



Rush Retreat Guidelines

Time, Duration, and Location

- A retreat should take place no more than a week before the rush event and one should be held before every rush so that the new members and benefit from the first exposure to these matters. It is important that older members also attend to demonstrate the importance of Rush to the underclassmen.
- It is hard to imagine much useful coming out of a retreat that did not last an entire afternoon, at least. One could probably fill a day (with a long lunch break) easily.
- A retreat should take place off campus and away from the Chapter house – far enough so that people are not dropping in casually and that once there, will not likely leave. On the other hand, it should not be so far away that travel time becomes an issue. The house of an alumnus would do as would a campsite or church or community center.

Objectives – What we must instill in each member before rush.

Knowledge of our product and how it compares to those of competitors

- In what areas do we excel? What makes us unique on campus in good ways? What things are important to us in ways that are obviously by how we use our time and money? We need to know these things because they are what differentiate us from our competitors in ways that might appeal to prospects.
- In what areas are we deficient? We need to know this because our competitors will probably point these things out during rush. We need to be able to address these issues if a prospect brings them up.

Knowledge of our prospects and what they care about

- What are freshmen looking for? What are upperclassmen that are rushing looking for?

Belief in the value of what we have to offer

- Why are we still here? Why do we pay the dues and the insurance in order to hang out with each other? What is it about our Chapter and ourselves that keeps us together despite its being a pain sometimes.

Programming Suggestions

General

- Write down the points that come out of the inquiries. A flip chart that has pages with post-it adhesive on the back would be good, One can find these at an office supply store.
- A good mix of old and young members should attend – the whole Chapter would be great. Especially the retreat should not be just young guys. If the old members skip out, it lowers the importance of the event in the eyes of the young ones.

- Consider having a young alumnus who understands marketing and sales facilitate. He should be young enough to understand the mind of the undergrads but old enough to be removed enough to command the respect he needs to conduct the retreat.

Knowledge of our product and how it compares to those of competitors

- Begin with what is good about the Chapter and what the organization obviously cares about. Consider every aspect of life in the Chapter. However, *you are not allowed to list “the quality of our brotherhood” or any variation of it* because all groups claim this as a strength and it is not a useful differentiator. If the brotherhood is strong, that will come out in the other things you say and in how the prospects see you relate to each other.
- If the Chapter has a vision or mission statement, it would be useful to compare your state with this ideal – to see both strengths and weaknesses.
- Where is the Chapter deficient? Be blunt about it because it is better to recognize this and prepare for it before rush.
- Material for a Chapter Retreat may come out of this exercise, especially if the Chapter concludes that it has little to offer anyone other than the privilege of paying dues and insurance to hang out with friends.
- Ask girls known to and trusted by the Chapter what members of other fraternities and sororities say about the Chapter –good and bad.
- The output of this process should be a list of our essential characteristics, our attractive qualities, and our problems. Each member should be able to phrase, *in his own words*, each of our characteristics and qualities and how they have benefited him. The Chapter should agree upon a standard general response to each of our problems and each member should be able to explain his take on these in his own words.
- Members should be able to express these things quickly and vividly with examples.
- Prospects should hear a presentation of our strengths and weaknesses that is consistent in content but personal in delivery. We must all be singing from the same page.

Knowledge of our prospects and what they care about

- Have each member remember back to when he pledged and mention the people and events and qualities that interested him. Usually a small set of themes will emerge, including such as “home away from home”, “the people here would talk to me”, “feeling comfortable here”, and “feeling liked here”.
- Ask girls known to and trusted by the Chapter what prospects have said about the Chapter in the past.
- Ask the oldest members present what they think they have gotten out of membership over the years and how the things they value about membership have changed.
- At least this knowledge should remind us of what our basic behavior towards each and every prospect should be – courteous and friendly. Every undesirable prospect has a sharp friend or two and, over time, a person who was socially inept as a freshman may develop in good ways away from home and be a great prospect as a sophomore. We don’t need to burn an social bridges.
- When presenting the Chapter’s strengths, we should hint at our ability to provide the things the prospect is seeking and demonstrate it if we can. These things are obvious in the case of most freshmen but some freshmen will be more sophisticated, perhaps having had a parent who was Greek, and upper classmen

we would expect to be looking for something more than a home away from home since they have been settled into college life for year at least already. In these cases, we can call upon the longer-term benefits known to the older members and bring those up in conversation.

Belief in the quality of what we have to offer

- Remaining active can involve a lot of work and a lot of risk but we have stayed anyway. What would our lives in college have been like without membership? What would we hate most to give up by quitting? What keeps us around?
- Have some members, especially some older ones relate some stories that illustrate the value of the Chapter beyond just a place to hang out with your friends. Probably, only the old members have been around enough to have reflected on this but some young ones might have something to throw in.
- The primary purpose of this exercise is to make sure that each member knows exactly why he is a member and has not drifted off. A person who is sure of the value of what he is presenting will be a more effective presenter, other things being equal. The sincerity will come through.
- During rush, a member might even bring up some incidents, mentioned in the retreat, that illustrate the value he places on membership – if the experiences were positive one. Although we all know that the Chapter can sometimes prove its value during “bad” times, rush is not the time for heavy stories. Mention of specific incidents should be done carefully lest prospects here the same specific stories from several people. Then it begins to sound like something they just memorized.
- Encourage each member to be able to express his love for the fraternity in 30 seconds or less. He may not use the words during rush but they will come through in other things he says and does.

Quick Review of Procedures and Wrap Up

- If the Chapter has a list of tactical dos and don'ts, such as “don't rush girls”, and “no more than three Tekes or rushees in a group”, it would be good to go over them briefly so that people aren't clueless during events.
- Make sure everybody understands how bids are granted, folders prepared, and the procedure for giving bids, the warning signs, and what we do when a bid is accepted. Have the Rush Chairman and the Prytanis ready to answer any questions.
- Conclude with a brief recap of our features, strengths, and weaknesses and a reminder to each member to be able to express these in his own worlds and encouragement to be able to express his love for the fraternity. Some people may find role playing useful but practicing speaking aloud in front of a mirror is probably just as effective.
- *Don't let your first presentation of material about the Chapter, be to a rushee. Go in armed and ready!*