

2020 FALL PLEDGE CLASS NAMESAKE HONOREE



JAMIE CONOVER STEWART'S PLEDGE CLASS CHALLENGE

To the new Fall 2020 members of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity,

I have often said that pledges or new members are the most important people in a chapter. Without new students taking their first steps in Alpha Phi Omega and then becoming brothers, a chapter will die. A chapter can do all the marketing it wants to do, but the fact remains: the best way to get new members is by word of mouth. That means it will be up to YOU to continue the cycle of growing your chapter or perhaps even helping to ignite a spark that will start a chapter where there isn't one currently. My challenge is one that you can do while a pledge or new member, but also as an active brother. That is to R.E.C.R.U.I.T. We, as a Fraternity, love acronyms – my challenge takes that form, so it is easy to remember! See the next page for the R.E.C.R.U.I.T. acronym.

Things are definitely challenging in these times. This means that the future of the Fraternity is even more dependent upon each one of us, especially our newest members, to ensure we continue to grow and thrive. In order to do so, I challenge each of you to R.E.C.R.U.I.T. at least three new members to the next pledge or new member class in your chapter (perhaps even at another chapter) or encourage at least three people at a school without a chapter to start the extension process. Replace yourself, grow your chapter and grow the Fraternity. That is what I challenge you to do as a pledge or new member and as you continue to be active as a brother of Alpha Phi Omega.

R

Relish your time as a pledge or new member

Your time as a pledge or new member should be a good experience and something you will want to remember. I encourage you to get to know your fellow pledges or new members – some of them may be your friends for many years to come. Bond with your Big Brother(s). I had two Big Brothers, but not every chapter does it that way. There will be special gifts and events just for you – soak all of this up. I may not have been a model pledge, and there was a time I nearly quit, but overall, I recall my time as a pledge with fond memories.

E

Enjoy yourself

Keep a scrapbook or some other way to remember this time. Digital photos and memories are great, but technology will keep changing and you might not have access to these in 30 years, so I suggest some sort of “hard copy” record. You may be surprised just how much it will mean to you in the future and how it will help you talk about APO to potential new members. Have fun while you are honing your leadership skills, making new friends that you didn’t know you needed in your life and helping others through service. My pledge book is still a prized possession of mine. Even though I came close to throwing it out of a window out of frustration, I am so glad I did not.

C

Commit to the principles of Leadership, Friendship and Service

There was something about at least one of our cardinal principles that intrigued you enough to start the pledge or new member process. You may find that principle that initially attracted you to Alpha Phi Omega isn’t the one that makes you stay. For instance, I initially was interested in the service aspect, but found that the friendships and leadership development is what really kept me involved, especially after graduation.

R

Reach out to others

I wouldn’t be a brother today if a high school friend hadn’t told me about APO, and my life would have turned out very differently! People don’t join organizations; they join other people. It is up to you to continually reach out to your friends and classmates to encourage them to become members. Don’t limit yourself to a mirror image of yourself – I ask that you look at yourself, find your “opposite” and reach out to that person. For instance, reach out to someone of a different gender, major, skin color, religion.... however you want to interpret “opposite.”

U

Understand that YOU can make a difference to the Fraternity

That friend you encouraged to join? They may have friends at other schools that don’t have chapters and you could help grow the fraternity. That friend may go on to a professional career that could save an APO brother’s life. That friend may go on to have children who become APO brothers. You don’t know what kind of difference your involvement, your service or your leadership can make.

I

Involve yourself

Take a leadership role. Even as a pledge or new member, you have the opportunity to be a leader. Help coordinate a pledge class service project or fellowship/friendship project. Be an officer in your pledge class. Alternatively, you can lead by example by providing leadership without a formal role. You will get as much out of APO as you put into it...perhaps even more!

T

Tell a friend to join you

When I was working blood drive tables, I was taught that the reason many people don’t give blood is because they aren’t asked. That can also be applied to recruitment – if you want to grow your chapter and the Fraternity, don’t wait for someone to hunt down APO. Tell them about it and encourage them to join. Word-of-mouth has been, and still is, the most effective recruitment technique.