

The Rush Guest

Unless men are considered and selected for membership who have the basic ability and motivation to fulfill the academic requirements for graduation, the fraternity cannot serve as a catalyst to the educational process. Few colleges admit students who do not have the basic skills to do college work. There are certain factors, however, related to the past performance and future goals of the individual which should be considered before approving a prospective member.

- Appraise a man scholastically as you would socially or by any other measuring device.
- Discuss with each rushee his high school background in scholarship as well as his activities and social life. This is important. Discuss his course programs. Inquire into his attitudes toward study, grades, teachers, and his college program. If possible, discuss these same factors with the rushee and his parents.
- Consider with the rushee his long range professional and vocational goals. Do these reflect the thinking of someone who is fairly mature? Are these similar to the goals and aspirations expressed by other members of the chapter?
- Examine the scholastic background of the rushee through as many tangible means as possible.
 - Academic subjects completed in high school and the grades achieved.
 - Rank in graduating class.
 - Test scores in admissions tests, reading and aptitude examinations. Remember this important fact. According to existing research, these factors--high school academic performance, rank in class, and college admissions scores--present the best indication of a man's future academic performance on the campus.
- The chapter scholarship committee should develop from chapter records a set of information on the likelihood that a man will be initiated. One such technique might be the compilation of the high school grades and SAT scores for every man who joins. Then a table could be devised with the expected grade point as the body of the table, plotted against high school grades and SAT scores. Based on your own chapter's norms, you can develop a grade predictor for your new members, useful in deciding whether or not they are a good academic risk before pledging takes place.
- During rush, there should be an emphasis on house scholarship performance. This might include the scholarship rank and pictures of the top scholars prominently displayed, a list of membership of various honoraries, and scholarship holders specifically listed. Such lists and tabulations might be included in any rush book or on the chapter bulletin board for display.
- Continue to be on the alert for good quality upperclassmen who have proven themselves academically. Many of the most outstanding leaders in the Fraternity joined as upperclassmen.

The New Member

In a recent study at the University of Illinois nearly three-fourths (73.8%) of the hundreds of rushees to fraternities stated their foremost motive for joining a college fraternity was "to help me get better grades." The obligation for the fraternity to serve as a positive contributor to the freshman academic experience is an obvious one. The reciprocal responsibility on the part of the new member as a probationary member of the fraternity is also apparent. A chapter's records of high scholarship is usually the result of the type of man the chapter seeks to join.

Reference was made earlier in the Manual to the need for the scholarship council to work closely with the new members through weekly reports to the Hegemon and Hypophetes which are shared with the Big Brother. Similarly, many of the points referred to throughout the Manual also apply to the scholarship program of the new members.

One basic question which is asked frequently is, "What is the best kind of relationship between the older and younger members?" Some insight into the best approach for the active chapter to take in working with new members in scholarship or any other area of the fraternity is presented in a study which was conducted at the University of Kansas. The purpose of this study was to find differences in fraternities that excelled scholastically, socially and athletically as compared to those who were not successful in these areas.

The differences as described by the author of the Kansas study, William R. Butler, are as follows:

1. The chapter atmosphere in which new members were respected, accepted, and encouraged was definitely related to high scholastic achievement. In opposition, an atmosphere in which new members were belittled, embarrassed, and made to feel inferior was concomitant with low scholastic achievement.

2. The new member programs of the high achieving fraternities were based upon a system of management and guidance rather than law enforcement. Considerable opportunities were allowed for new members to become self-directing. On the other hand, an atmosphere in which new members were given little opportunity to take self-initiated action and be responsible for those actions, usually contributed to poor scholarship.
3. New members tended to copy the behavior of the older members in both the high and low groups. The older members of the high fraternities were constantly aware of themselves in the new members' presence and made every effort to present themselves to the new members in the best light. In the low groups, the activities generally deviated greatly from the behavior they expected of their new members.
4. Seeing and understanding the new member as an individual who had definite physical and emotional needs was an important factor in the high ranking groups. The low groups had few provisions in their new member programs for satisfying the new members' personal and academic problems. They believed that physical and mental discipline would produce academically successful members. Results showed that attempts to control new members by using a maximum amount of punishment yielded a minimum amount of production.
5. The high achieving fraternities used methods of controlling new member behavior which were based upon the use of reward alone, or a combination of reward and punishment. They stressed positive inter-personal relationships between non-actives and actives. The low group primarily used punishment and reproof and developed negative inter-personal relationships.

Scholarship Council Responsibilities With New Members

- The scholarship chairman should meet with the new members at their first official meeting and should state the chapter's view on scholarship. If the new members are made aware of scholarship emphasis from the day they are bid, the chapter climate in one college generation should improve drastically.
- The scholastic chairman should consider the writing of a standard letter to parents of all new members explaining to them what the chapter's policy is on scholarship and how their son's academic career will be furthered by his fraternity membership.
- The selection of a Big Brother for each new member should be given consideration by the scholarship committee as well as the Hegemon. The person selected should be able to work well with the new member in question, both intellectually and socially.
- A weekly report of the new member's grades should be required at meetings of the new member class, and reports made to the chapter about the progress of the new members.
- There should be a minimum standard for initiation based on a scholastic grade point, necessary to remain in good standing.
- There are a number of gimmicks which might be employed to help promote good scholarship among the new members, such as steak and beans dinners, studying with older members, and so on. Many of these are just what the name implies - "gimmicks." They may not serve any useful function. If they do and have proven to be of value, then they should be continued.

Chapter Scholarship: Additional Suggestions

There are a number of different techniques over and above those referred to earlier which have been used to develop and maintain a program of scholarship by various chapters. This list is not exhaustive but may be of some value as you consider ways to improve academic achievement

- Have public presentation of scholastic achievement awards such as trophies, plaques and certificates, outstanding freshman scholar, highest room award, etc. Too often the "activities man" or the athlete outdistances the scholar in terms of recognition.
- Post grades of all chapter members through the use of a scholarship bulletin board with group and individual progress reports through graphs and charts, pair off Brother with the highest and lowest scholarship or Big Brother-Little Brother competition.
- Give cash prizes for scholastic improvement and achievement as well as for selection to membership academic honoraries, such as Phi Eta Sigma, Phi Beta Kappa, or Tau Beta Pi.
- Invite faculty members and businessmen to talk on the importance of academic achievement and its relevance to post-graduate life working in business or the professions.
- Post notices and bulletins about university lectures, concerts and exhibits.

- Investigate with your alumni the possibility of their sponsoring a "scholarship achievement ring" program. Specially designed rings are available through the Balfour Company.
- Raise the academic requirements for initiation to slightly higher than the local Interfraternity Council standards.
- Arrange an annual "Scholarship and Awards Banquet" for the chapter, or for a number of chapters in a district, with the parents and college officials in attendance.
- Make frequent use of scholarship news in chapter, campus, and local news media.