

## **GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLANNING**

### **Goals**

Goals are plans for the future. They outline where you want to go and are your direction for the year. They state what your group wishes to accomplish. Goals should be evaluated and changed from time to time.

### **Why Set Goals?**

- To give direction, provide a course of action for the chapter
- To motivate members
- To clarify and communicate what the chapter is striving for
- To define the chapter
- To provide a basis for measurement of success and accomplishments
- To save time by allowing the chapter to plan and prepare for the future
- To become more aware of problems in time to develop solutions

### **Objectives**

Objectives are descriptions of exactly what is to be done, which are derived from your goals. They are clear, specific statements of measurable tasks that will be accomplished as steps toward achieving your goals. Objectives are short-term and have deadlines. Each goal may have a number of objectives.

### **Steps for Setting Goals**

- Brainstorm goals as a chapter.
- Evaluate past group successes and failures.
- Address new things the chapter wishes to accomplish.
- Choose from the list those goals to focus on for the coming year.
- Prioritize the chosen goals.
- Break each goal into the steps necessary to reach it.
- Many chapters fail to reach their goals because they do not follow through with the action stages of goal setting.
- Move into action and begin working on each step necessary to achieve the goal.
- Set timelines/deadlines for each step
- Identify what is to be done (Your objective)
- How will it be accomplished?
- What are the resources available (people, money, materials)?
- Who will carry it through?
- When will it be accomplished?
- What results are expected and how will they be measured?
- Continually evaluate your progress.
- Be flexible; realize that your goals might change to meet new circumstances.

### **Helps Goal Achievement**

Flexibility - This means being willing to change or modify goals when original goals become blocked. A goal suited to a particular point in time may not be appropriate when circumstances change.

Specific, Written Goals – This process promotes commitment. When a goal becomes written, it becomes concrete, tangible, and easy to focus on. Deadlines produce a target and can provide a sense of achievement when met.

Ownership – The serious effort needed to achieve most goals is difficult to muster if the goal is not “right” nor owned by the individual or chapter.

Realistic Goals – Goals should challenge and stretch the individual or chapter, and not become a constant source of frustration. One should consider past performance and available resources in setting goals.

Positive Attitude – State goals in positive terms. Not achieving a goal should not imply failure. A positive environment encourages goal achievement.

Support – Asking for help is a means of utilizing resources available. Accepting help can assist an individual in being successful.

Planning – Consideration of potential problems will help in making decisions concerning how a goal might be achieved. Account for the reactions of others indirectly involved with an individual’s plans.

### **Hinders Goal Achievement**

Rigidity – It is clinging to a goal not possible or practical – using its pursuit as an excuse for not working on realistic goals.

General, Unwritten Goals – This shows evidence of a lack of commitment to goal achievement. Most goals are not realized without a written plan.

Pleasing Them – Setting goals to please others and trying to meet their expectations rarely works.

Unrealistic Goals – Failure can be ensured by asking too much of oneself. A destructive pattern of behavior could result that is difficult to recover from.

Negatives – Stating goals in negative terms cannot result in accomplishment. Avoiding tasks because of fear of failure will not challenge an individual. Dwelling on what one cannot do detracts from what one can do.

Seeking Disapproval – Sharing ideas with people who will ridicule one’s goals is not smart or productive.

Ambling Along – Letting life happen rather than crafting the destination. “If you do not know where you are going, how will you know when you have arrived?”

*Adapted from Leadersheets, University of Alabama*

## **Goal Setting**

The old quotation still rings true: “If you don’t know where you’re going, how will you know when you get there?” Undergraduate leaders are oftentimes so busy with the mundane, daily chores of leadership that they do not take the time for proactive planning and goal setting.

Some leadership teams set goals but fail to involve the entire membership, thus missing out on opportunities for the general members to get excited about reaching the chapter’s goals together. They also miss out on key leadership development opportunities through committee work aimed at the chapter’s goals.

Help the chapter plan a goal setting session. Remember, people support what they help to create. Give the general members a chance to set the direction for the organization and help them build some personal pride in accomplishing group goals. You will be strengthening their chapter management and leadership skills.