

# FarmHouse International Fraternity

## Chapter President Resource



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**FarmHouse International Fraternity  
Chapter President Resource**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of being a Chapter President is intense, challenging, and rewarding. In this role you represent FarmHouse Fraternity on your campus and in your community. Being Chapter President is not about dealing with the administration or accepting awards. It is about Leadership and Responsibility. It is your responsibility to represent FarmHouse in all things, public and private and to lead the men of the chapter in conducting themselves with honor and distinction on campus and in the community. As is the case with any leadership role, the success or failure of your presidency rests less with what you are able to do or not do than what you are able to motivate the group to accomplish.

As you prepare for all of this and more, FarmHouse will do all that it can to provide you with every opportunity to have a successful presidency. While a manual or on-line file can never tell you every aspect that you will need to successfully lead your chapter and your brothers, it can serve as one of the tools that can support you as you embark on your journey.

### *The Object of FarmHouse Fraternity*

*The object of our fraternity is to promote good fellowship, to encourage studiousness, and to inspire its members in seeking the best in their chosen lines of study as well as in life. Progress shall mark our every step; the spirit of congeniality shall reign at all times; and every member shall be honest with himself as with his brothers. Men elected to our membership are considered to be of good moral character, to be high in scholarship, to have the capacity for meeting and making friends, and to give promise of service to their fellow-men and to the world. To be and become such may at times require a sacrifice of time, pleasures and comforts.*

Having been elected Chapter President by your fellow brothers, it is your responsibility to live out the object of FarmHouse Fraternity and set this example by your words and actions as you represent your chapter and the Fraternity.

## II. THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

As Chapter President, you are responsible for the chapter. Much of its success or failure will rest on your shoulders, whether you were directly responsible or not. Stay in touch with the officers, chapter members, alumni volunteers, university officials, and International Headquarters staff. They will look to you as a central figure. In addition to this resource, as President, you need to read and understand the chapter by-laws, the International By-Laws, the Ritual, and all the additional resources FarmHouse Fraternity provides its chapters.

### Responsibilities

- Preside at all meetings.
- Enforce discipline and the observance of the Constitution and By-laws.
- Decide all questions or order.
- Appoint all committees not otherwise provided for.
- Provides motivational and directional leadership to the chapter in terms of setting and reaching goals.
- Represent the chapter at Conclave, Leadership Conferences, and other official events unless another person is so designated – and encourage a strong showing from your chapter at RLC and Conclave.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the various chapter committees.
- Serve as a member of the Association Board.
- Distribute mail and information from the International Headquarters.
- Communicate with the Chapter Advisor weekly.
- Visit the campus Greek Life Office weekly.
- Contact the International Headquarters monthly, via telephone or e-mail.
- Organize and plan a strategic planning retreat at least once a year.
- Educate and train your successor.
- Call special meetings.
- Learn and understand the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- Accept legal responsibility for the decisions and activities of the Chapter.

### Be a role model

The Chapter President is one of very few offices that get the immediate respect of new members. Do them a favor and be a role model. You set the tone for the chapter's standards and norms. You also serve as a reminder and compass for active members. So, make sure they have a brother that can model the way. Go to class, study and make good choices.

### Survival Tips

*You are the Leader – but NOT alone. Ask for help.*

Being President can get overwhelming – after all, you are learning as you go. Luckily, there is a person on campus who has been formally educated about the best ways to run a chapter and getting the most out of your members. This person, of course, is your Greek Advisor. They know what they're talking about and want to be a part of the success story during your time as president – that is why they have a job. Additionally, you have a wealth of resources available to you from the International Headquarters, your Chapter Advisor, faculty, and alumni.

### **Take care of yourself**

The most common trait of any leader is not organizational skills, public speaking talent or the ability to pull members together. It is, unfortunately, high stress and burn out. Not why one would choose to join a fraternity. So set aside time for yourself and make sure to have fun. It is not that easy, but a little rest and relaxation can go a long way. Remember, you are still a brother and you are still in the best years of your life. You are far less useful to the chapter stressed out and overworked. Learning to balance these issues now will definitely serve you well later in life.

### **Key Relationships**

Relationship with the Regional Advisory Council Mentor – Each Chapter is assigned a regional volunteer advisor who will conduct a consultation visit to the chapter, maintain monthly contact with the chapter, association and advisors and help provide resources, ideas and support to help the chapter achieve its goals and help meet the standards/expectations of the International Fraternity. This RAC is the link with the International Fraternity and is an invaluable sounding board for the Chapter President=s problem situation decisions.

Relationship with Educational Leadership Consultant - Each Chapter is assigned a staff educational leadership who is responsible for serving as a resource for your chapter. The leadership consultant will make at least one targeted programming visit to your chapter annually, utilizing the Chapter Award of Excellence as the focus of the visit and helping provide ideas, resources and support for the chapter to succeed. He will provide presentations on risk management and another program of the chapter's choosing during his visit. He will also maintain regular contact with the chapter to assist the chapter in whatever ways possible.

Relationship with Association - The Association is a group of interested FarmHouse members who usually hold title to the Chapter property and oversee the long-term running of the Chapter. The association exists to provide aid and counsel to the undergraduates. The Chapter President is responsible for reporting the state of the Chapter to the Association, and seeing that the rent is paid to the Association (except in some unique cases). The legal relationship is one of landlord and tenant, renter and rentee, but the Chapter President should establish an amicable working relationship with the Association officers; they can be valuable resources and provide important, seasoned guidance to the undergraduate officers.

Special Relationship between the Chapter President and Other Officers. While proper function of the Chapter will require responsible leadership and fulfillment of duties by all officers, it is ultimately the Chapter President who must ensure that everything gets done. He must lead the Chapter=s leaders. His job is to coordinate, however, not berrate. It will be necessary for the Chapter President to be cognizant of the duties of each officer, as explained in detail in the Chapter Operations Handbook.

### **III. LEADERSHIP**

#### **Situational Leadership**

As a leader, you will face a wide variety of situations. Each one will require careful decision-making and an analysis of the circumstances. Leadership requires attention to two things:

- The Person
- The Task

“The Person” refers to the individual or group of people assigned to work on “The Task.” A good leader must effectively relate with the rest of the group to accomplish their collective goals. This behavior includes giving support and encouragement, communicating at all times, facilitating discussion, listening, and providing feedback.

“The Task” is simply the job or project to be completed. For example, it could be the recruitment schedule of events, the homecoming float, or a social function that needs to be planned. Goal setting, organization, time lines, directing and controlling are all part of the Task Behavior.

It is very important that you take both of these factors into account as a leader. The different combinations of People and Tasks define the term “Situational Leadership.”

One of the most challenging aspects of being a leader is to match your style with the different people you work with. Each officer, committee chair, and member in the Chapter has his own reasons and motivation for being in the Fraternity. It is wise to find out what drives them – it may be a simple thank you in private, or they may want official recognition in the Chapter meeting. Some people will have to constantly be reminded, while others will never need a reminder.

As a leader, you should choose a style that is comfortable to you and one that is effective with the people you work with. The following is a list of the four basic leadership styles:

#### **The Director**

You guide behavior of those around you by telling them how to do things and informing them of the decision previously made. As the leader, you establish power and control over the group and guide them in a predetermined direction. This is good for followers who are unable to do the Task and need step-by-step instructions in order to succeed. You solve problems immediately with the information available at the time.

#### **The Coach**

As the leader, you still make the final decisions, but only after asking advice from those around you. Once a decision has been reached, you carefully explain the situation and facts and provide a chance for questions to be asked and discussion to take place among the group. You still have a directive touch with the Task, but you are also concerned with the individual person involved and give them support. You often sell and persuade people on ideas and the direction of the Task. You commonly use this style when followers are unsure how to do the Task, but they are willing and confident.

### **The Cheerleader**

In this style, you are not directing people as much as you are encouraging them. They may have the expertise or means to do a Task, but no confidence or motivation to help out. As the Cheerleader, you work with them and gain a commitment by participating in the Task with them. Once their inhibitions are gone, they will gain the needed confidence to carry on. A good example of this is the person who is afraid to take full responsibility but will work with other people on a Task. As the leader in this situation, you will focus on the person and his well being more than the Task at hand.

### **The Advisor**

This is a very hands-off leadership style you would use when the follower is confident of his ability to complete the Task and has the necessary internal motivation to get the job done. This style is true delegation, where you observe and monitor the follower along the way. You can use this style when the follower has developed his own leadership style and ability to work on his own. Even with the hands-off approach, it is still wise to thank the individual for a job well done.

In reviewing these four styles, you can see that the Director and the Coach are leader-directed styles and the Cheerleader and the Advisor are follower-directed styles. The key to success with situational leadership is to know the people you work with. Make it a priority to understand their abilities and motivations. It will be much easier to be a leader if you understand the people following your lead. It is also important to know that leadership does not always mean you are in charge. That is why two of the four leadership styles are follower-directed.

Leadership is a learned behavior, so just take it slow and your own style will develop as you gain experience. Do not try to be something you are not, but realize that your style should change to fit the situation. Some situations call for immediate action and you will be the Director. Others will enable you to play the Cheerleader or Advisor role. Remember that successful leaders understand the people around them and can communicate effectively. Seek out ways to get people involved in the organization. Never underestimate what involvement in the organization can do for a person.

### **Goal Setting**

The above discussion of Situational Leadership focuses on recognizing patterns in people and adjusting to those to accomplish a task. But it is just as important to clearly define those tasks and set out a plan to accomplish them. Depending on the nature of the task, it may be simple or complex and require one or many participants. You need to make sure that goals are specific, attainable and measurable. Benchmarks and methods of evaluating goals that are more long-term (such as fundraising) need to have steps built in that generate excitement about the potential results.

- Have a clear understanding of the purpose or reason for the task or goal.
- Get acceptance of that purpose from the chapter or group that will be undertaking the task and provide positive and active involvement for all members.

- Determine the resources needed to meet those goals and a realistic timeline.
- Measure Results – did you accomplish the original goal?
- Evaluate the project and what follow-up if any needs to be done.

### **Decision Making**

As Chapter President, it is easy to fall into the mind-set that decisions are yours to make, or perhaps you and the Executive Council or Chapter Advisor. That may indeed be appropriate in various situations. But when that is the case, it should be something clearly understood by the men of the chapter. As Chapter President, you must not only decide, but also lead.

Making a decision is often easy; it is the consequences that can be far more complex. This means you must make decisions in a manner that the chapter – whether they agree with the decision made by you or the chapter or not – can continue unified towards your goals. If people feel their opinions have been heard and acknowledged, they will be much more likely to continue to assist the group, even if a decision does not go their way. The personality assessments in the situational leadership section can often be useful in addressing various factions that may not be happy with decisions made by the chapter.

### **Confrontation**

It is always difficult to confront your peers about sensitive issues or have an open, serious disagreement with them. However, as Chapter President, it will often be your job to arbitrate matters between brothers, but to ensure the difficult task of enforcing the rules on all brothers. No one wants to be “the bad guy.”

This burden will fall less on you if you and the officers help create a culture where everyone is held accountable for their actions not just by you or the Advisor, but also by each other. An important part of this is to always be consistent in enforcement of the rules – even for minor issues. This is not always possible – or easy, but if your reputation is one for fairness and consistency, it can help alleviate the tension that arises when something serious does occur. As Chapter President, there will be times when confrontation is inevitable. In this case, you should have three goals.

- Do your best to keep the situation from escalating.
- Whenever possible, be discreet when confronting someone about an issue. People are more responsive when they do not feel cornered or that they are being attacked. This gives them the opportunity to address the situation on their own if necessary as well.
- Resolve the conflict in a manner in which everyone is a little unhappy – no clear winners or losers.

People worry that confrontation and disagreements will cause divisiveness and strife if they are addressed and things would be better off if they were “left alone,” that the issue will fade away. On rare occasions, for truly trivial matters, this can be the case.

However, what truly festers and causes division in a chapter or group is when there is a problem that is NOT confronted. Rather than go away, it will come back as part of some other issue – making things that much more heated and complex.

## **IV. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Resource Directory**

It is important to keep this list updated so that your successor does not have to re-invent the wheel each time a constituent needs to be contacted. You should make sure this is available in your officer notebooks, at the chapter house, and other locations.

- FarmHouse International Headquarters
- Chapter Advisor
- Association President
- Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students
- Greek Life Advisor
- Interfraternity Council President
- Emergency Contact Information (Local, Police, Fire, Paramedics, Hospitals)

### **Published Resources**

No chapter president should be without these things. Go through your files and make sure each of your chapter officers, advisors, housemothers and association leaders have the latest copy of all FarmHouse materials and resources. Upwards of 30 resources have been updated in 2005 and are available in downloadable form at [www.FarmHouse.org](http://www.FarmHouse.org). As Chapter President, you should familiarize yourself with all of these resources.

- 17 different chapter officer resources
- Recruitment resource
- New Member Education resource
- Membership & History Handbook
- Public Relations resource
- Chapter Advisor's resource
- Housemother/Resident Advisor resource
- Expansion resource
- Association Board resource
- Chapter Retreat/Strategic Planning resource
- Frequently asked questions & responses (from FH Questions of the Week)
- Chapter Planning Guide

As well as links to other resources, such as those listed on the North-American Interfraternity Conference website at [www.nicindy.org](http://www.nicindy.org).

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

Download basics of parliamentary procedure at:

[http://www.farmhouse.org/pdf/par\\_pro.pdf](http://www.farmhouse.org/pdf/par_pro.pdf)

Find more detailed resources at: [www.robertsrules.org](http://www.robertsrules.org)

## **Meeting Management**

Any meeting, with the possible exceptions of elections or membership selection meetings, which run longer than one hour is too long. With sufficient preparation and attention to parliamentary procedure, an amazing volume of work can be accomplished in 60 minutes. A well run meeting can contribute to promoting a positive attitude and with a moderate amount of effort and advance planning; the chapter meeting can become reasonable, productive and interesting. These are some of the more common reasons why meetings will take longer than planned and areas the President should manage:

1. Lack of preparation by officers and chairmen. An agenda should be prepared and distributed prior to the meeting. The Executive Committee should be held prior to a chapter meeting to sort out possible concerns with business items.
2. Disorderly conduct. Informality, shouting, obscene language, indiscriminate conversation all add length and aggravation to a meeting.
3. Starting the meeting on time. If the meeting is delayed, a disorganized tone is set and members will get restless and tardiness is promoted. All officers should arrive at least 5 minutes before the meeting is to begin
4. Room environment. Proper site selection for chapter meetings is important and having meetings in a professional setting will improve meeting efficiency. Pay particular attention to the room temperature
5. Insufficient fluency in Parliamentary Procedure. Abiding by Roberts Rules of Order will keep the meeting on track as well as avoid claims of “railroading” or “favoritism”.
6. Selling ideas. The meeting should be used primarily for informing and ratifying decisions. Persuasion efforts are better suited to an informal situation, one-on-one conversations, in small groups, or in committee meetings.
7. Always end on a positive note. Sing, pass a candle, congratulate brothers, thank someone. Whatever it is, take a few minutes before breaking up to reinforce the brotherhood.

## **Ten Commandments for Good Listening**

Listening may seem to be the same as hearing, but it implies making an active effort; it means paying attention and taking heed. It signifies that you care about the speaker and the message. Here are some ways to enhance the listening process:

1. Stop talking! You can't pay attention if you're thinking about what you're trying to say.
2. Put the speaker at ease. Be relaxed, friendly, and receptive – open to whatever he or she has to say.
3. Show interest. Look alert and attentive. Make eye contact. Don't steal a glance at your work or passersby or the clock.
4. Listen for ideas. Listen to understand rather than to argue.
5. Judge the content. Don't focus on the speaker's personality or the delivery, but what that person knows and is telling you.
6. Find an area of common interest. There's no such thing as a boring speaker. Every encounter with another person carries some kink of learning experience.
7. Be patient. Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don't shift in your seat or let your mind wander to other things.
8. Ask questions. Questions encourage speakers to develop points further. They show that you are listening.

9. Hold your temper. Anger, arguments, and criticism put the speaker on the defensive and hurts good communication.

10. Stop talking! This is the first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. You simply can't listen while you are talking.

### **Tips for Meeting with a Campus Official**

- Dress appropriately. Use common sense. Your attire should be business casual at the minimum, and, of course, be clean.
- Introduce yourself. Shake hands. It is a common courtesy and is a sign of friendship and honesty.
- Have an agenda prepared before you go into the office. This way you will not forget items of discussion. You may also want to email a copy of what you will be discussing a day or two before the meeting so that the university official is able to prepare or find out more information prior to the meeting. At the very least you should state what you would like to discuss when you schedule the meeting.
- Bring your chapter's schedule of events and be prepared to answer the question about it.
- Bring a pen and paper. Use them!
- Keep good eye contact and ask questions. The university official will be more interested in your thoughts if you seem interested in her/him.
- If your financial situation allows, take the person to coffee, breakfast, or lunch. They will appreciate a break from the Greek Office and it is a sincere gesture that the meeting is important.
- Greek issues. Show your human side; your entire conversation does not have to revolve around awards and Greek issues. Ask the administrator about their weekend, family, or any common interests or hobbies.
- Keep in constant communication. Send out letters and announcements when your chapter is involved in any positive activity, community service project, wins awards, or achieves high marks on scholarship. Let them know that your chapter is doing something positive for the university.
- Do not make a habit of asking for things or complaining about the institution. This will leave a bad taste in the administrator with whom you are meeting.
- Always send a thank you note following a meeting. This will also leave a lasting impression of FarmHouse.

### **Chapter Award of Excellence**

The FarmHouse International Fraternity has established the Chapter Award of Excellence as our minimum standards program. It is designed to recognize Chapters that are operating at the performance level outlined in our By-Laws, policies, and handbooks. The criteria for the Chapter Award of Excellence are built upon basic expected performance in the various areas of chapter operations. Each chapter officer has specific criteria within his area of responsibility. As Chapter President, you should familiarize yourself with the criteria for the Chapter Award of Excellence at the beginning of your term and coordinate the efforts of your officers. The most recent version of the Chapter Award of Excellence can be found at: [http://www.farmhouse.org/pdf/award\\_excellence.pdf](http://www.farmhouse.org/pdf/award_excellence.pdf)

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Bowditch, James L., and Anthony F. Buono A Primer on Organizational Behavior. John Wiley and Sons: New York, 1990.