



OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY INC.

THE 9th DISTRICT RETENTION CHAIRMAN

“ FRIENDSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SOUL ”

71st Ninth District Meeting SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

9TH DISTRICT 2007 COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Committee: RETENTION

Committee Chairman: VERNON <BOP SWALOS> WEAKLEY. Committee members – Clarence Ball, the Texas representative and Darryel Sanders, the Arkansas representative. The retention committee is looking for a few more hard working, self motivated, dedicated good men. Specifically, we need a Louisiana and Oklahoma state representative as well as several other good members to help us continue the work of retention. Retention continues to be a critical success factor for the mighty 9th District. Please contact me, Vernon Weakley, at 832 259 9911 or email me at swalos@aol.com if you are interested in joining this committee.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

To significantly improve the 9th District's retention performance. Four specific areas that are targeted to improve our performance are as follows:

- Improving the retention of our newer brothers (NEOs) whose three-year advance payment expire each year.
- Improving the retention of graduating seniors, undergraduate brothers and finding better ways to get them into graduate chapters immediately after graduation.
- Improving the over-all mindset of all brothers in the 9th district where retention is concerned so that retention can be given a higher priority and taken more seriously at the chapter level.
- ELIMINATING WRECKING and/or find ways to significantly reduce the negative retention effect of WRECKING on our newer members.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

During this year we have had several significant successes in the area of retention. We have provided critically important retention reports to state representatives as well as to our membership via their chapter leadership. This is an achievement given the fact that for a number of years we have not been able to get these reports from the International office. These reports have enabled our chapters to more readily identify those brothers who they should focus their retention improvement efforts. Additionally, we have successfully incorporated new cutting edge technology such as Video Emails to our tool box to help us improve our over-all performance where retention is concerned. Video email messages were sent out on several occasions to our leadership and chapters to advise them of our goals and efforts in seeking retention progress. During this period, I personally spoke at state rep workshops and various other meetings to improve our performance and provide critical information via retention tips to our membership.



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The internet via the www.mightyninth.org web site has been used to provide valuable improvement tools to our membership to help them achieve progress in the area of retention. Reports, surveys and various other innovative retention improvement tips and methods have been uploaded to the www.mightyninth.org web site to assist our chapters. During this period, I as chairman, also conducted a workshop and spoke to both under grad and graduate leaders at the annual under grad workshop in Desoto Texas. As usual at this event as well as most district events, I distributed retention information to our members and chapter to aid in their retention progress. One very effective tool that was used this year to poll our membership to get their input and inquire on those things they would like to see utilized in the mighty 9th District, was surveys. During this period a new highly effective abbreviated Retention Survey was created. It has been used to solicit valuable improvement data from our membership. The information obtained has been reviewed and findings are being shared to improve our over-all performance in the critically important area of retention.

Another new feature that was developed by our DR, Willie < Mercenary> Hinchon, is an award recognition breakfast to show appreciation of and publicly praise the accomplishments of our chapters and members. This effort is a never done before event in the 9th District that will take place on Friday morning at the 71st District meeting. It is the retention recognition that our members have been asking for, for many years. We want our brothers to know that we appreciate them, value them and are seeking new ways to keep them happy. We want all of our brothers to stay with us here in the mighty 9th District. But as I have always said, we are not mind readers. Our brothers have got to tell us what's on their minds and what they need to make them happy. Brothers are urged to complete surveys when they see them, or when they are passed out at their chapter and district meetings and get them back to me. Surveys that are passed out at chapter meetings should first be given to chapter leadership for their use and from there forwarded to me by the KRS for district wide tabulation and evaluation.

During this period we added two new state retention chairman to assist in better coverage of our membership. Clarence Ball at email address CHBALL@SBCGLOBAL.NET, will represent Texas and Darryel Sanders at email address quedog_omegaman@yahoo.com will represent Arkansas. Brothers in these areas please contact these brothers with your retention concerns, needs, and/or to provide any constructive input you may have. We are looking to fill chairmanships for Oklahoma and Louisiana in the near future.

Our research has successfully identified the major reoccurring retention problem areas that are severely hurting our district. From year to year our NEOs WHOSE THREE YEAR ADVANCE DUES PAYMENT HAVE EXPIRED who do not re-new their membership with Omega and COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO DO NOT JOIN GRAD CHAPTERS ONCE THEY LEAVE COLLEGE have been the major offenders. We continue to lose roughly 80% of our NEOs and 87% of our undergrads who do not join grad chapters when they leave college. These figures are not exclusive to the 9th District. They are the same or in many instances, much worse across the board nationwide. We must get these BROTHERS to stop this negative trend AND LIVE UP TO THEIR SACRED OMEGA OATH! The key to improvement for us is more awareness and contacting these brothers long before their three year advance payment expiration and/or their graduation dates.

In addition to our chapter Basilei and College Graduate Advisors being more vigilant and taking prompt action to retain their applicable people, I have designed several retention improvement tips that focus on these two specific areas and placed them on the www.mightyninth.org web site in the Retention Improvement Tips Segment. There is additional information and various other retention tools and initiatives for our Basilei to use to aid their perform on the web site in the Retention Committee section. Basilei and Advisors should be asked too direct their attention to these areas and use these improvement tools. I especially recommend the use of the new abbreviated survey. It can be very



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effective in identifying those hard to put a finger on destructive under currents in a chapter that are driving away our members. College Advisors must talk with their graduating seniors and instill in them the desire to stay with Omega after they graduate. Many of these brothers apparently feel that Omega is only a college thing. We must teach them differently. I recommend that Advisors keep good contact information on their graduating seniors and conduct follow up contacts by December of the next year to gauge their effectiveness and/or to get brothers who failed to stay with Omega to immediately go and join graduate chapters. Many graduate chapters have significantly lowered their dues or eliminated them all together for graduating seniors who join their chapter within two years of graduating. Our college grads must be made aware of this enticement. Additionally, during this year **a one hundred dollar scholarship initiative was approved and established in the 9th District this year for graduating college seniors.** One added stipulation was that these graduates only be allowed to receive this money if they had joined a graduate chapter. It is hoped that this practice will also help improve retention of our graduating seniors.

This request for more serious attention on the subject of retention goes out most especially to our chapter Basilei. They are on the front lines and therefore have the greatest opportunity to immediately have positive impact in this crucial area. Our chapter Basilei are the key to immediately improving retention in their chapters, and in doing so, they amplify our district's over-all success as well. **A FAILURE TO ACT, which has been many of our poor performing chapters' history, along with their perpetual year to year poor performance in this crucial area, is the ENEMY OF IMPROVEMENT, PROGRESS, POSITIVE AND LONG LASTING CHANGE AND OUR CONTINUING GREATNESS in the 9th District. We must get our poor performing chapters to not only act where retention is concerned, but constantly do so in an aggressive manner.** It is imperative that we do what is RIGHT AND NECESSARY and go full blast to continue to improve our performance in the critically important area of RETENTION. **During this period it has been discussed whether or not to reprimand or penalize chapters with poor retention performance over a time frame that consistently falls below fifty percent.** This possibility has not gone beyond the discussion phase. While I am not yet an advocate of taking action against consistently poor performing chapters, I do feel at some point the District will need to seriously consider alternative methods to demonstrate that it is serious where retention improvement is concerned. We have currently chosen to stimulate improvement by awarding positive performance with the hope that consistently poor performing chapters will get the message and be motivated to improve their performance.

IN MY DUTIES AS 9TH DISTRICT RETENTION CHAIRMAN, I have uncovered another VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM that is driving away many of our new brothers in Omega. It is called WRECKING. This behavior has been cited in many of our surveys from our newer members as a reason they walk away from their chapters and Omega Psi Phi fraternity in general. Wrecking is where newer brothers with five years or less Omega membership are being targeted by brothers who in many instances are not even financial themselves. It usually is one newer brother who has been isolated off and has to face several of these brothers alone. They challenge the new brother with off the cuff charges about Omega and if the brother doesn't answer to their liking, he can be beaten and or threatened out of his frat shirt or threatened with any number of other physical and or verbal intimidations. Brothers, there is only one legal, mandated charge. Enough said! It is no wonder that new brothers who experience or hear about this type of none sense are choosing to leave Omega in droves all together or just stay away from Omega events, district meetings etc. to avoid these types of crazy serious confrontations. This is not good for Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. I seriously suspect that this is a reason why we lose 80% of our NEOS during the three year advance dues payment period. This negative condition is not exclusive to the 9th District . It is occurring all across America in all of our districts.

Wrecking is inappropriate behavior that is clearly in direct violation of the international code of conduct Article 5, section 1A4 and 1A11. It is killing our fraternity by chasing off our members who choose to not to be in a situation



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where they may have to physically defend themselves or even worse have to kill a brother. These incidents are illegal and must be stopped. **This inappropriate behavior is not brotherly and is a direct contradiction to our beloved Founders intentions.** Brother DR, I recommend that you continue to speak out publicly on this issue and advise the offenders that they risk immediate expulsion or suspension when they are found guilty of WRECKING OMEGA BROTHERS. Brothers who are victims of this negative and un-brotherly behavior should report the incident and the person or persons who perpetrated this act to the DR and his Basileus immediately so that immediate and serious punitive action can be initiated against anyone who is guilty of these inappropriate acts. During this period, to show just how serious this issue is with this administration, written invitations were given to our newer members to report incidents of wrecking directly to the DR and myself. The DR's email address and telephone number was published in my documents and volunteered as an immediate reporting source for this illegal behavior. Brothers who encounter this illegal behavior still have this option available to them to help the district rid itself of this illegal and dangerous behavior.

OMEGA Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. WAS NOT FOUNDED FOR BROTHERS TO BE IN physical CONFRONTATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES LIKE THAT WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT ANYTHING, LESS ON OVER MADE UP CHARGES/WORDS ON A PIECE OF PAPER. Omega is about the intangible brothers. It is about brotherhood. True brothers would never threaten or act inappropriately like that with another Omega man. THAT'S THE DISCONNECT FOR THE MIS-INFORMED, MIS-GUIDED OR INEXPERIENCED new to our organization. THEY THINK THE WORDS ON THE PAPER ARE IMPORTANT AND THE PRIMARY FOCUS ABOUT OMEGA. It is not my brothers. Brothers who act in this manner are severely hurting Omega Psi Phi fraternity with these inappropriate antics. In addition, every time a brother behave like this in public, someone sees it. They may not know it, but someone sees it. They are doing major damage to the image of Omega. MORE than they realize.

Some young kid or parent seeing THIS behavior can be making a NO decision about Omega or be thinking bad about Omega because of the confrontational type circumstance and/or image they are displaying. Where retention is concerned, it is obvious from our surveys that many of our NEO brothers have chosen to not be part of this type of nonsense. We lose roughly 80% of these brothers way before their three years dues payment expire because they choose not tolerate this threatening behavior. Many come to think that they were wrong in believing all the great things they had heard about Omega brotherhood that caused them to join Omega in the first place. Brothers out there who observe this nonsense, LAUGH, do not speak out against it or DO NOT try to stop it, you have a RESPONSIBILITY here as well. **Brothers we have got to learn how to STAND FOR WHAT'S RIGHT as Omega Men and not for WHAT'S POPULAR, BUT WRONG.** Additionally, we must be ethical brothers and not think we must blindly support a brother in the name of brotherhood when he is wrong. That is not what our beloved Founders would want of us.

I believe **WE MUST CHANGE HOW WE THINK ABOUT AND INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER.** One reason we (the DR, the Vice DR and I) set as a goal to work to change the mindset of our 9th District members by developing documents like the “**15 Commandment Of Good Omega Brotherhood**” is because, to a large degree, **we have been our own worse enemy.** Our very own mis-treatment of our brothers drive them away. We must stop the meanness, divisive cliques and **TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE WRECKING ANTICS** towards our brothers if we want them to come around and want to be with us. This is just basic human nature. Everyone is not guilty of this. But even a few bad brothers can have serious devastating long lasting consequences for us all. Good brothers must be mindful of this and quickly move in to correct this, usually out in the open, negative behavior when it rears its head.



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We must be more brotherly towards each other in every interaction we have, letting brotherhood, unity and friendship be our guiding light.

The bottom line is, IT DOES NO GOOD TO RECRUIT AND RECLAIM BROTHERS if those very same brothers are slipping away out of the back door and leaving our fraternity. New members who have paid extremely large sums of money to get in Omega would not normally elect to exit Omega so quickly. We must be doing something wrong to drive them away. We must man up and take a hard look at our selves and practices to find real solutions. We must not only slow the bleeding, we must stop the bleeding entirely or at a minimum slow it to a mere trickle. For those brothers who leave chapters for good reason, I suggest that rather than leave Omega for good because of unfixable disagreements etc. with a chapter or its members, that they seek out a new chapter that is more in line with their thinking, practices, ethics and principals etc. And failing that or finding that there is not another satisfactory chapter in reasonably close proximity, that they be allowed to found new chapters. The latter, although not the preferred solution, is better than losing our good brothers from Omega forever.

This committee conducted numerous Retention Surveys during this period. Brothers across our district TOOK SURVEYS we issued and provided constructive input that will be used to help improve our performance. Of the brothers who provided this information this year, forty percent were 1-5 years in Omega, six percent 6-10 years, fifteen percent was 21-30 years, and thirty nine percent was 31 years or above. Seventy seven percent of the survey takers were financial. Here are a few question results taken from our survey. The results of the compiled surveys are shown below.

2ND COLUMN= NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED TO THE QUESTION - 3RD COLUMN=PERCENTAGE



Should chapters be required to contact members who miss 3 meetings in a row?

YES		137	44%
NO		170	55%
		Total	307 100%

Do you feel THAT it is the responsibility of OMEGA over-all and each chapter individually to work hard to retain its members?

YES		231	76%
NO		69	24%
		Total	301 100%

Do you consider RETENTION to be an important issue?

Not important		0	0%
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Moderately important		114	35%
Very important		214	65%
		Total	328
			100%

How would you rate the practice of WRECKING as a detriment to 9 th District Retention			
None		0	0%
Low		04	7%
Moderate		18	38%
High		63	55%
		Total	279
			100%

*These numbers speak for themselves.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A. Have continued to effectively use the previously designed and implemented improvement tips and initiatives such as the District Retention Survey, The Retention Improvement Tips Website Segment, The 15 Commandments Of Good Omega Brotherhood, The NEO Payment Alert, The Undergrad Advisor Initiative, The Undergrad Relocation Form, The Graduating Senior Initiative, The Retention Chapter of the Year Award, The Membership Friendly Payment Reminder etc. to improve our district’s performance. These valuable tools are now on the www.mightyninth.org website for our membership’s convenience.
- B. **Have continued to incorporate the Internet into our district retention improvement strategy by finding innovative ways to utilize the www.mightyninth.org district website.** Numerous retention improvement tools, forms and initiatives have now been placed on the website for easy access by our chapters.
- C. **Continued to promote the undergrad Advisor procedure/policy** that involves getting Advisors to play more of a role in encouraging undergrad brothers to immediately go into graduate chapters after their departure from college. This procedure called for the contact, and tracking of both prior and current departing undergrads by all Advisors throughout our district. We also developed a relocation and tracking form to be used by all under grad Advisors. It is available on the mightyninth.org web site.
- D. Have continued to effectively utilize and circulate “**The 15 Commandments Of Good OMEGA Brotherhood**” Initiative to help change our mindset about each other. I believe improvement here will also have immediate significant positive impact on our retention performance. This document has been and will continue to be distributed district wide.
- E. **Continued to circulate and** promote the effective use of a new abbreviated Retention Survey that was developed to identify a wide variety of issues and allow for constructive input and/or feedback from our membership. Feedback from the surveys and Focus groups have been used to develop initiatives and feedback



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vehicles for our chapters in an effort to improve the district's over-all performance in the area of retention. This survey is now on the mighty ninth District website.

- F. **Designed Focus Group Session formats and guidelines** and made them available to our chapters via the Internet Website in the Retention Improvement Tip Segment.
- G. Have continued to send comprehensive Retention improvement tips COMPILED FROM OUR SURVEY RESULTS AND MEMBER FEEDBACK to state representatives for dissemination throughout the district.
- H. Have continued to pass out Retention improving tips etc. at district meets etc to raise awareness and improve district wide performance.

Retention Goals and Objectives for FY 07-08

- Will make available a list of every brother that has been a member of any chapter in the last 10 years in the Ninth District to each chapter. This effort would have a dual purpose in that it will also improve reclamation as well as retention. This list will provide the date of initiation, the last date the brother was financial in a particular chapter and address and vital other contact information such as telephone numbers and email addresses, if available. (**This information will be provided to any member of the District council, all Chapter Basilei, district and chapter level Retention and reclamation Chairmen and /or their representatives.)
- Will continue to forward un-financial members list to state reps, the District Reclamation and Retention chairmen and all district officers as well to in achieving significant improvement..
- Will design more effective retention tracking forms and make them available to all state representatives, chapters, and retention chairmen. Old forms are now available on the www.mightyninth.org web site. For use, until the new forms are forthcoming.
- We will continue to gather and update information we receive from International Headquarters and distribute it throughout the Ninth District.
- Put more focus at the chapter level on the retention of our newer brothers whose three-year advance payment expires each year.
- Find even more effective methods to improving the retention of graduating senior, undergraduate brothers and finding better ways to get them into graduate chapters immediately after graduation.
- Find even better ways to improve the over-all mindset of all brothers in the 9th District where retention is concerned so that retention can be given a higher priority and taken more seriously at the chapter level.

Retention Improvement Recommendations for FY 07-08

- The Ninth District should continue to recognize chapters and brothers as in the new Award & Recognition district meeting breakfast setting and with district wide Retention Chapter of the Year awards.
- The Ninth District should continue its newly established practice of giving one hundred dollar scholarship initiatives to our graduating seniors **who join graduate chapters** within the first two years of leaving college.
- The Ninth District should continue to implement a dual membership policy for undergraduate members. This process would allow undergraduates to be a member of a graduate chapter (preferably in their hometown or in an area where they plan to relocate after leaving college). This will slow the attrition rate and foster greater relationships and understanding between grads and undergraduates.



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- The Retention Committee is asking that members provide more recommendations and constructive input to the retention committee. This can be done via the www.mightyninth.org website Retention Segment.
- **Each chapter Basileus should immediately establishes a Chapter Retention Chairman in their chapter, if they do not already have one.** In some instances the chapter Retention person and Reclamation person are one in the same. We ask that our Basilei now separate these two functions and choose a person for each duty.

CONCERNS:

My concern is that RETENTION is still not being given the priority it needs by many of our chapters. Our Basilei are the key to immediate success in this critically important area. They also have the most to gain or lose. My committee has placed numerous improvement tools and developed several improvement initiatives on the web site. Many of the improvement aids that are currently being used across the nation were developed by the 9th District retention. So, even as we strive to develop even more innovations for use by our district chapter, it is very important to note that **no tools will be effective, if the intended user will not use them.** I ask that all Basilei go to the web site and use the various retention improvement tools that we have made available for them. Additionally, we must constantly improve and reinforce the mindset of our chapters; “**retention**” should be on all meetings agenda. Chapter surveys and/or frank discussions on how to improve chapter retention should be ongoing in every chapter. We will need to make certain that retention is being given the priority it needs by many of our poor performing chapters in order to achieve the constant improvements we seek and need.

During this period it was discussed whether or not to reprimand or penalize chapters with retention performance over a time frame that consistently falls below fifty percent. This possibility has not gone beyond the discussion phase. While I am not yet an advocate of taking such action against consistently poor performing chapters, I do feel at some point the District may need to seriously consider innovative alternative methods to demonstrate that the district is serious where retention improvement is concerned. We have currently chosen to stimulate improvement by awarding positive performance (ie: the new Award Recognition breakfast at the 71st District meeting) with the hope that consistently poor performing chapters will be motivated to improve their performance.

I also recommend that each chapter Basileus be asked to IMMEDIATELY establish a Chapter Retention Chairman in their chapter, if they do not already have one. Brother DR and Vice DR, I need your assistance as well in personally asking that our Basilei move forward on this repeated request. In some instances the chapter Retention person and Reclamation person are one in the same. We ask that our Basilei now separate these two functions and choose a person for each duty. of these duties, and, as a direct result, enable each area to have more accountability and perform at the optimum. This action, the selection of a Chapter Retention Chairman, will not only support and significantly amplify our district’s retention efforts, but also, more importantly for the chapters, serve to better help them prosper and grow. Please ask that they **send their person’s name to me via email. My email address is swalos@aol.com.** I also need for their retention person to stay in regular contact with me to advise me of their progress so that we can all be on the same page and I can let him know what is going on across the district and internationally where retention is concerned. **WE WILL BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE WORKING AS A TEAM THAN WORKING INDIVIDUALLY.**

I will continue to design and provide retention improving tips that our district can use. **However, as stated previously, no tools will be effective, if the intended user will not use them.** Additionally, to constantly improve



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and reinforce the mindset of our chapters, this subject (retention) should be on all meeting agenda. Given its extreme critical importance, RETENTION must be a constant focus at all chapter and district meetings.

In conclusion, Retention, Reclamation and Recruitment have been identified as crucial, critical success factors for our beloved fraternity. These three critical variables are the lifeblood of our fraternity. RETENTION, IN MY VIEW, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE THREE BECAUSE WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT STATISTICAL GAINS IN OUR MEMBERSHIP, Or have consistent District progress IF WE CONTINUE TO BLEED TO DEATH BY THE LOSS OF OUR MEMBERSHIP. As stated earlier, it does no good to recruit and reclaim brothers, if those very same brothers are slipping away out of the back door and leaving our fraternity. Consistent good retention performance is the key to greatness and long lasting success for THE MIGHTY, MIGHTY 9TH DISTRICT. I believe we can accomplish this goal where retention is concerned in the mighty ninth District,

Vernon <Bop Swalos> Weakley
FALL 69, YE
The 9th District Retention Chairman