

# RETENTION TIPS, IDEAS & TOOLS

## 8 TIPS TO HELP RETAIN CHAPTER MEMBERS

- 1. DISCOVER WHY THEY JOINED.** More importantly, do more of it! Every member has their reason for joining, whether it be to build their resume, to meet more friends or to get involved on campus. Ask members why they joined so the chapter can be sure to cater to the needs that support their purpose.
- 2. RECOGNIZE AND REWARD.** Each brother brings something special to the table and it's uplifting and motivating to be recognized for our accomplishments. Whether it be academic successes, personal successes or professional successes, stay in tune with the achievements of your fellow brothers. A simple shout-out or more formal recognition can put a smile on their face and encourage them to continue to excel.
- 3. OFFER FLEXIBILITY.** Program diversity is essential when catering to the needs of members. It's important to recognize a member's workload, and it's more important to try to accommodate that through flexible programming. Events offered at different times and days are likely to attract a higher volume of attendees. Similarly, meeting times should cater to the schedule of most members, offering alternatives for those that may not be able to attend.
- 4. CREATE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS.** Making a difference in the world alongside your friends is an experience that is unique to Alpha Phi Omega. The personal connections made in APO extend well beyond the collegiate experience. Shared connections are a driving force in the Fraternity and promote the development of servant leaders across the world.
- 5. TRAIN AND DEVELOP.** Everyone in APO is striving to make the world a better place through Leadership, Friendship and Service. For members interested in expanding their personal and professional skillsets, training and development are high priorities. As mentioned above, it's important to cater to the needs of members no matter the cause that drives them. Just as some members join for the service or friendships, many members join for the exposure to leadership opportunities so be sure to balance chapter programming to accommodate these needs.
- 6. REMIND MEMBERS OF BENEFITS.** The benefits of joining APO are expansive. Don't forget to remind members exactly what the chapter and National Fraternity offer – shared connections, educational opportunities, priceless experiences, member discounts and so much more.
- 7. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.** Healthy, happy chapters have many things in common; one of which is having effective communication. Consistent updates, transparent reports and regular interactions can help chapter members stay on the same page. Remember, it can be challenging to interpret a person's tone over a mobile device or through social media. Ditch the technology and clearly communicate through in-person conversations.
- 8. ASK FOR FEEDBACK.** Asking members for their feedback shows the chapter is invested in each member's unique experience! Feedback also helps the chapter analyze the success of a project, program or event for future improvements to be made.

# RETENTION TIPS, IDEAS & TOOLS

## RETENTION IDEAS

### 1. GIVE BACK TO MEMBERS

a. Offer incentives for members who go above and beyond the expectations set by the chapter. This could be in the form of gift cards, APO/school gear or unique experiences.

### 2. SHOW MEMBERS THE FRUIT OF THEIR LABOR

a. Although we all do service selflessly, it's encouraging to see the impact made as a result of the service provided. Take it upon yourself to show chapter members how the service they've performed is impacting the campus and community.

b. Share some statistics on how much service was provided or who/what was impacted.

### 3. HIGHLIGHT BROTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

a. Allot a special amount of time during chapter or executive committee meetings to recognize the accomplishments of your peers. Whether it be scholastic achievements, personal milestones or professional successes, celebrate the development of one another as a team! This can be in the form of brother of the week, bro-ments, brother of the month and more.

### 4. DEVELOP CONSISTENT ONBOARDING PRACTICES

a. The first few encounters a student has with the chapter will leave a lasting impression. Aside from recruitment, the onboarding process should be consistent, engaging and customized to the group of people being welcomed into the chapter.

b. Onboarding can consist of welcoming new members in a variety of ways including gifting members with APO gear, school supplies or other welcoming items; providing a resource binder of Fraternity information to get them started on the right foot; hosting a pledge or

new member ceremony that incorporate brotherhood activities in addition to the ritual; highlighting the pledge or new member class on social media.

c. Introduce a personal point of contact or contacts for members who have questions that commonly arise when acclimating.

d. Set clear expectations from the beginning so members know exactly what is being asked of them. Allow an opportunity for members to reaffirm this agreement and recommit to the values and mission of the chapter.

### 5. CREATE A REFERRAL PROGRAM

a. This will act as a two-fold program, targeting both retention and recruitment. For example, referring a student to join APO can benefit current members through various incentives. Implementing this will encourage current members to remain engaged and involved in the growth and development of chapter membership.

### 6. CREATE AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

a. Many students today are heavily engaged through online interactions like social media. Establishing an online presence can allow chapter members to stay connected with each other between in-person interactions.

b. Host a member takeover of social media to give external audiences an inside scoop of the chapter from a different perspective.

### 7. REMEMBER NAMES

a. Show others they are a valuable member of the chapter and organization with this simple yet impactful gesture.

### 8. SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND TOTAL WELLNESS

a. Beyond APO, everyone has a unique sense of worth that impacts the

campus and community around us. The health and wellness of our peers, mentors and even strangers comes first. Check in with one another and reach out if you or a friend are struggling to maintain a healthy mind and healthy body.

### 9. IMPLEMENT A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

a. To ease the process of integrating new members, supporting current members and transitioning graduating seniors, a mentorship program like a big/little program may benefit your chapter.

b. Mentorship can take many forms, so decide what members wish to gain from being a mentor or having a mentor and build the program around those goals.

### 10. SENIOR & PAST OFFICER LEADERSHIP ROLES

a. Provide seniors and past officers the opportunity to continue expanding their leadership by creating leadership roles that cater specifically to their academic workload and experience in the chapter.

b. Allowing leaders other than those elected to officer positions to offer insight and ideas can add more variety to chapter programming.

c. This approach can help chapters struggling to retain seniors and past officers, and provides those members with a purposeful opportunity to continue expanding their leadership.

### 11. DEDICATE A LEADERSHIP ROLE TO RETENTION

a. Establishing a leadership position that caters specifically to retention programming, similar to recruitment, helps the chapter maintain retention practices long term.

b. This officer's objective will be to target membership retention through some of the ideas provided here and beyond!

# RETENTION TIPS, IDEAS & TOOLS

## RETENTION TOOLS

### CALCULATING RETENTION

The first step to understanding retention is familiarizing yourself with your chapter's current retention rates. Retention can be calculated for audiences like new members or the chapter at large. Insert your chapter's membership numbers below and do the math!

### PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBER RETENTION

$$\left( \frac{\text{\# OF INITIATING PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBERS}}{\text{\# OF PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBERS AT THE TIME OF THE CEREMONY}} \right) \times 100 = \text{RETENTION \%}$$

### CHAPTER-AT-LARGE RETENTION

$$\left( \frac{\text{\# OF RETURNING ACTIVE MEMBERS (AMD)}}{\text{(LAST YEAR'S AMDS + INITIATES - SENIORS)}} \right) \times 100 = \text{RETENTION \%}$$

# RETENTION TIPS, IDEAS & TOOLS

## RETENTION CHART

Establishing a retention program can be challenging if your chapter doesn't have an existing program to build upon. By utilizing the following activity, your chapter can identify and address retention struggles and find realistic solutions to increase membership retention. Chapter leaders such as officers and advisors should facilitate this activity. Use the following information to complete the Retention Chart Worksheet on the next page.

Begin by establishing the audience the chapter would like to target first. Select from the options below:

PLEDGE OR NEW MEMBERS  
NEWLY INITIATED MEMBERS  
ACTIVE BROTHERS

CHAPTER OFFICERS (PAST & CURRENT)  
ADVISORS  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

SENIOR MEMBERS  
ALUMNI  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. ASSESS: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- List current retention practices
- Survey current brothers, pledge or new members and advisors in the chapter about why they joined Alpha Phi Omega; also ask why they have remained active within the chapter. This survey can include areas like memorable recruitment tactics and chapter education and programming.
- Survey students who have left the chapter for circumstances other than graduation, asking about their reason(s) for leaving.

### 2. DIAGNOSE: WHAT DO WE NEED TO FIX?

- Determine what needs are not being met, resulting in unsuccessful retention efforts.
- Considering all audiences, determine what effects (positive and negative) the current retention practices have on the chapter.

### 3. PLAN: HOW WILL WE ADDRESS THE STRUGGLES WE'RE FACING?

- Establish a plan to overcome the struggles of the chapter. Consider improvements that can be made on existing retention efforts and the continuation of successful retention practices.

### 4. IMPLEMENT: WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?

- Delegate tasks to members who will be responsible for the implementation of the retention plan.
- Determine timelines for each element of the retention plan.

### 5. EVALUATE: HOW DID WE DO IT? HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?

- Set a specific time to evaluate the retention plan on a consistent basis.
- An executive committee retreat, CAPS, SMARTER goals, etc. are great times for the evaluation to take place.
- The evaluation should include what went well, what areas still need improvement, resource utilized and member involvement.
- Revise the retention plan where necessary.

# RETENTION CHART WORKSHEET

## AUDIENCE

### 1. ASSESS

WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO STAY?

### 2. DIAGNOSE

WHY ARE PEOPLE LEAVING?

### 3. PLAN

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

### 4. IMPLEMENT

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF MAKING THIS PLAN HAPPEN?

### 5. EVALUATE

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF OUR PLAN IS SUCCESSFUL?