



Phi Lambda Sigma

Pharmacy Leadership Society

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Guidelines

For

Phi Lambda Sigma

Membership Selection Processes

2011

Introduction

Phi Lambda Sigma established a system of chapters with the founding of the first chapter at Auburn University. Each chapter is affiliated with an accredited college or school of pharmacy and is designated by Greek letter. The most current listing of the [established chapters](#) may be found on the Phi Lambda Sigma web site.

Each chapter is charged with the recruitment of members. Initiated members at each chapter are members of both the national organization and the chapter and are responsible for the respective fees.

This document is intended to be a discussion about the creation of a membership rubric for use by the chapters. Some chapters have created a membership rubric while many are still trying to decide whether they should use one and/or how to create one. This discussion will consist of three sections – membership criteria, member selection, and membership rubric.

Membership Criteria

Background

The National By-laws contain the specifics for the minimum membership criteria for the four established categories (Article II; page 5)¹:

Persons to be considered for membership must have complied with the following conditions:

- (a) They shall be actively involved in advancing the profession of pharmacy through demonstrated leadership in local, state and national professional pharmacy organizations.
- (b) They shall possess a high degree of professionalism upon entrance to the Society, as well as the capability to maintain this professionalism throughout their membership in the Society.

Section 1. Collegiate Membership

Those student pharmacists, men and women, who have demonstrated dedicated service and leadership in the advancement of pharmacy and are of high moral and ethical character.

- (a) They shall have completed one professional year of scholastic work applicable toward the pharmacy degree.
- (b) They shall be in good academic standing.

Section 2. Faculty Membership

Those members of the staff, faculty and administration of schools and colleges of pharmacy who shall be initiated by local chapters or were formerly initiated and presently serve as staff, faculty or administrators in schools and colleges of pharmacy.

Section 3. Alumni Membership

Those members of the Society who were initiated during their collegiate enrollment.

Section 4. Honorary Membership

Those individuals who have demonstrated dedication, leadership, and service to the profession of pharmacy, including those members pursuing degrees in pharmaceutical sciences.

The criteria are meant to be general in nature. Whether a new charter or an established chapter, each has approached the establishment of membership criteria differently. Examples of questions from chapters involved in this process include:

- How do you measure “involved in advancing the profession?” “...professionalism?”
- Do you use subjective, objective, or both types of measures to determine membership criteria?

Recommendations

The focus of membership is in the collegiate (student) category. Chapters will add members in the other categories, however, the criteria for students is critical to establish because this is the foundation of the chapter. The By-laws provide each chapter with a minimum criteria for all members of Phi Lambda Sigma:

1. actively involved in advancing the profession of pharmacy through demonstrated leadership in local, state and national professional pharmacy organizations and
2. shall possess a high degree of professionalism upon entrance to the Society, as well as the capability to maintain this professionalism throughout their membership in the Society.

In addition, collegiate (student) membership includes four additional criteria:

3. have demonstrated dedicated service and leadership in the advancement of pharmacy,
4. are of high moral and ethical character,
5. shall have completed one professional year of scholastic work applicable toward the pharmacy degree, and
6. shall be in good academic standing.

For each of these six criteria, chapters have interpreted each to best suit their program.

The following are offered as recommendations for these criteria:

1. Demonstrated leadership may include offices/positions held, recognized committee assignments, and other involvement with in any of the recognized professional pharmacy organizations.
2. It has been stated that regarding professionalism, you know it when you see it and your certainly know it when you see its antithesis.² There are a variety of definitions used for professionalism. Ensure consistency by using the same definition of professionalism as your college or school of pharmacy. In addition, a helpful resource regarding professionalism may be found at the following [Professionalism Toolkit for Students and Faculty](#).
3. Similar to the first criteria, however, do not overlook dedicated service. Not everyone can hold an office. An individual that has provided dedicated service within an organization has also demonstrated leadership characteristics and are eligible for membership.
4. This criteria adds some detail to professionalism. Moral and ethical characteristics are critical, however, how is this criteria measured. Unfortunately, it is usually determined by a negative measure, such as probation.

5. The length of the program (three year, four year, or six year) will determine this criteria. While a one year minimum is probably best for three year programs, many four and six year programs opt for a two year minimum for membership.
6. Good academic standing is defined differently due to the number of variations among programs. For programs on a 4.0 scale, the recommendation has been a 2.50 minimum. There are more programs using a pass/no pass grading system. Good academic standing must be determined by each individual program.

Recommendations for determining the eligibility of candidates by using the membership criteria will be further addressed in the Member Rubric discussion.

Member Selection Process

Background

In the National By-laws, Article III – Election and Initiation of Members, Section 3, it is stated that nomination for membership shall come from any voting member of the local chapter. In addition, as reported in the PLS Chapter Guide, nomination for all membership categories emanates from the present members of the Society. Prospective members are nominated on the basis of their demonstration of dedication, service and leadership in the advancement of pharmacy. By promoting such recognition, Phi Lambda Sigma provides an incentive for the development of future leadership potential for the profession. The specifics regarding the election of new members is outlined in Section 2 of the By-laws.

The member selection process used by each chapter varies – methods include nominations, applications, essays, and interviews. The processes include combinations of these methods.

1. **Nominations** – All chapters use nominations. Nominations shall come from voting members (collegiate and faculty). The nominations may be as simple as a call for nominations goes to all voting members, candidates are nominated, the chapter's voting members vote on the list of nominees to receive an invitation for

- membership. In other cases, nominations are just the beginning of a detailed membership selection process where the nomination helps determine who will be invited to begin the process.
2. **Applications, CVs, Resumes and Essays** – Once nominations are collected, some chapters ask nominees to complete an application to help voters make their decisions for membership. The application is usually in the form of a curriculum vitae (CV) or resume. There have also been applications created to collect the pertinent information required for the voters to make their decisions. A number of chapters request essays as well, asking the nominees to answer a question or two or provide their reasoning for the opportunity to become a member of the Society. These data collection methods use the rubric to determine the questions asked for each method.
 3. **Interviews** – Again, some chapters conduct interviews as part of the selection process. An interview can be a very useful method in learning more about the candidate.

Recommendations

Each chapter is provided with minimal requirements through the National By-laws regarding membership selection, election and initiation. From this, many chapters have detailed their selection processes and expanded their own requirements within the local chapter's by-laws. Based on questions received by the national office and discussions with many chapters, the following is a brief list of items that each chapter should consider regarding the member selection process:

How many members should we initiate annually?

It is up to each chapter to determine the appropriate number. There is no "correct" number because the total is affected by many variables: such as class size, length of program, and budget considerations. One approach for chapters is 10% of the average class size. The length of the program (three, four, or six years) also affects the number of initiates each year. The shorter the program, the less time there is to

recognize and develop leaders. Finally, the initiation fee for new members may affect the total number of initiates, whether the initiate or local chapter is responsible for the fees.

What is the required selection process?

As has been discussed, there is not just one selection process. The methods presented previously may be used individually or in combination to best fit with each chapter. It is highly recommended that each chapter establish their member selection process and document the process in the chapter's by-laws.

New Chapters

Another important aspect of the member selection process relates to newly formed chapters. As a chapter matures, so does the selection process. However, as a new charter, the selection process is one of many challenges being faced.

What comes first...the chicken or the egg? ...members or the member selection process? As a new charter, it is very difficult to create an elaborate membership selection process when you have no members. As described in our Chapter Guide, the petitioners and chapter advisor are involved in identifying the first members of the local chapter. As identified on page 10 of the Chapter Guide, the process is usually simple and consists of identifying those individuals who are recognized as current and up and coming leaders within the college or school. Once the charter members have been elected, the officers identified, and the newly chartered chapter and members initiated, then the next big focus of the chapter should be regarding their membership selection process. Resources, such as this document and information from other chapters and the national office are available.

Membership Rubric

Background

Several chapters have created membership rubrics, based on the membership criteria and member selection process. What is a rubric? There are a variety of definitions for rubric, however, the definition used here is any established mode of conduct or procedure; protocol.³ In general, a rubric helps an individual evaluate a candidate by providing a procedure/protocol.

The most common procedures used for evaluating the methods used for the member selection processes are points-based rubrics and general application review.

Points-based evaluation is very common. The key component of this procedure is the creation of the point legend: examples may include officers receive 3 points for holding the position, attendance at national meetings is 2 points, and 4 points for each community service activity. A point legend may also be created for the interview and essay. The difficulty with creating such a legend is the assigning of points to all possible activities and recognition. This process takes a lot of time up front because the list of possible activities and recognition should be inclusive of the program, as well as the university, and there will be a lot of updating and correcting. However, once completed, the point legend will be very valuable during the member selection process. The chapters that use the points system often require a CV, an essay, and an interview to make up the application for membership. Then, the voting members evaluate each method using the created point legend. Then, the total points are summed and used to identify the top candidates for membership.

The general application review rubric maps the selection methods used and provides defined categories for the reviewer to place the candidate. An example might include four categories for the candidates: Excellent, Average, Below Average, and Does Not Meet Requirements. Each of these categories is represented by a score, such as 3, 2, 1, or 0 respectively. Then, for each method used, a rubric is created and the categories are defined. An example of such a rubric is offered in Table I.

Table I – Rubric Example

	Excellent (3)	Average (2)	Below Ave (1)	Doesn't Meet (0)
Letter of Recommendation	Provided valuable insight about the candidate and shared specific examples of leadership	Provided a detailed evaluation of the candidate	Answered the questions asked but provided no additional detail	Did not answer all of the questions required for a letter of recognition

Another example that might be used and adapted for the local chapter is the program's admissions application process. Most colleges and schools have established rubrics that could be adapted to focus more on leadership for the local chapter. The chapter advisor and other faculty members will be valuable resources in

Recommendations

The examples provided are meant to offer chapters guidance in the pursuit of creating a solid member selection process. The creation of rubrics helps to standardize the selection process and help guide the voting members each year. Due to the large number of resources available online and within most colleges and schools of pharmacy, this document is not intended to identify a particular rubric or format for use. However, it is recommended for the chapters to see if this process will help the chapter.

Conclusion

This document is intended to provide guidance to the chapters regarding one of the most asked questions of the Society – how are members selected? The topics and recommendations offered are meant to guide the local chapter. This document will be updated regularly and will serve as a valuable resource.

REFERENCES

1. Phi Lambda Sigma National By-laws. www.philambdasigma.org/bylaws/ (Accessed March 5, 2011).
2. Hammer D. Professional Attitudes and Behaviors: The “A’s and B’s” of Professionalism. Am J Pharm Educ. Vol. 64, 455-464. Winter 2000.
3. Defined by Dictionary.com (Accessed March 14, 2011).