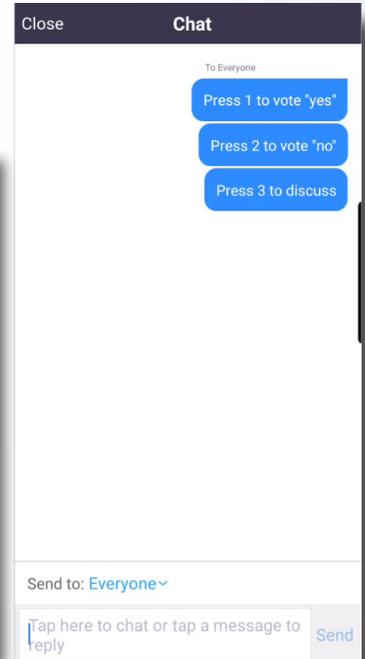
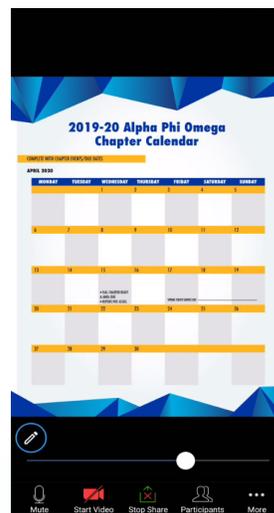
1. Attendance and quorum can be monitored on platforms like Zoom. Have the sergeant-at-arms or another assigned student track each individual's voting status and ensure the correct votes are counted based on this information.
2. For simple pass/fail elections, members can raise their hands to be counted, or the video app chat window and other polling apps can be used. With the chat window, ask students to privately chat their vote to the sergeant-at-arms.
3. The results of polls do not have to be shared with the whole meeting, so polls could be used for general elections. The APO Mobile Resource App is available for Android and iPhone and has a polling feature in the chapter feed that can be used for voting.

BELOW ARE A FEW OPTIONS OFFICERS MIGHT CONSIDER LOOKING INTO FOR VOTING AND ELECTIONS THE REST OF THIS SEMESTER. KEEP IN MIND THERE IS NOT ONE WAY TO DO THIS, SO FEEL FREE TO FIND OTHER OPTIONS THAT FIT THE NEEDS OF YOUR CHAPTER.

APO Mobile Resource App Group Polling



ZOOM



OTHER POLLING RESOURCES TO CONSIDER



SAMPLE

VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER (PRESIDENT)
- II. PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA (PRESIDENT)
- III. STATUS CHECK! (PRESIDENT)
 - A. HOW ARE YOU?
 - B. WHERE ARE YOU?
 - C. HOW'S SCHOOL?
 - D. DO YOU NEED ANYTHING?
- IV. OFFICER REPORTS (ALL PRESENT)
 - A. PRESIDENT
 - B. VICE PRESIDENT OF SERVICE
 - C. VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBERSHIP
 - D. VICE PRESIDENT OF LEADERSHIP
 - E. TREASURER
 - F. SECRETARY
 - G. PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBER EDUCATOR
- V. PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBER CLASS REPORT (EDUCATOR)
- VI. OLD BUSINESS (PRESIDENT)
- VII. NEW BUSINESS (PRESIDENT)
- VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS (SECRETARY)
- IX. FELLOWSHIP (FELLOWSHIP CHAIR)
- X. ADJOURNMENT & TOAST SONG (PRESIDENT)

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE!

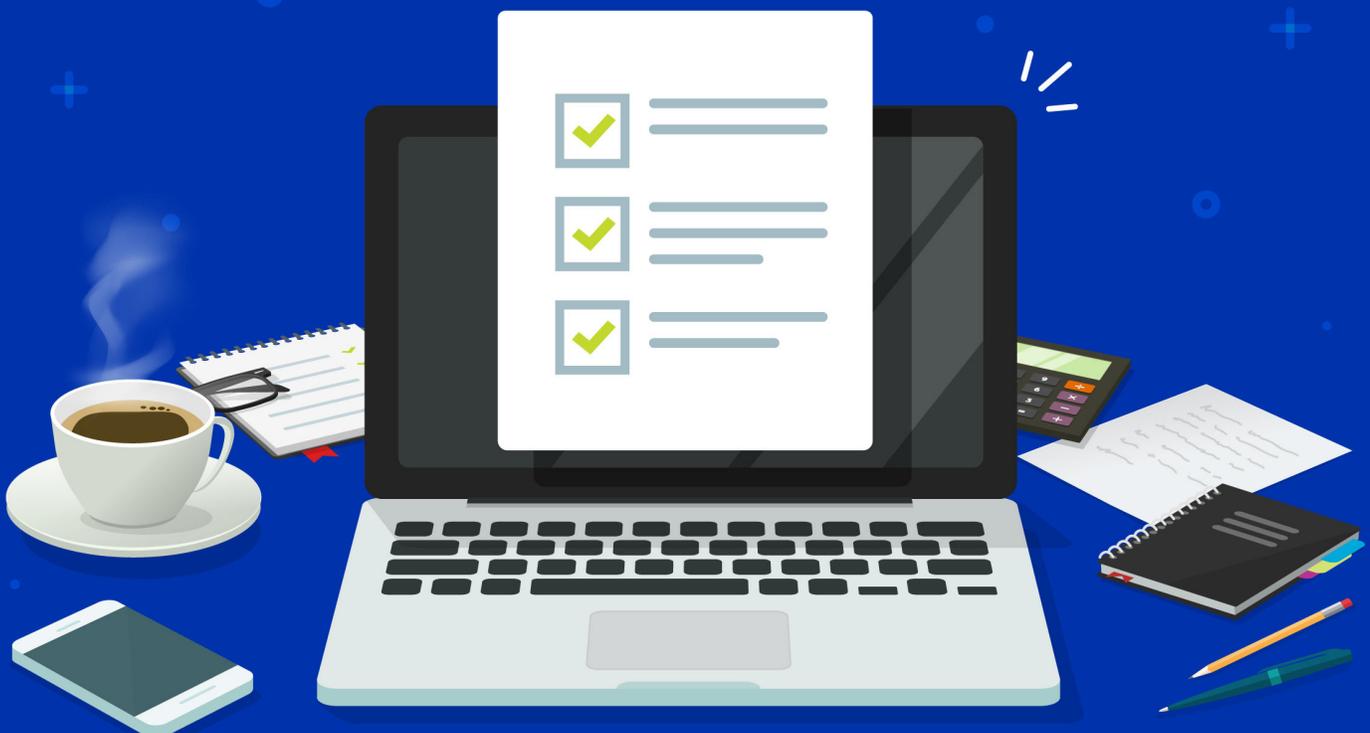
Now is an opportunity to look ahead to the fall semester. Use this time virtually to plan events for the fall that will recharge chapter energy and get everyone excited for what's ahead.

What can the chapter put in place now to make the return to campus more smooth? Do you need to reserve rooms for next semester? Can you be planning ahead for recruitment? Do you want to make sure Brothers stay in contact over the summer? Is there a big project your chapter has been putting off, such as a service event, or an anniversary celebration?

OFFICER TRANSITION!

Don't wait until you are in-person to complete the officer transition plan for the chapter. Virtually is a great time to connect outgoing and incoming officers via video conference to go over the roles and duties.

More details about recommended online officer transition plans will be coming from the National Fraternity in the near future so be on the lookout!



SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Whether members joined APO to develop their leadership skills, establish new friendships or provide more service, programming can continue virtually.

In addition to holding weekly or bi-weekly chapter meetings, consider holding a virtual leadership, friendship or service event every other week. Continuing to engage members with virtual opportunities will help retain the chapter's membership once everyone is able to return to campus. The longer a member goes without connecting with the chapter, the less likely they are to see the value in the organization and in returning come fall.

Be mindful that chapter programming and the expectations for members may look different than before. Brotherhood events at a local restaurant or bowling alley may transform into online game nights, while leadership development and service opportunities are now customized to fit the interests of each member, individually. Virtual program ideas are located in the Chapter Officers area of the website to allow members to stay connected through Leadership, Friendship and Service.

While active members continue to develop themselves as leaders, new members can participate in Launch Online - the introductory course to APO LEADS - and the new Introduction to Alpha Phi Omega online course.

GIVE ATTENTION TO RETENTION

Who says chapter meetings have to be all business? Be sure to include fellowship activities to give members a chance to come together as brothers and have a little fun while strengthening the culture of the chapter.

Below is a small sampling of some activities that chapters utilize to make meetings enjoyable and meaningful, as well as space to add other ideas.

- Brother or New Member of the Week
- Kudos or Snaps
- Two Truths and a Lie
- Kahoot Activities
- "Would You Rather" Questions

OTHER IDEAS:



(CON'T) SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

PLEDGE AND NEW MEMBER EDUCATION

Moving to a virtual setting for chapter operations doesn't mean pledge and new member education has to be put on hold. Just like initiates, pledges are seeking membership and community in Alpha Phi Omega. With a little bit of creativity and flexibility, pledge or new member educators can shift learning to the virtual realm and still welcome pledges and new members into the Fraternity this spring.

We're caring for our chapters in a challenging time, and changing and adapting the pledge or new member program in an unprecedented time is more valuable to the chapter than no pledge program at all. Remember to be patient and creative with this process. The pledge or new member program may look different than what other initiates went through, however that doesn't make it invaluable. The goal is to continue welcoming members who want to improve themselves through service to others. The world needs Alpha Phi Omega servant leaders now more than ever to give back and create positive change in our communities.

The Introduction to Alpha Phi Omega training course in the APO Online Learning Center was designed by the Fraternity's Pledge Education Taskforce to guide pledges and new members through their first step of membership in APO. This resource shares essential information about the Fraternity, its values and its founding to help pledges and new members gain a full understanding of what this wonderful organization is all about! The Fraternity welcomes you as a new member and looks forward to seeing the service you will provide as a leader of your campus. Completion of this course is the equivalent of a six-week in-person new member training requirement. A certificate of completion will be provided to learners once all modules and assessments are finished.

An online pledge or new member education process might look like the following...

1. Complete the Introduction to Alpha Phi Omega online course
2. Complete APO LEADS Launch Online
3. Develop a virtual service project as a group and present the idea at an upcoming chapter meeting
4. Attend one online pledge or new member education meeting via Zoom
5. Attend all chapter meetings through the end of the pledge or new member period

CONDUCTING CEREMONIES

Welcoming a new member or initiate into Alpha Phi Omega is a rewarding and moving experience for both the student and the chapter, and one that can and should continue in the virtual chapter environment. Halting new member and initiate ceremonies can exponentially impact the service the chapter is able to provide both now and in the future, as well as negatively impact membership and engagement. If the chapter is struggling to come up with ways to effectively conduct ceremonies, contact chapter_services@apo.org for help creating a plan.

In order to help take the guesswork out of what a virtual ceremony might entail, the Fraternity has put together virtual arrangements for both the Pledge Ritual and Initiate Ritual that provides setup and instructions for these online video conference events. These arrangements are recommendations and can be adjusted to fit the technological needs of the chapter and its students.

The virtual arrangements are for initiated members only, so the PDFs and supplements are available for download by chapter officers in the Chapter Officer Portal Library.

RESOURCES & CONCLUSION

There are many resources - both people and virtual items - within reach to help chapters transition to virtual operations. Remember to be creative, flexible and patient.

For more information on virtual resources available to you and your chapter, visit the [Chapter Officer Resource Area of www.apo.org](#) or download the [APO Mobile Resource App](#).

- To maintain chapter programming while your chapter operates virtually, check out the [Virtual Service Ideas](#), [Virtual Fellowship Ideas](#) and [Virtual Leadership Ideas](#) resources on the APO website.
- A chapter calendar is a great resource for all members to stay on track and on time. Refer to the [2019-20 Chapter Calendar Template](#) to create your chapter's calendar!
- On-campus administrators, often in Greek Life or Student Affairs, can help explain campus requirements, point the chapter towards extra funding, or recommend initiatives for the chapter to support virtually through servant leadership. They also help navigate campus policies and procedures, educational resources and much more.
- Maintain chapter growth and development by utilizing the virtual pledge and initiate ceremony resources found in the Library of the Chapter Officer Portal.
- Sectional and regional staff provide support to operations, including connecting the chapter to other members, officers and alumni in the area. Visit the Officer Tab in the Chapter Officer Portal for contact information for the regional chair and sectional chair who support the chapter.

KEEP CHECKING BACK! The Fraternity will continue to add resources and tools for chapters to utilize while operating virtually.

If you have ideas for tools, tips and resources that would be helpful to chapters right now, send them to chapter_services@apo.org

