



## Training Concept: Effective/Strategic Communication

To help PNMs progress successfully through recruitment by maximizing their options, recruitment counselors must be trained how to effectively and strategically communicate with PNMs about Panhellenic recruitment. Preparing to explain to PNMs in a clear and thorough manner will make recruitment more enjoyable for everyone.

Below are topics all College Panhellenic communities should be discussing as it relates to recruitment. Each topic provides tips for facilitating discussions and activities to teach this information to recruitment counselors and in turn, to PNMs.

### Topic 1: Benefits/Role of sororities on a campus

Sorority women are sometimes asked, “What is so great about being in a sorority?” Knowing and being able to clearly articulate the membership benefits is a great way to help with recruitment. This applies to recruitment counselors as well as to the entire sorority community.

#### Discussion

To train recruitment counselors on this aspect, facilitate a discussion about the benefits of membership in a sorority. Record the responses on flip chart paper. Try to generate a mix of practical and values-based reasons for membership. PNMs want to hear about high GPAs as much as the importance of sisterhood and leadership and vice versa. Encourage participants to answer the questions “Why do our organizations exist?” and “What is our purpose in our members’ lives?”

#### Activity

Salespeople often create an “elevator pitch” as a way to promote or explain something in an efficient but thoughtful manner. This concept means a person can quickly describe the importance or meaning of a topic within about 60 seconds, the length of a typical elevator ride. An elevator pitch for a recruitment counselor is a one- to two-minute synopsis about the benefits of membership in a Panhellenic organization.

Example: “Being in a sorority at [college/university] means that I am part of a community that shares common values. We believe in community service, leadership, education and sisterhood. Being in a sorority has changed my life, because it has taught me ...”

#### Creating an Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch should always contain:

**Problem-solution “hook”:** This is a statement or question that piques a person’s interest and makes her want to hear more. Good hooks succinctly define a problem or need and suggest the solution.

**About 150-225 words:** The pitch should be no longer than 60 seconds (average elevator ride). Cramming 500 words into a minute won’t work.



**Passion:** Share energy and excitement about the topic. If you aren't enthusiastic, how do you expect others to be enthusiastic about what you are saying?

**A request:** At the end of the pitch, ask for something, knowing what you want. In a recruitment setting, do you want a PNM to continue in recruitment, to choose the organization that matches her values, etc.?

Have each recruitment counselor write her own elevator pitch that she would tell to a family on move-in day at the residence halls. Ask a few recruitment counselors to share their speeches to the group. No two speeches should be alike, because no two sorority experiences are the same.

Below are a few prompts to help recruitment counselors think about what they could include in their speeches:

- My favorite memory from recruitment/Bid Day/new member training ...
- My academics have been supported by my sorority through ...
- An exceptional leader in my chapter is ...
- My sorority gives back to the community by ...
- I live my sorority's creed by ...

*Note: Avoid the most common mistake of turning this into a sales pitch. Instead the recruitment counselor should be able to describe how she became her best self through membership in a sorority.*

Preparing an elevator pitch will help recruitment counselors easily and succinctly articulate the benefits of sorority membership. This is key information to share when introducing themselves to their PNM groups or when a PNM is expressing she might withdraw from recruitment. This exercise is also useful for recruitment counselors to walk through with their PNM groups to help each PNM give an elevator pitch about what she is looking for in a sorority or what she offers a sorority.

## Topic 2: Membership expectations

You should be honest when communicating expectations of sorority membership. The last thing you want is several PNMs excited to join your community and then realize they don't meet the minimum grade requirement for most chapters, can't afford membership dues, or don't want to put in the time to be an active and involved member.

### Discussion

**Time:** Let the PNMs know time management is key to sorority success. Describe how often chapter, new member and other meetings occur. Outline other commitments such as sisterhood events, service programs, social events, enrichment programs and academic initiatives. It is possible to dedicate 24 hours a day to sorority activities — calendars are packed with fun and valuable experiences — but learning to say no is a crucial skill in time management. Sororities will work with a PNM if she is upfront about academic or extracurricular commitments.



### **Activity**

Outline the “typical day” or “typical week” in a sorority member’s life on your campus. Illustrate the diverse activities and time commitments. To reflect, discuss different techniques to manage your time and commitments.

### **Discussion**

Financial obligations: Questions about membership financial obligations are common before joining a sorority. PNMs and family members want to know upfront what this experience will cost. Price points may vary from chapter to chapter, so you should provide correct information. The NPC Manual of Information suggests giving an average for all groups. Make sure PNMs take the time to review the financial information provided by the College Panhellenic.

In addition, explain that sororities typically have payment plans to help manage membership costs. This can be a relief regarding meeting financial obligations. Another item to share is scholarship opportunities that may be available from the area Alumnae Panhellenic or inter/national organizations.

### **Activity**

First, brainstorm all the experiences, activities and programs a member gets out of her sorority experience — remember to think about current, as collegiate, and future, as alumnae, benefits. Then, conduct a “sorority by the numbers” breakdown. Take the average cost of a year’s membership, and divide it by the number of weeks in school or even days in school to show the “deal” members are getting. This highlights what women actually pay for and what they receive from their investment.

This also helps PNMs realize the financial obligations of sorority membership have nothing to do with “paying for your friends.” It helps fund the myriad activities, events, programs and benefits for members.

*Tip: Put this breakdown in the information a PNM receives to highlight this “deal” in print.*

### **Topic 3: What to expect from the recruitment counselor experience**

The recruitment experience is different at every campus. Some students come with preconceived notions of what sorority life will be like, and the same goes with recruitment. You should speak honestly about the realities of recruitment while maintaining a positive perspective. The recruitment counselor experience is very different from the chapter member experience, and this must be communicated to the recruitment counselor team.

### **Activity**

Have a panel of former recruitment counselors speak about their recruitment experience. If there are second-year counselors on the team, they may be the perfect women for this job. If not, call back some of the stellar recruitment counselors from the past year to share. Select women for your panel who will be honest and supportive of the experience. It is OK to discuss the difficulties in this position, because it will better prepare the recruitment counselors to handle any situation they may face. Ask a few questions for each person on the panel to answer.

Possible panel questions:

- » What was the most rewarding thing about being a recruitment counselor?



- » What was the most challenging thing about being a recruitment counselor?
- » What surprised you about the experience?
- » If you could do it again, what would you do differently?
- » How was leadership important in the recruitment counselor role?
- » How were effective/strategic communication skills important in the recruitment counselor role?
- » What hat — leader, mentor or coach — did you “wear” the most, and why?
- » How did your personal leadership style help you in the role?

*Tip: Give the questions to the panelists in advance so they can provide thoughtful, positive responses during the program.*

Once panel members have gotten into a groove and shared their perspectives, open the floor for questions.

Similarly, a panel discussion can be a positive way to help PNMs prepare for what to expect in primary recruitment. Make sure panelists are coached to provide answers geared to the values-based recruitment experience.

Possible panel questions include:

- How did you figure out whether a sorority matched what you wanted out of the experience?
- What did you consider when choosing a sorority?
- What are some important questions to ask the members you meet in recruitment?
- How does recruitment progress round by round?
- What was the most rewarding thing about being a recruitment counselor?
- What was the most challenging thing about being a recruitment counselor?
- What surprised you about the experience?

### **What Every PNM Needs to Know About Recruitment**

- The College Panhellenic has information available that tells you what to expect during recruitment, such as logistics, schedules and what to wear.
- Ask questions when you do not understand.
- Some events will have more PNMs in attendance than others, and this is not a reflection of a chapter.
- You must attend all events for which you receive an invitation.
- Failure to attend an event may jeopardize your ability to receive invitations.
- Being a group’s legacy does not ensure membership in that group.
- Accurate financial information regarding membership is given by the College Panhellenic in a cost range unless the individual groups provide specific chapter information to you.
- Good scholarship is valued by all groups.
- All NPC member organizations have policies against hazing.
- No chapter member may promise or imply the promise of a bid.
- You are expected to act politely and respectfully when attending an event.
- You should expect to be treated politely and with respect.



- Every woman attending a preference event must appear on that sorority’s bid list, but this does not ensure an invitation to join that particular sorority, because recruitment is a mutual selection process.
- You must be certain you understand the membership recruitment acceptance binding agreement (MRABA) that you will be expected to sign immediately after attending the last preference event.
- You may choose not to join a chapter and therefore not fully complete the MRABA.
- You may choose to limit or list only one choice on your MRABA, or you may list all the chapters where you attended preference events.
- You must understand if you list a chapter on your MRABA, are matched to that chapter and receive an invitation to membership, you are bound to that chapter until the next primary recruitment.
- Men and alcohol are not permitted during recruitment or Bid Day activities.

### Legacy policy

It is important for a PNM to know the chapter policy for the organization for which she is a legacy. Policies vary from sorority to sorority. It is a good idea to educate recruitment counselors on any legacy policies the NPC member organizations on your campus follow; however, the College Panhellenic ultimately should determine whether this is necessary. Seek advice from your NPC area advisor and fraternity/sorority advisor to make this decision.