

Goal Setting Talking Points

When inactive members are asked, "Why did you choose to not renew your membership," the most common responses include:

- My honor society/chapter did not offer any programs/activities of interest to me
- My honor society/chapter did not do anything
- The offerings were not worth my time or money
- I never received any information about the events
- I did not know I was supposed to renew each year

As a developing honor society (DHS), your members are not entitled to Sigma benefits because the honor society is not yet an official chapter of Sigma. DHSs may operate for one, two or even 5+ years before becoming an official chapter. Therefore, creating member benefits at the honor society level is crucial to sustaining the 50+ members needed to become a chapter.

Member benefits are essential to recruitment and retention of members for developing honor societies. Benefits provide active engagement opportunities for members and encourage candidates to accept the invitation to join. Benefits are what keep members coming back for more. As a DHS it is important to maintain effective and sustainable benefits so members will see value in their membership.

When developing benefits, it is important to keep all member types in mind. For example, what might be attractive to a collegiate might not be as enticing for a nurse leader. We recommend surveying your members to determine their professional needs and interests to be able to offer the best and most essential programs and other benefits that will entice, excite, and retain members.

Sense of Community

Building a bond of "nursing-hood" is a major responsibility of developing honor societies. This is called an "intangible benefit" - one that money can't buy. This benefit is long-term and will encourage members to create organizational relationships and make life-long investments.

You can begin creating a sense of community through direct and indirect initiatives, such as:

- Interest-based focus groups (book club, neonatal alliance, educators united, etc.)
- Establishing ice-breakers at first event/program and meeting
- Creating name tags with specialties
- Commemorating holidays together
- Planning a "Nursing Appreciation" celebration
- Sending cards/appreciation communications to members (birthday, graduation, anniversary, retirement)

These are a few examples of ways to connect members with the developing honor society. Below are examples of benefits that can be implemented on the developing honor society level. Keep in mind that benefits need to be sustained. If you offer it, you must follow through with that promise. As you read through the samples, think of other benefits you can create through your nursing school/faculty/staff/community contacts. This can include creating a scholarship, have a discount day at the bookstore, nurses day at a local restaurant...the opportunities are endless!

Programming and Events

Well-planned programs will be the main catalyst for exciting and enticing member participation. The developing honor society/chapter should offer several types of programs to meet members interest and professional development needs. Just remember, programs offered must meet the purposes and goals of Sigma.

Here are some ideas:

- **Leadership Development Opportunities**
 - Robert's Rules of Order/Parliamentary Procedures
 - Officer and Committee Opportunities
 - Position Orientation
 - This is an opportunity for members interested in holding a position. This orientation can include: what skills are necessary to be successful, tasks in role, time management, officer transitions.
 - Skills Assessment
 - Ex. True Colors, MBTI, Bird Test
 - This assists nurses understand their personality style vs. their professional ethic
- **Professional Development Opportunities**
 - Providing opportunities to earn continuing education credits
 - Having quarterly seminar to discuss nursing updates in a particular field/interest
 - Round tables (you can choose a topic of discussion)
 - Host opportunities to attend a conference/convention/meeting for nurse professionals
 - Mentoring program
 - Have a nursing professional partner with a collegiate student for they year
 - Have them check-in with each other periodically
 - Create an initiative based off interest (ex. all emergency room nurses in a sub-group, all nurse educators in another group, etc.)
 - Develop series where interested nurses can learn about specific specialties
- **Job Shadowing**
 - Check with a local hospital on departmental shadowing opportunities
 - This benefit will be helpful for collegiate students seeking to learn more about specialties
- **Service/Philanthropic Opportunities**
 - Pick a charity of choice and devote a X number of hours each quarter
 - Sign up for a race/walk for a cause
 - Breast cancer, childhood illness, health research, etc.
 - Hold an event/auction and donate a percentage of proceeds to a charity of choice
 - Hold a contest for members to choose the charity to contribute
 - Ask members to donate to a health organization
 - Ask members to donate to the developing honor society's scholarship fund (*see info about not-for-profit status*)
- **Social/Networking (collaborations)**

- Host a nurses round-up
 - Provide appetizers and refreshments, have light music and allow attendees to mingle among their constituents
- Host a happy hour at your local/neighborhood restaurant/eatery
- Plan a fun activity per quarter (bowling, skating, laser tag, wine tasting - cater to your membership)
- Partner with another local nursing organization and host a larger meet and greet opportunity
- **Awards and Recognition Opportunities**
 - Letters of recommendation for portfolio
 - Member spotlight - event/dinner/communications
 - Scholarships and awards

Tangible Benefit Ideas for DHS Members

Tangible benefits make DHS members feel special and part of the DHSs history and development into an Sigma chapter.

- "limited edition" DHS items: only for members that joined before DHS became a chapter
 - DHS pin, t-shirt, honor cord, stole, lanyard/badge reel, pens, customized items
- letter explaining importance of a chartering member of DHS
- Sigma books
- Pamphlets
- Member Packet
 - [Sample Chartering Member Letter](#)
 - Copy of current DHS bylaws
 - Chapter newsletter
 - Meet the Board sheet with contact information
 - Calendar of events for upcoming year
 - Welcome gift
 - Tote bag, t-shirt, lapel pine, honor cords, etc.
- Overall
 - What kind of membership experience do we want to create for members?
 - What perceptions do we want members to have about our honor society/future chapter?
- Programs and Benefits
 - What educational programs and events will the honor society offer to its members? How many and how often?
 - What activities will be of interest to our various types of members (students, nurse educators, clinicians, researchers, nurse supervisors/CNOs, retired)?
 - Will we survey members about the types of programs they'd like to attend?
- What will interest student members?
- What will interest members who are nurse educators?
- What will interest members who are clinicians/practicing nurses?
- What topics are timely and relevant in nursing currently?

- Besides educational programs the honor society will offer, what other developing honor society benefits/services/perks will be offered?
- Will the honor society offer free generic honor cords/stoles/customized pins to members?
- Will the honor society offer letters of reference/accomplishment for members' portfolios?
- Will the honor society develop a mentoring program to help members develop professional and leadership skills?
- Will the honor society offer leadership opportunities?
- Will the honor society offer networking and social opportunities?
- Will the honor society offer service opportunities?
- Will the honor society offer philanthropic opportunities?
- Will the honor society offer awards or scholarships to members? When?
- Communications
 - How will the honor society communicate with members and how often?
 - Paper newsletters or electronic newsletters?
 - Printed mailings or electronic mailings or both?
 - Do we have valid email addresses of all members?
 - Do we have valid mailing addresses for all members?
 - Can we have a webpage on the School of Nursing's Website or do we need to develop our own independent honor society website?
 - Can we develop a Facebook page, Twitter feed, other networking platform?
 - Bulletin Board
 - Announcements/updates at each honor society function?
- Goals/Projects/Planning
 - How will goals be accomplished? Strategic Plan? Action Plan? Timeline?
 - Will you phase out your goals to be accomplished over specific time periods?
- Recruitment and retention goals
 - With Sigma's membership eligibility criteria in mind, how many student candidates do we anticipate to induct each year?
 - How many Nurse Leaders from our community shall we recruit and induct each year?
 - How many invitations sent vs. invitations accepted do we expect?
 - If candidates are not accepting the invitations, why are they not accepting?
 - How many member renewals do we anticipate receiving each year?
 - What is our honor society's attrition rate?
 - What initiatives will the honor society put in place to entice candidates to join and excite members to sustain their active membership?