

The Recruitment Interview

An Integral Part in Recruitment Victory

The academic term has started, and names have been recommended for potential new members of Sigma Phi Epsilon. You've gathered the names of the top prospects through various sources (e.g., presentations to sororities, Balanced Man Scholarship applications, member recommendations, etc.). The Vice President of Recruitment and his committee have already called these potential new members to set up personal interviews. The hardest part of the program is over. Getting the names and persuading them to give 10 to 20 minutes of their day to become informed about SigEp is definitely the most difficult part of recruitment. NOW LET'S ENSURE RECRUITMENT VICTORY.

The best Balanced Men on your campus aren't always going to show up, introduce themselves and ask where the Vice President of Finance is so they can pay their fees and join. Often, it's up to you to search out these sharp individuals, tell them what our Fraternity stands for, and demonstrate how they can gain great skills and leadership opportunities by affiliating with SigEp.

Again, you have done the hard part, but don't make the mistake of assuming they will now join your chapter because they'll be impressed by your house or enamored with your brotherhood. Sit down in a comfortable setting and explain to potential members how successful SigEp is as a top chapter on your campus and as the largest, most progressive national fraternity in the world. Share with them how they play an important role in continuing, or building upon, that tradition.

Bear in mind that the interview sessions are supplementary to all other recruitment functions. Your typical recruitment event is an excellent opportunity for the recruit and your chapter to meet one another. The interview is to give recruitment a more POLISHED and PERSONAL touch. Take the time with every recruit to explain Sigma Phi Epsilon as a chapter and as a national Fraternity. Tell everyone how the Balanced Man Ideal can help him achieve a great college experience and satisfying life. The interview also gives the recruit time to become comfortable with some of the chapter's leaders. We all know that men are going to join the fraternity where they feel they have the most friends, so put him at ease with the high profile members who may seem intimidating by their stature.

WHO CONDUCTS THE INTERVIEWS?

Recruiting new members is always a busy task. Interviewing potential new members can be time consuming. Therefore, you should develop at least two and possibly three interview teams. The Recruitment Committee will likely invest hours of time and hundreds of dollars into the other facets of winning recruitment. Be sure to finish what is started by putting the best possible men on the interview teams regardless of position or title.

The interview teams should be made up of two individuals—one is not enough and three's a crowd. Of these two individuals, one should be knowledgeable about the Fraternity through his experience. Preferably, he should be a current or former member of the Recruitment

Committee, a senior member, an executive officer or the Vice President of Recruitment himself. This individual can be matched up with a younger member who is still learning about the Fraternity, but who can add his insight on having recently joined It's preferable to have members who are different, therefore widening your range of personalities. The recruit you're interviewing might be from a different background than you. If the two interviewers are diverse, the chances of the potential member having similarities with one or the other are greater.

LOCATION AND ATMOSPHERE

The location for the interview is very important. A room on campus always works best. The fraternity house works as well, but it might be a little intimidating for a recruit to walk into your fraternity house all by himself. Meeting him on a "neutral" playing field is recommended. The student union or similar high traffic location is the excellent, and private rooms are often available at no cost.

Professionalism is the key here, but being relaxed and sharing common conversation is also very important. The two individuals conducting the interview should be dressed in a respectable manner. Suits or blazers are not a requirement, but they can add to the professional atmosphere. If you're concerned that business attire might intimidate the recruit, rest assured that your sincerity and affable conversation will put him at ease. Keep in mind that conversation style is key. Imagine if you walked into a room where two men were dressed well, and were very stuffy in conversation tone. This is an opportunity to get to know a potential lifelong brother, conversation should flow as such. Whether you wear coat and tie or not, look like the Balanced Men that you portray.

LOCATION AND PREPARATION MATERIAL

After the 10- to 20-minute meeting is scheduled, it's the interviewers' jobs to be prompt and ready for the recruit. Within the room you reserved, you can have the following material:

1. SigEp's customizable recruitment brochure (order at www.sigep.org/recruitment)
2. Copies of The Journal
3. Lists of prominent SigEps
4. The Quest and/or SigEp Planner
5. The Lifetime Responsibility of Membership

These are materials you can order from Headquarters to help inform the recruit about what a great organization Sigma Phi Epsilon is. It is also vital for you to inform the recruit on what your specific chapter is all about. Such information should include:

1. Scholarship\athletics awards won in the past years
2. Specific members' involvement on your campus
3. Sound Mind, Sound Body events the chapter has completed, or is planning
4. Specific information about joining and member development (i.e., finances, meetings, individual expectations)

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

The first step of the interview is introductions. Take a couple of minutes to tell the potential member about yourself—hometown, year, major, how you're involved with the Fraternity and school. Ask the recruit questions to elicit the same information. Allow him to talk as long as he desires. Allow time to explore any common threads that come up. Discussing common backgrounds, interests or friends will quickly put the recruit at ease.

The next step is to inform the recruit about Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity on your campus and as a national Fraternity. Include facts such as:

1. When your chapter was founded \ When SigEp was founded (1901)
2. How many members your chapter has \ How many brothers SigEp has nationwide (about 15,000, #1 in the fraternity world)
3. Where your house is located (if applicable) \ Where the Headquarters is located (Richmond, Virginia)
4. Statistics of your chapter (for example, GPA, athletics, involvement) \ The same on a national level (2.89 at last check, #1 in the fraternity world)
5. The Balanced Man Ideal of Sound Mind, Sound Body \ Briefly share with him the mission of the Fraternity

Try not to be very long winded with this information, but you're very proud of your chapter and the Fraternity with which you are affiliated, so speak passionately. After you give the recruit the above information, ask him for his input on the Greek system. Ask him questions such as:

- Why are you considering joining?
- What are you looking for in a fraternity?
- What do you like about the fraternities you have seen? What do you dislike?
- Why haven't you already joined a fraternity (if he is an upperclassman)?

This gives the recruit the opportunity to voice his perceptions on fraternities. It also lets you know if he has any common misconceptions that you can dispel as you tell him about SigEp. Now it's time for you to tell him about SigEp, about your commitment to friendship, and about your chapter's dedication to developing the campus' top Balanced Men, men with Sound Minds and Sound Bodies. The following is a typical interview dialogue:

Interviewer: *“Let me explain SigEp’s Balanced Man philosophy. We believe the best way to achieve an outstanding college experience, and life, is through balance. In SigEp, we define a Balanced Man as one consisting of a Sound Mind and a Sound Body.*

Did you know the reason why fraternities chose Greek letters in the early days is because only the most outstanding students were allowed to take Greek courses? Likewise, SigEp values the development of one’s mind while in college. Obviously, academics play an important part in the development of a Sound Mind. Rest assured, SigEp has brothers in numerous courses of study to help

ensure your success academically. But, the development of a Sound Mind does not end there. In SigEp, you'll have the chance to participate in many activities that will be new to you, and new experiences help you think critically. Activities such as attending a play or symphony with a sorority set us apart from the pack, and show women that we are gentleman.

The ancient Greeks believed that the body is the vessel of the mind, and you and I know that to be true today through modern medicine. It's really quite simple, the better you treat your body, the better, more efficiently, your mind operates. We compete, and win, as a chapter in intramurals, we work out together, and we try new ways to stay in shape as a chapter. We also recruit varsity athletes, guys who can show us the best ways to stay healthy. Think of us as the fraternity Men's Health Magazine might try to create.

We believe the combination of Sound Mind and Sound Body helps us get the most out of college, and we think it can do the same for you. We want faculty, administration, and community members, male and female students alike to see SigEp letters and know the man behind them is a winner.”

Be sure to share vivid examples with the recruit to support your assertions as the best fraternity—academic standing on campus, names of high profile chapter leaders, lists of Sound Mind and Sound Body activities, intramural awards and varsity athletes, and events with the sororities. Share the fact that SigEp can open doors to the campus and help the recruit get involved in other activities, even a job upon graduation. Explain to him how joining SigEp will help him develop in all areas, preparing him for a successful life after college. Describe the alumnus aspect of joining a brotherhood for life.

At the conclusion of the interview, make sure the recruit gets the information on the Fraternity, such as a copy of The Journal, recruitment brochure, and other material you have to give him.

The following can be touched on in the first interview as well:

1. Structure of the executive board
2. Time commitment
3. Finances

Sometimes it's good to schedule two interviews so the recruit doesn't think that all this is too much information to handle. Splitting the interviews gives the recruit time to think about some questions he might want to ask. If a second interview is to be scheduled, do it right there at the end of the first interview, and make sure the same two interviewers conduct the second interview.

FOLLOW-UP

Remember, the interview is a part of the overall recruitment process. At the conclusion of the interview be sure to establish the next meeting time. Whether it's a second interview or a

chapter recruitment event, you have to determine when you will get together again and then follow through on that commitment. If you do conduct a second interview, this is typically an excellent time to invite the potential member to join (i.e., offer a bid).

SUMMARY

How many times have you heard, “I really wasn’t interested in fraternities until a friend of mine explained the difference his fraternity made, the way it helped him become more involved in campus leadership, the friendships that continued and the great times he had.” The point is that an individual does not always have a friend in your Fraternity who can explain all the benefits, and we have to make sure this gets done. These individuals must not slip through the cracks, because one of them could be the next student body president, SigEp officer, or outstanding friend for life!

SOME COMMON RECRUITMENT MISTAKES

- **Recruiting What Shows Up** — The best recruitment results from an aggressive effort of identifying your ideal prospects and then committing the time necessary to find those who fit the ideal or come very close. If you only recruit “what shows up” at your house/events during formal recruitment, or rush week, you are guaranteed to get the slimmest of pickings. Pick your apples from the tree where they are the freshest and purest rather than from the bushel brought to your door (and many others before yours).
- **Succumbing to Social Newtonism** — You are no doubt familiar with Newton’s law of physics that states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Well, when this theory is applied to the Greek system, we end up with Social Newtonism. Here’s how it works: the SigEps decide to host a campus-wide event during recruitment (i.e., Dorm Wars). It results in tremendous success, yielding the best recruits on campus. Someone in another fraternity suggests that his chapter try the same thing, and he is met with the following response, “We’re not doing that, that’s a SigEp thing. They’re all a bunch of clones.” For the SigEp action, there is an opposite reaction from the other fraternities on campus. The net effect is that your chapter gains a competitive advantage.

The lesson here is to always be on the lookout for successful recruitment techniques used by your competitors. When you discover them, fight your natural tendency to discount or ridicule the ideas and find ways to incorporate them into your program. It’s okay to do what the competition does; the trick is to do it better. The Balanced Man Scholarship, SigEp’s finest recruitment tool, is a prime example. It was developed by another fraternity, and SigEp took the idea and executed it better on a national level. In fact, it’s often the organization that “copies genius” first that sees the most benefit.