

Alpha Phi Omega Advisor Orientation Guide

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	2
II.	Important Dates	3
III.	Advisor Positions	6
IV.	Risk Management	11
V.	Additional Resources	12

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for choosing to be an Alpha Phi Omega chapter advisor. It is great you have chosen to help Alpha Phi Omega continue to be the nation's largest collegiate fraternity by preparing campus and community leaders through service.

Advisors are a support system for each collegiate chapter of Alpha Phi Omega. Advisors help the chapter grow. They are there for the chapter in a mentor capacity. An advisor is not meant to run the chapter, or push their own opinions or chapter experiences onto the chapter. Advisors encourage and validate chapter officers as well as offer support and guidance when asked. Advisors provide connections to the university, to the community, and to the Fraternity as a whole.

This guide is intended to provide you with the basics of the role of an advisor. This information is just the start – the details of the position and how to best support the chapter you advise will need to be worked out with the chapter itself. Work together to determine the needs of the chapter, and how the advisor role can best support those needs and have a positive impact on the future of APO on your campus.

Thank you again for your dedication to the student members of Alpha Phi Omega.

For more information about APO, please visit www.apo.org.

ARTICLE VI -ADVISORS

SECTION 1. *This chapter shall have an advisory committee consisting of four or more advisors including, at minimum, two advisors from the faculty, administration or staff of this educational institution, one advisor representing Scouting or other youth services, and one advisor from the community. One of the advisors shall be elected by the chapter as the chair of the advisory committee and shall serve on the chapter's executive committee.*

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.” - John Quincy Adams

Alpha Phi Omega Structure

Alpha Phi Omega is a national, co-educational service fraternity—college students gathered together in an organization based on fraternalism and founded on the principles of the Boy Scouts of America. Its purpose is to develop leadership, promote friendship and provide service to humanity. Since 1925, more than 450,000 students on 365 campuses across the country have chosen APO, making it the nation's largest Greek-letter fraternity.

Alpha Phi Omega is governed by a board of directors who are elected by the Biennial National Convention. These individuals, as prescribed by the National Bylaws, are the governing body of the Fraternity between conventions. The Board has the power (within the confines of the Bylaws) to act on all matters it deems to be in the best interest of the Fraternity.

Additionally, the Fraternity has a National Operations Council that is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the Fraternity's programs and other administrative and operational functions. The council is comprised of nine program chairs, who oversee the various program areas of the Fraternity, and 11 regional chairs who represent and oversee the administration of the Fraternity's 11 geographic regions.

Within each region there are sections. These sections are supported by elected sectional chairs. Region and section staff work with chapters to provide guidance, support, and administrative maintenance. As an advisor, the first point of contact for support will be the sectional chair, and then the regional chair.

The Fraternity's National Office is located in Kansas City, Missouri, just south of Downtown. The Fraternity employs 17 full-time staff members who are available by phone and email to answer questions as well as provide guidance for new and continuing advisors. More specifically, the Chapter Services Department, as well as the Alumni Volunteer Coordinator, are there to help work through chapter- and advisor-related questions. The National Office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Central Time. Visit www.apo.org for more information, or call the office at 816-373-8667.

There is a large support system for advisors both within the Fraternity and on the campus. Each chapter of APO is administered on campus under a student activities or Greek life office by a professional who is in charge of working with campus organizations. In many instances, though not all, this is an associate director of Greek life or associate director of student life. This person is a valuable contact for advisors as well as chapter officers, and someone the chapter should connect with at least one a semester.

Important Dates

Please note: Items with a (*) are tasks that will need to be completed in the [Chapter Officer Portal](https://op.apo.org)
<https://op.apo.org>.

2017

- **October**
 - 1 Chapter Officer List Update Due (within 10 days of elections)*

- **November**
 - 5-11 National Service Week
 - 15 Annual Charter Reaffirmations Due (REQUIRES ADVISORY CHAIR APPROVAL)*
Annual Active Membership Dues and Insurance Fees Due*
National Service Week Report Due*
Annual Chapter Evaluation Due*
H. Roe Bartle Award Application Due*

2018

- **February**
 - 1 Youth Service Grant Applications Due*

- **April**
 - 20 Spring Youth Service Day

- **May**
 - 1 Spring Youth Service Day Reports Due*
Service Innovation Grant Application Due
John Mack Scholarship Applications Due
2018 Fall Pledge Class Namesake Honoree Nominations Due

- **June**
 - 1 Graduating Senior List Due*

- **July**
 - 1 End of Fiscal Year
COE/PPOE Applications Due*
Chapter Financial Inspection Form Due*

- **August**
 - 1 Beginning of Fiscal Year

- **September**

- 30 Legislation Proposal Deadline

- **October**
 - 1 Chapter Officer List Update Due (within 10 days of elections)*

- **November**
 - 4-10 National Service Week
 - 15 Annual Charter Reaffirmations Due (REQUIRES ADVISORY CHAIR APPROVAL)*
Annual Active Membership Dues and Insurance Fees Due*
National Service Week Report Due*
Annual Chapter Evaluation Due*
H. Roe Bartle Award Application Due*

- **December**
 - 27-30 45th Biennial National Convention, Austin, Texas

Advisor Positions

To maintain good standing with the National Fraternity, each collegiate Alpha Phi Omega Chapter must have at least four advisors - two faculty or staff, one scouting and one community. One of these advisors will also serve as advisory chair. Chapters may have additional advisors beyond the required four outlined by the National Bylaws. The selection, appointment and duties of these additional advisors must align both with the needs of the chapter and its bylaws.

Advisors should be actively involved and committed to the future success of the chapter, and not just a signature on a form. Ideally, an advisor is a leadership mentor to chapter officers, a role model to chapter members, an encourager, and a voice of reason. Additionally, one of the advisors should help the chapter review financial records annually.

Advisors cannot be undergraduate students and should be at least two years post-graduate. This helps ensure the advisor is removed enough from the undergraduate experience to guide efficiently and with experience.

Position descriptions and expectations should be outlined in the chapter's bylaws and reviewed annually to ensure they remain true to the needs of the chapter. Any changes made should be discussed between the executive and advisory committees to ensure all parties are fully communicated with regarding changes. This might take place during an annual joint meeting of the executive and advisory committees or during officer training sessions. Time expectations and other variables that may impact the relationship between the advisor and the chapter should be included in this discussion.

TYPES OF ADVISORY ROLES

Below are general descriptions of the faculty/staff, scouting and youth services, community and advisory chair roles. As mentioned above, each chapter should develop a description and corresponding responsibilities that meet the needs of the chapter and review those annually. The information below is intended to help clarify the differences among the various advisory roles.

Faculty/Staff Advisors

This advisory role is either a member of the faculty or paid staff on campus and is a connection between the college/university and the chapter. This includes helping identify ways the chapter can support the needs of the campus; keeping the chapter informed and update-to-date regarding campus policies and procedures; and helping officers build positive relationships with administrators and other members of the campus community.

ARTICLE X - CHAPTERS
SECTION 8. CHAPTERS IN GOOD STANDING. *A chapter in good standing is one which yearly meets its financial, administrative, and Annual Charter Reaffirmation obligations to the National Fraternity; is not more than 90 days delinquent in its financial accounts with the National Office; has maintained their 501(c)3 not-for-profit status with the federal Government and any appropriate state and local non-for-profit status; has confirmation of submission of a Spring Youth Service Day Report and a National Service Week Report; has at least one Active Member; and which has not been declared inactive or suspended, or had its charter revoked, or has not otherwise been deemed in violation of the policies or National Bylaws of Alpha Phi Omega; or of the rules, regulations, or policies of its school.*

Faculty/staff advisors provide support by understanding requirements for student organizations on campus and helping the chapter operate within them. The best way to get that information is to establish a relationship with the campus administrator who works specifically with the chapter, such as the associate director of Greek life or student activities, and facilitate a review of the information with them and the chapter president on an annual basis.

Faculty/staff advisors often also help the chapter book rooms, connect with other campus organizations, find speakers for leadership events, engage in campus activities and conduct its annual financial review. If an advisor does not want to complete the financial review, they often help the chapter find another campus resource to complete this task.

The main points of contact for this advisor can include but are not limited to: vice president of membership, secretary, treasurer, and president. All advisors should be in contact and have a relationship with the executive committee as a whole.

Scouting and Youth Services Advisor

As a scouting and youth services advisor, ensuring the chapter maintains a commitment to serving the youth is a top priority. This advisor should have a solid grasp on community youth programs, as well as the needs of youth in the community surrounding the campus. This advisor is key in helping the chapter provide meaningful service for and with youth.

An advisor affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America or Girl Scouts of the United States of American might assist the chapter in planning events with a local area council such as Merit Badge Universities, STEM badge events, or field days. Local scout camps are typically great locations for chapter and/or officer retreats, so chapters may want to take advantage of potential connections the advisor has.

The main points of contact for this advisor can include but are not limited to: vice president of service, secretary, and president. All advisors should be in contact and have a relationship with the executive committee as a whole.

Community Advisor

As a community advisor, being versed in the needs of the community and helping the chapter connect with and serve the local community, is a key aspect of this position. It is ideal if this advisor is an active citizen in the community which the chapter serves.

Ideally, the community advisor has relationships and contacts with other local organizations in the community including large companies, and local nonprofits. The community advisor can help bring new projects to the chapter that seem like a good fit for the chapter and that meet a need locally, such as a park cleanup or blood drive.

The main points of contact for this advisor can include but are not limited to: vice president of service, treasurer, and president. All advisors should be in contact and have a relationship with the executive committee as a whole.

Advisory Chair

As advisory chair, the main undertaking is to oversee the advisory committee, and facilitate connections between the chapter and committee. The chair is a non-biased voice of the advisory committee. Additionally, the advisory chair should be a non-voting member of the chapter's executive committee.

This advisor should know the history of the chapter and the Fraternity as a whole. The advisory chair should be most familiar with the sectional and regional staff and know who to contact and how to connect officers to these leaders.

The advisory chair should be present at ceremonies, attend chapter meetings, and attend executive committee meetings or make sure the advisory committee is splitting these duties equally and fully. The advisory chair should be available to all brothers for support and have a relationship with the executive committee as a whole.

NOTE: The advisory chair's signature is required annually on the chapter's Annual Charter Reaffirmation. This form is due through the Chapter Officer Portal no later than November 15 and is required as a part of the Fraternity's good standing requirements (Article X, Section 8).

ROLES OF ADVISORS

- Leadership mentor
 - Work with chapter officers, especially chapter president
 - Be a role model
- Encourager
 - Participation in campus activities
 - Participation in APO programs and conferences
 - Striving to be the best
- Voice of Reason
 - Keeper of the big picture
 - Risk management
 - Financial risks
 - Commitment beyond means/resources
- Safety Mentor
 - Bylaws – National & Chapter
 - Risk management
 - University policies/rules
 - Deadlines (see Chapter Checklist & Chapter Same Page Guide)
- Connector / Promoter
 - Connect chapter and known resources / opportunities
 - Promote APO to colleagues / community

BEST PRACTICES

- Successful Advisors...
 - Work behind the scenes
 - Provide thoughtful advice from multiple perspectives
 - Provide a different (non-active) perspective
 - Serve as unbiased mediators
 - Help develop leadership skills in student members
 - Work within an Advisor team – not every advisor has to be all things to the chapter
 - Attend chapter meetings and events (to the extent schedule allows and as negotiated with chapter)
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Transitioning from active to advisor
 - Advising home chapter
 - Chapter as social circle
 - Partying / using chapter as social circle /venting or complaining to chapter
 - Speaking too often/leading meetings
 - Trying to fix everything
 - Planning events

ADVISORS SHOULD:

- Encourage an evaluation of each activity by those students responsible for planning it
- Urge the cancellation of any activities which violate university policy, or are unsafe
- Speak up during discussion when the advisor has relevant information
- Speak up during discussion when the advisor thinks the group may make a poor decision
- Get a copy of all official correspondence
- Require the treasurer to clear all expenditures before financial commitments are made
- Request to see the treasurer's books at the end of the semester
- Keep the group aware of its objectives and/or mission statement when planning programs
- Inform the group of infractions of their bylaws, codes, standing rules, and constitution
- Veto a decision if it violates stated objectives, bylaws, standing rules, constitution, or university policy
- Mediate interpersonal conflicts that arise
- Let the group work out its problems including making mistakes and “doing it the hard way”
- Represent the group in any conflicts with members of the university staff
- Let the group thrive or decline on its own; do not interfere unless requested
- Be a custodian of group materials, records, etc. during the summer, and between officer transitions

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Advisors should attend chapter meetings and events when possible. As mentioned above, the time commitment and expectations should be outlined with the advisory committee and executive committee and reviewed annually. The ideal advisory committee would have a representative at each executive committee meeting and each chapter meeting. It is not realistic to assume that every advisor is able to attend every chapter meeting and event, however it is important to have an advisory committee representative at as many meetings and events as possible. Advisors are invited to attend fraternity programs such as National

Volunteer Conference, National Convention, APO IMPACT Live webinars, Membership University, Membership Academy, and APO LEADS events, as well as other region-wide conferences and events.

EVALUATE

The advisory committee should be evaluating its progress. In doing this, each advisor should self-evaluate performance in advising the chapter. Are the right advisors in the right role on the advisory committee? If not, it is better to make a change than to avoid what may feel like confrontation? If the committee feels someone is not the right fit for the committee, help that person find a better volunteer role within the Fraternity. Are the meetings efficient? Are advisors receiving member input? Can you track progress? Is any one person/a few people dominating discussions?

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TRANSITION

Just as chapters need a process for transitioning chapter officers, the advisory committee should have a process for transitioning new advisors. A typical advisor transition should be in depth and cover all potential questions a new advisor would have. New advisors should go through a discussion about expectations with the executive committee as well as have a conversation with the outgoing advisor. All materials including, contact information, and important documents should be transferred to the incoming advisor.

A WORD FROM THE WISE

Here are a list of questions advisors can ask the advisory committee working with a chapter

- What is the best way to recruit the right advisors?
- What skills are needed to be an effective advisor?
- How do advisors determine what issues the committee should be mediating?
- What types of conflicts do advisors need to be able to handle?
- What type of reporting is required of the chapter, and what support is needed?
- How do advisors motivate the members of the chapter?
- How do advisors support executive committee members facing stress or burnout?
- How do advisors engage with new members of the chapter?
- How are advisors serving as a connection to (campus, community, and service organizations) and the Fraternity/chapters

As stated above, it is important to create expectations between the advisory committee and the executive committee. Below are questions to start off the expectations. These questions should be discussed with the executive committee at the start of each semester or as stated in the chapter bylaws.

How often should advisors attend meetings? What type of events should advisors attend? How often should advisors reach out to the chapter? Does the university have a policy that the Advisory Chair is a Faculty Advisor?

Risk Management

It is up to every member and advisor of Alpha Phi Omega to be familiar with the Fraternity's Risk Management Policies and to work toward minimizing exposure to risk. The National Bylaws outline the policy in detail.

SIGNED RISK MANAGEMENT FORMS

Every advisor of the Fraternity needs to sign the Risk Management Policy stating they have read and understand the policy as a volunteer. The policy is currently being reviewed to determine if the form should be signed annually versus one time. Any changes to this policy will be communicated appropriately.

REPORTING ISSUES

- **Report everything to the regional chair** (regardless of whether you think it is truly an issue or not) - those which do not require an investigation or action can be discarded. When in doubt call first - this way information that should not be relayed in writing is relayed verbally; therefore preventing it from being found later in discovery.

Additional Resources

- Chapter Officer Portal – <https://op.apo.org>
 - HOW TO LOG INTO OFFICER PORTAL: Visit apo.org and log in to the member’s page and then click the Officer Portal button. If you do not have an account, click “create an account” You will need the Greek name of the chapter you advise and the year you were “initiated” or established as an advisor to create the account.

OR: Go to op.apo.org, log in with your username and password. If you have never logged in, click “click here to establish your officer portal account.” You will need to know the Greek name of your chapter and the year you were “initiated” or established as an advisor to create the account.
 - The Library tab contains national documents and guides, such as the National Bylaws, Fraternity Operations and Policy Manual, and Chapter Same Page Guide
 - The OP has a chat support feature that can be used if you run into issues or questions while working in the portal. Click the “Live Chat” button on the left side of the page to initiate a support chat.
- National Website – www.apo.org
 - [Chapter Officer Resource Area](#)
 - [National Office Staff Directory](#)
 - [APO Online Learning Center](#)
 - [Essentials of Advising Course](#)
- [Chapter Same Page Guide](#)