

# LEADERSHIP IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

## An Editorial

Some chapters seem to be under the impression that leadership of the chapter is a nice reward that should be spread around to as many people as possible. That may be a nice thought, but it doesn't contribute a thing toward the sound and stable operation of an effective organization. How many corporations change their top leadership position every six months? None that are still in business. Some people have strong resentment toward fraternities being referred to as businesses. Like it or not, one aspect of a fraternity on this campus is the business side of the organization. Some chapters operate on a budget of \$100,000 a year which immediately takes them out of the fun and games category.

Why elect officers, especially the president, for a year? Continuity is a big factor. Anyone who thinks a president's main job is to run a meeting has been sleeping under a rock or belongs to an organization with more than its share of problems. The president is the spokesman of the chapter on the campus and off. On this campus he must maintain communication lines with IFC, other chapter presidents, Student Services, Physical Plant, Department of Public Safety, and Fiscal Affairs to list just a few. There is also work with the International Headquarters, advisors and alumni. Presidents realize that to be effective they need to have a good working relationship with many people and it is impossible to develop that rapport overnight. The sad fact of a rapid turnover is that, as soon as a president has developed that rapport, he is out of office and hasn't had time to do a thing with it. Workshops and seminars for officers are totally worthless. Many times a president will attend a seminar to gain useful information only to be out of office a month later.

There are only two valid reasons for continuing to elect officers on a semester basis: (1) We've always done it that way, and (2) We've always done it that way.

Cries will be heard that you could elect a bad officer and then be stuck with him for an entire year. Could be, but if he doesn't deserve to be in office for a year, he doesn't deserve to be in office for a semester either. Every chapter constitution should have a provision for removing an officer from his position. If it isn't there, amend the constitution and make sure it is. Removal from office may be a drastic step, but it is far better to remove an ineffective officer, regroup and then move forward than to wallow in mediocrity. Also, the possibility of removal from office is a far greater incentive to do a good job than riding along doing nothing until the end of a term of office.

Others will say the job is too big to handle for an entire year. Any fraternity using that line may just as well be admitting they don't have any men capable of effective leadership. Any officer who has had a year term will acknowledge that the second half of their time in office was the easiest. Why? Because they not only know what to expect, but also know how to handle the situation. Good leaders in office for only a semester will admit that a full-year term would have been more productive. Ineffective officers are silent on the subject or take the martyr approach commenting on the "extreme burden" that has been lifted from them.

By now the thought might be "nice idea, but we're doing OK the way we are". A chapter which is content merely to continue to exist rather than improve deserves sympathy and a lot of luck. (GPB)

NOTE: This Editorial was written by Gary Baumann, Advisor to Fraternities at the University of Arkansas, for their Greek Newsletter, "Speaking Frankly". It represents his views as a one-time undergraduate, a former fraternity professional and now a university faculty member.