



## PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES: Membership Recruitment

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There was a time when I thought I knew EVERYTHING about being a Black Greek. Wood was good, skating was not an option, your prophytes always knew better, we don't recruit and no matter what the campus professional said, they were wrong about how we "got down", especially if they didn't look like us. Back then, I was so wrong.

But, you don't think like that today...right?

Seriously, the block is hot, the gig is up and our groups can no longer afford to rely on myths and mistakes to ensure maintain the legacy and the future of our beloved organizations. The time to stop is now before things get out of hand. I don't have to talk about the long laundry list of chapters at schools across the country that had to hang it up because "tradition" got in the way.

So now what?

I wrote the INTAKE EQUATION program a couple of years ago because I kept finding myself in deep conversations with students at different conferences and universities that were stuck. They wanted to move away from the vestiges of the past that were getting their chapters nowhere, but lacked the tools and skills to move forward in a meaningful way. The concept of being elite was making them extinct and with growing administrative rules they were starting to die a very slow, painful and public death. The INTAKE EQUATION is a 5-6 hour program for campuses but let me share four brief points from the program that many have found to be effective in assisting chapters to conduct values-based intake.

### 1. STOP the Illegal Crap.

I don't care who brought you in and what they said had to be done. You and your chapter don't have a check large enough to beat a lawsuit or worse, un-kill or un-hurt someone. Joining a fraternity and sorority should not be about breaking someone down so you can build them up and mold them into loyal, steadfast and lifelong members of your chapter. How is that working for all of you? Are all of your alumni financial? Active? Engaged? Late nights, useless memorization, eating ridiculous foods, intimidation, and physical and mental abuse do not make a good, lifelong member. If your chapter puts out in the world what you are about, what you will and will not stand for and follows the rules, your chapter will be around long after other chapters get suspended. Even better, you will attract people that are about the business of values and not interested in proving who went harder and for how long.

### 2. Don't Be Snotty.

The point of our groups is to mentor and uplift our community. Freshmen and sophomores need this most on any college campus. From day one of the new school year, your chapter should be seen as a resource and a friendly face to new and young students. The campus is hard to navigate. Get out there and meet new people who can most benefit from the knowledge and skills your brothers and sisters have. Say hello to unfamiliar faces, invite students you don't know to events and activities. Go a step further and offer to walk them over to the gathering. This is not recruitment; this is being of service to your fellow brothers and sister in the university community. We need to branch out and meet people, make friends, and mentor. Some of the people we meet will want to become members, not because you won the step show, but because of the resources you provided and kindness you showed. Bottom line is to be approachable to everyone regardless if they are a potential member or not.

### 3. You Recruit...Get over it!

Whenever any member of your chapter opens their mouth, puts on letters, attends an event or is in a public place where others can observe them, you are recruiting for your chapter. I don't care what you call it or if it's passive or active. Our chapters have always recruited members and we always will if we want to stay around. Your founders invited others to join. So embrace it and do it well. Something about your organization recruited you to peruse membership in your chapter. Re-

cruitment is not a bad thing and we do it in different ways. Our Panhellenic and IFC brothers and sisters do it differently and that is ok, just recognize that we need not be good at in our own way. Try this: obtain a list of students that made Dean's List in your community at you university. Send an email or handwritten note to each one of them and say this: "The XY chapter of ABC Fraternity/Sorority, Inc would like to congratulate you on making the Dean's List this semester. Our chapter prides itself on academic excellence and we wanted to recognize your accomplishment in something we hold in high esteem and value. Best of Luck for the upcoming academic year! Best, XY Chapter." Done! A simple way to introduce academically proficient students to your organization....and you didn't ask them to join. Game recognizes game and your chapter just upped the score with that note. Inquiries about your chapter will roll in and when they do, don't shy away from telling people about how wonderful your organization is, how many doors it will open and how it has changed you as a person. This concept is bigger than recruitment; this is about continuing your legacy.

#### 4. Trust your campus professional.

It's ok to let us in. Believe it or not we are not the enemy and we want the very best for your chapter and organization as a whole. Being a chapter of 3 or 2 people and having to fill multiple roles in your fraternity/sorority is not the experience we want for your chapter. You are the key in teaching your campus professional everything there is to know about your chapter, your needs, your wants and what we can do to help...if you let us in. Stop hiding or omitting information about your intake process, timelines, etc., and claiming it's a secret. If we want the information, trust me we can get it! However, we'd rather get it from you so we can discuss what is best for your chapter on your campus. Your campus professional can be your GREATEST ally in sending great potential members and interest your way, advocating for your group, and help getting the word out about your council. When you finish reading this, make an appointment to see your Greek Advisor. Prepare for full disclosure, bring documents that they should have, discuss your plans, ask for help. We love Greeks and we love this work...trust us, we may surprise you!

These points are just some highlights of the INTAKE EQUATION, but I think they are really important steps to take if your chapter plans on being around for a long time. Start thinking differently. Hold on to your values, but let go of the "traditions" that are out-dated, dangerous, and fail to make your relevant to today's college student. This is your chapter, take control and take it to the next level.



## PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES: Best Two Members

*Sam Centellas is a member of Sigma Lambda Beta.*

Your chapter is all about quality over quantity. KUDOS. I agree completely and believe that only the best and brightest should get into and qualify to be members. I want to explore what we actually mean, and how we actualize that thought process behind quality over quantity.

Indulge me for a minute...

Right now you happen to have two active members this semester. Yes, of course this means that there are ONLY two people on campus that meet your membership criteria, made it through the rigorous selection and interview process. They obviously completed and crossed after the most intense leadership experience known to man and are now proud neos.

No worries about leadership skills though, they are the best. Member one is the president, treasurer, community service chair, and runs a sweet chapter website and updates the chapter Facebook page. Member two handles all the VP positions, secretary, council representative, is planning the chapter stroll competition team (don't worry some alums and unfinancial members are helping to round out your two person team), and is the new member educator.

So luckily all the important chapter positions are covered and we are rolling along. Right now we are all about quality over