

KAPPA KAPPA PSI

Making Music and Musicianship Our Focus

Kappa Kappa Psi is first and foremost a *musical* fraternity dedicated to college bands. But sometimes we lose that emphasis. How much does your chapter focus on music and musicianship? This handout provides some suggestions on how to improve that focus within your chapter, your band, and your community.

Music within the Chapter

- First of all, **you will see improvement simply by thinking about it and talking about it.** Take a few minutes in a chapter meeting to discuss this handout and your chapter's musical activities. Your own thoughts and ideas will do wonders.
- **Appoint a music chair.** If music is important to what we do, then there should be a person in the chapter in charge of ensuring that music gets its share of our focus. The music chair will be in charge of coordinating musical events, rehearsing the Hymn and Song with the chapter, and will be the point person for music-related projects. This is a simple suggestion that will go a *long* way: appoint a music chair. The music chair might be an officer or a non-officer, a music major or a non-major.
- **Rehearse and regularly perform both the Fraternity Hymn and the Fraternity Song.** Both of these songs should be points of pride for your chapter – can you sing them well? With full harmonies for both pieces? It is strongly recommended that you take time to practice each of these regularly and that you sing them regularly – many chapters sing them before and/or after each chapter meeting. Learn your Alma Mater as well.
- **Put on a chapter recital.** This could be an opportunity for the chapter to come together and perform music. The recital can be a mix of solo and ensemble works, instrumental and vocal pieces. Putting on a strong recital is a great way to cement your reputation as a musically-focused organization in your music department. And if the recital is not strong enough to perform publicly, simply perform it for yourselves – either way you grow as musicians. The event could be coordinated by the music chair, who would help brothers find music and would set the program. In addition to this, some large chapters have even formed chapter band ensembles.
- **Ensure that brothers practice regularly.** Being the best musicians we can is our obligation as brothers of Kappa Kappa Psi. Set up a practice hour a couple of times per month or have brothers commit to practice time to promote musical excellence.
- **Have a music appreciation night.** This could be any number of things: the chapter could attend a symphony concert, get together in small groups and read duets and ensemble music, listen to brothers' favorite works – there are many possibilities.
- **Make music and musicianship part of your recruitment and membership education.** This doesn't mean putting a playing audition in your recruitment, but it does mean focusing on how much a prospective member values musicianship. Does each potential member strive to be a good musician? Also, is music part of your education process?

Music within the Band

- **As brothers of Kappa Kappa Psi we are charged to set the example within the band.** So the primary manner in which we can promote musicianship in the band is to practice our parts and display a positive attitude toward musical quality at all times. Never be the band members joking about playing their parts poorly.
- **Help the weaker performers** both by setting the example as stated above and by working directly with them to ensure they know their parts. You don't have to be a section leader to help others grow musically. Don't be overconfident, though!
- **Ensure that the band has the equipment it needs** to perform well. Damaged and broken instruments can make a band full of fine performers sound terrible. Raise money toward instrument repair and ask your director what equipment would be needed to improve the band's musicianship.
- **Bring in guest clinicians.** Talk with your director and music faculty about this possibility and see if he or she would like your chapter to pursue this. Chapters have brought in guest conductors, marching band clinicians, and instrumental professors to teach master classes – all of these things help your band to grow musically. Sometimes, colleges and universities provide funding to chapters for this type of project. See what your school might offer! Also be sure to check out the National Matching Grant Program, which could provide money for this project.

Music within the Community

- **Promote your band's performances.** Do your concerts fill the concert hall? If not, try advertising for them. Talk to the school and local newspapers, local high schools, local radio stations, and public broadcasting. Also, be sure to contact local retirement homes – particularly if your concerts are free. Retirement homes are always looking for events for their residents and often have their own transportation already available. You'll never find a more enthusiastic and positive audience!
- If you feel like the quality is high enough, be sure to **open your chapter recital to the community.** Advertise it in much the same way as you would your band concerts.
- **Any community event you undertake should have a musical element.** For example, Relay for Life is a great event – but general community service falls outside our purposes. Why not offer to put together a pep band and perform at Relay for Life? This will benefit your community while keeping to our purposes and promoting music.
- **Consider hosting a campus music day.** This could be an event featuring various musical groups at your school performing around the campus throughout the day – perhaps as a lead up to a band concert in the evening. This is a big undertaking, for sure, and certainly a project to discuss with your director, but this can be a great way to promote music.