



## GETTING PERMISSION FROM YOUR SCHOOL TO START AN ALPHA PHI OMEGA CHAPTER

Alpha Phi Omega chapters are a partnership between the national organization of Alpha Phi Omega, the students who make up the chapter, and the educational institution where the chapter is located. Because the school is part of this partnership, it is necessary to obtain permission from your school's administration before beginning to form an Alpha Phi Omega chapter. Each campus has different procedures; therefore, it is impossible to tell you exactly what steps you will need to take in order to begin your effort. However, below are some tips to help you determine who you need to speak with and talking points that you can use to explain why Alpha Phi Omega will be an asset to your campus.

### GETTING STARTED

The first step to obtaining administration permission is determining who to talk to on campus. Usually that person is either the Dean of Student Affairs (or equivalent) or the administrator who oversees student activities on campus. Before approaching your administration, it is recommended that you research not only who would be the best person to talk to, but also what campus rules and regulations apply. Every campus has different requirements for establishing a new organization. Once you have identified the most appropriate person to meet with, you should make an appointment to speak with them about your interest in bringing Alpha Phi Omega to campus. At that meeting, be prepared to explain what Alpha Phi Omega is, why you want to start a chapter, what benefits Alpha Phi Omega will bring to your campus, and why a letter of permission is needed.

To prepare for the meeting with the administration, spend some time thinking about the issue from their point of view. If you were that administrator, what would you want to know about a group that wanted to set up shop on your campus? Some typical concerns are membership practices, benefits to the students, how APO would fit into the mission/vision/values of the institution, and how Alpha Phi Omega is different from service organizations that already exist on campus. Every institution is different and the administration's concerns will be shaped by the institution's characteristics: public, private, large, small, a HBCU (historically black college or university), serving a particular population, secular, faith-based, predominantly residential, primarily commuter, and whether or not there are other Greek-lettered organizations on campus.

When you filled out the web form to indicate that you were interested in starting an Alpha Phi Omega chapter a packet of information was mailed to the Dean for Student Affairs or nearest equivalent at your school. The Fraternity's National Office or the Alpha Phi Omega volunteer you are working with can tell you who the packet was sent to. If you are going to be meeting with someone else, the Alpha Phi Omega National Office can send that person a copy of the packet as well.

One thing you should know before you start talking to administrators: Although Alpha Phi Omega is a Greek-letter organization; the fraternity's preference is to be recognized through the mechanism that

recognizes student organizations on your campus rather than through the Greek life system if your campus makes a distinction between the two. Alpha Phi Omega has a rule that says chapters cannot belong to an association that consists solely of social fraternities. There are a number of reasons for this. One is the Fraternity's membership policy. Alpha Phi Omega is open to all students regardless of other fraternal affiliations, but most associations of social fraternities and sororities only permit students to belong to one member fraternity. Another reason is that, as a non-residential fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega chapters don't have the concerns of funding and maintaining a house; so, the issues that a Greek Council spends much of its time and energy on are irrelevant to an Alpha Phi Omega chapter. Also, as a service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega's recruitment and member education structure is different from that of other Greek-lettered organizations.

That being said, you must always abide by the rules and regulations of your campus. Your institution's requirements may conflict with the requirements set by Alpha Phi Omega. If there is a conflict between your school's requirements and Alpha Phi Omega's requirements, Alpha Phi Omega will yield to the school's rules. If your school administration requires that Alpha Phi Omega belong to the Greek Council or equivalent in order to exist on campus, the Alpha Phi Omega will waive its requirement. As part of getting your school's permission to begin organizing an Alpha Phi Omega chapter, you should determine whether the school will classify your chapter of Alpha Phi Omega as a general club or a Greek life organization.

## TALKING POINTS

Below are some talking points to help you prepare for the meeting with administrators at your college or university. If your school wants to know more about Alpha Phi Omega before granting permission, a follow up phone call can be arranged with a fraternity official.

Here is some information you can use during your conversation:

- Open membership: membership in Alpha Phi Omega is open to all enrolled students.
- Alpha Phi Omega's focus is on leadership development through performing community service.
- The process for creating chapters is designed to foster strong, on-going organizations that will serve the campus and community for many years to come.
- Founded in 1925, there are active Alpha Phi Omega chapters on over 360 campuses nation-wide.
- During the 2012 National Service Week, the chapters of APO impacted over 43,000 youth and performed over 49,000 hours of service.
- During the 2013 Spring Youth Service Day project, the chapters of APO impacted over 175,000 youth of our nation.
- Each chapter's program is student driven, and each chapter tailors its activities to its campus rather than using a pre-designed structure from the national organization.
- Alpha Phi Omega has a strict no hazing policy.
- Chapters are required to have advisors from the school's faculty and staff.
- Having students doing service in the surrounding community and on campus is good for the school's image.
- Our alumni have served as college presidents, business leaders, astronauts, governors and even President of the United States.
- Some notable alumni include: William Jefferson Clinton, former President of the United States; James Lovell, astronaut; Philip Pfeffer, Former Chairman of Random House; Maura Harty, former Assistant Secretary Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State; and Mark Hatfield, former United States Senator.
- Some benefits that Alpha Phi Omega can bring to your campus that a local community service

club cannot are:

- Access to Alpha Phi Omega's APO LEADS series of leadership workshops. APO LEADS is a series of five workshops varying in length from three hours to a full weekend and covering everything from leadership theory to teamwork to personal leadership skills. The five workshops are:
  - L = Launch - Launching your leadership development – leadership theory
  - E = Explore - Exploring personal leadership strengths and potential improving individual leadership skills
  
  - A = Achieve - Achieving Success through teams - working in a team, leading a team
  - D = Discover - Discovering personal strengths and success skills -- Strategies for leaders to be successful
  
  - S = Serve Serving the fraternity by using management skills in your chapter Project Management, project planning, meeting management
  
- Access to Alpha Phi Omega's Membership Academy workshop: a weekend program that focuses on all areas of a chapter's membership program and teaches students a variety of strategies that they can adapt to their particular campus needs. Chapters are healthy and can carry out a rich program of service on their campus when they have strong programs for recruiting, training, and retaining those new members and Membership Academy helps them achieve that.
- Learning and service opportunities through attendance at sectional, regional, and national conferences.
- Access to webinars and written materials that teach life skills and best practices for various aspects of chapter operations: how to recruit and work with advisors, conflict management, fraternity basics, position specific sessions (president, service vice president, treasurer, etc.).
- The opportunity to apply for grants from the national organization to conduct service projects and other activities.