Retreat Planning Tips

Try to plan an event for your chapter members to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday operations! Find out some tips and tricks to plan a successful retreat!

Setting Goals - New Year

What do you want your chapter to achieve this year? It’s that time to realign and set some new chapter goals and objectives.

Get Involved with BFCS

Buckeye Fraternal Citizenship Series is the perfect way to transform yourself into the SFL leader you want to be! Learn about the different tracks and how to get involved!

Message from the Staff

Kate Butler - Coordinator, Sorority and Fraternity Life

The beginning of a new year always brings lots of changes for Sorority and Fraternity Life. Our largest new member classes of the year are starting their new member education and learning about the brotherhood and sisterhood that they have just joined and new officers are transitioning into their roles and setting goals to move their chapters forward.

As we start this season of change, it is important to remember the consistent aspects of our organizations. Reflect on the standards you pledged yourself to as you help new members learn how to live the values of your organization. Remind yourself how you promised to better yourself and your organization through your membership. Thank your chapter advisors who provide consistency through their years of loyal service. In these times of change and transition, do not lose sight of the foundational aspects of our organizations that have helped us exist for the past 140 years.
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO SPEND TIME AWAY FROM THE TYPICAL CHAPTER ENVIRONMENT IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT TO FOSTERING A STRONG BROTHER/SISTERHOOD. CHAPTER RETREATS ALSO SERVE AS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT OR CREATE CHAPTER GOALS AND TO REVIEW THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATION. AS YOU PLAN A CHAPTER RETREAT, THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU’LL WANT TO CONSIDER. THE FIRST AND PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT STEP IS TO DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF THE RETREAT AND WHO THE AUDIENCE IS. A RETREAT THAT IS INTENDED FOR CHAPTER OFFICERS TO CREATE A FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATION IS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT RETREAT THAN ONE FOR NEW MEMBERS THAT IS INTENDED TO GET THEM ACCLIMATED TO THE CHAPTER MEMBERS. KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE CAN HELP ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RETREAT. YOU SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERING WHERE THE RETREAT IS GOING TO BE LOCATED AS WELL AS THE LENGTH OF THE RETREAT. THESE QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU IN DETERMINING THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF MATERIAL THAT CAN BE COVERED AS WELL AS ANY SUPPLIES THAT WILL BE NEEDED. THESE ARE SOME KEY THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU ARE GETTING STARTED IN YOUR RETREAT PLANNING. MANY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE BOTH AT OSU AS WELL AS WITH YOUR INTER/NATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO HELP YOU PLAN A SUCCESSFUL CHAPTER RETREAT. WHEN PLANNING A RETREAT MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT KEITH B. KEY CENTER FOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AND THEIR RETREAT GUIDE, WHICH CAN BE FOUND ON THE OHIO UNION WEBSITE (http://ohiouunion.osu.edu/posts/documents/doc_2122012_115519477.pdf).
NEW YEAR - NEW GOALS

With the start of a New Year and new officers leading the chapter it is a great time to review and/or create chapter goals and objectives. These goals should be focused on what you would like to see the chapter achieve in the upcoming semester and year. When creating chapter goals it is essential to do this with your executive board, however it is also important that these goals are presented to the chapter. It is critical that chapter members are a part of the final decision on goals and the direction of the future of the organization. When creating goals make sure they are S.M.A.R.T. meaning they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. Also, when creating a specific goal be sure to think of the 6 W’s: who, what, where, when, which, and why. Most goals can be attainable as long as they are realistic and kept to a schedule. To be sure your goals are met, create milestones to track progress and stay on track which will ensure your goals are both measurable and timely. Make sure to create opportunities to frequently revisit these goals to see where you are at in achieving them. A great opportunity to review these goals is by utilizing some time at your executive board once a month to ensure that you are following up on the goals that have been set. If the goals set within your chapter follow these guidelines it will be much easier to stay focused on where you want the chapter to be going.

Recruitment is wrapping up with our IFC and PHA chapters and we are continuing to see increased interest in joining fraternities and sororities. Panhellenic celebrated bid day on January 26th and welcomed 850 women into the Greek Community. This is an increase of nearly 150 women from last year. With the addition of Gamma Phi Beta, we are seeing women excited for more options to find a place to connect on campus and a group of women who will help them grow.

IFC chapters are finishing their recruitment periods and welcoming their new members into their chapters. This year, we have had nearly 800 men attend IFC information sessions to learn more about Greek Life. MCSC and NPHC chapters are beginning their intake processes and will be initiating new members later in the semester. We are excited to see the continued growth of the community and to meet the future leaders of our community.
Getting Involved - BFCS

The Buckeye Fraternal Citizenship Series, BFCS, is the ultimate transformative experience for today’s sorority and fraternity leader of tomorrow. This program provides leaders with a way to gain experiences in multiple areas that provide a holistic leadership experience. BFCS includes 4 sequential, intentional experiences, geared toward the development of Greek leader’s self-awareness, interdependence, civic engagement and fraternal leadership. The 4 experiences of Fraternal, Citizenship, Interfraternal Leadership, and Capstone, serve to foster fraternal citizens who use their knowledge and talents to define their role in society and change the world around them. BFCS is perfect for those members in our community that are involved in the Greek community as well as the campus. At the end of the series members are required to create a portfolio of their experience and meet with a mentor to talk about their leadership experiences. At the end of BFCS participants will receive graduation cords and recognition at Greek Award.

GREEKS GO GLOBAL!

An excerpt from the experience reflection of Kate Smidl...

One of the most important issues we learned about while in the Dominican Republic was the blatant injustice suffered by the Haitian sugar cane workers. Many Haitian people come to the Dominican Republic with the promise of work and fair wages. When they enter the country, they are stripped of their national documentation, bussed to the sugar cane plantations, and forced to work long hours in grueling conditions. They live on a bateye, a company community for sugar cane workers. The sugar cane workers cut cane day after day, hoping to save enough money to make better lives for themselves, but hardly making enough to feed their families.

We spent a day in Bayahibe, a beach town off the shore of the Caribbean Sea. Our speedboat took us to the white sand beach of Saona Island where we soaked in the sun’s rays, drank coconut juice straight from a coconut, and went snorkeling in the crystal blue and turquoise waters. Our service experience in the Dominican Republic was life changing. When I returned to Columbus, I came back with a better understanding of human rights and a stronger appreciation for the freedom and opportunities we have in the United States. I returned with great new friends and stronger connections in the Greek community. Our group experienced the true meaning of community and we hope to share this within our Greek community at Ohio State.

I could not have asked for a better experience in the Dominican Republic. I want to thank Buck-I-SERV, Greeks Go Global, Rustic Pathways, my fellow travelers and the Dominican and Haitian communities for providing me with this incredible experience.