

7 Habits of Highly Effective House Corporations

Adapted with permission from the Fraternity Management Group

1. Operate Like A Business

- Alumni/ae Leadership
 - Alumni/ae and Parent Relations programs in place
 - Recruit leaders who possess a passion for the chapter
 - Follow a specific plan for volunteer identification, recruitment, training, and recognition
 - Identify 2-3 core leaders and surround them with others
 - Invest in education
 - Identify those with a “thick skin”
 - Ensure that everyone is having fun and is recognized
- Reporting
 - Incorporate
 - File annual report
 - File other tax reports
- Property Management
 - Establish a budget
 - Decide if professional and/or volunteer management is needed for: chapter finances, alumni/ae chapter and house corporation finances and property maintenance
 - Ensure that a professional or volunteer makes inspections weekly
 - Ensure that the house corporation property manager and undergraduate house manager speak weekly
 - Meet with the chapter as a whole at the beginning of each semester
 - Utilize an online maintenance form
 - Follow move-in and move-out procedures
 - Enlist a Resident Advisor, if possible
 - Implement a 5-Year Master Plan
 - Budget and ensure you complete maintenance every holiday and/or summer
 - Hold the chapter accountable for cleanliness and damage
 - Use security cameras (it’s controversial, but it works)
- Master Lease and House Rules
 - Ensure that you post and distribute rules for use of the house
 - Follow a master lease that includes fees, rules, etc.
 - Require the chapter to use housing/member contracts
 - Rules need to be posted in the lobby, in members’ rooms, on the website, emailed to members and parents, and attached to member leases
 - Discuss with the chapter each semester
- Meet on a Quarterly Basis
 - Set annual meeting schedule and promote via email, newsletter, and website
 - Conduct meetings in different markets (top 2-4 markets where your alumni/ae live)

- Invite alumni/ae and parents in the market you are meeting to a reception (this will cultivate them and possibly identify new volunteers)
- Recruit New Volunteers Every Few Years
 - Identify sharp undergraduate leaders who are graduating and recruit them to your board
 - Establish a volunteer recruitment committee focused on recruiting a few more volunteers
 - Conduct an interest/involvement survey
- Follow One- and Five-Year Master Plans and Budget
 - Involve advisors, house corporation members, parents and undergraduates in developing and updating 1-Year and 5-Year plans every year
 - Produce an annual budget
 - Focus on alumni/ae and parent relations, finances, fundraising, land, facility, and volunteers
- Resources On Your Website
 - Everything you do should go on the website (public and private areas)
 - Educate all alumni/ae and undergraduate leaders on where resources are
 - Review and update annually
- Beat Your Competition
 - Your philosophy must be: “How can we remain competitive not just today, but 10-15 years from now?”
 - What can you provide that is better than apartments, dorms and other fraternity/sorority facilities?
- Open Communication
 - Stay involved with University house corporation committees and your national house corporation, if
 - available or appropriate
 - House Corporation officers communicate with each other regularly
 - House manager and property manager communicate weekly
 - Require the chapter to provide monthly accounting reports to the board
 - House Corporation update email to all board members monthly and all alumni/ae and parents
 - annually
 - House Corporation meets at least quarterly
 - Every term or quarterly meeting with entire chapter and officers
- Have Fun!
 - Volunteers join to be around others they enjoy – remember that!

2. Execute Master and Individual Leases

- Officers sign for chapter use each year in March/April (house rules attached)
- Chapter secures signed leases by all members (renters, meal plan, and dues)

3. Research, Charge Market Rent, and Collect it

- Research rent fees on apartments, houses, dorms and other fraternities/sororities every 1-2 years
- Ensure that the chapter understands why you have set rent at the level you have
- Set the rent and collect 100% (use professionals as needed)
- Bill up-front and provide a discount and, for those who cannot pay in-full, use payment plans

4. Establish A Maintenance Reserve Fund

- Budget to put away no less than 5-10% of your annual revenues
- Complete a Life-Use Assessment of your facility to help set an appropriate budget
- Consider adding an undergraduate building fee

5. Reduce the Debt and Fundraise

- Do not let your debt get out of control
- Rule of thumb for long-term debt is no more than \$5,000 to \$10,000 per bed
- Conduct an annual fundraising drives, soliciting donations from alumni/ae and parents
- Complete a major fundraising campaign every 20-25 years

6. Fill the House

- Do whatever it takes to keep the facility at least 90% full
- Have the chapter incorporate a point system for move-in and move-out priority

7. Develop a Sense of “Ownership” In The Undergraduates

- Invite chapter officers to attend all board meetings
- Recruit officers to help the House Corporation set the rent and rules
- Have fun with the undergraduates with an annual meeting trip

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For more information, about ADT, contact: John Pine National Account Manager

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- Water monitoring system
- Tracks unusual water usage
- Monitors temperature in the facility
- Supports remote volunteers and management

FPMA and RSUI Indemnity believe this technology has the ability to significantly reduce claim costs associated with plumbing system failures. To encourage members to install the system, Holmes Murphy has partnered with PipeBurst Pro and Sentinel Hydrosolutions to extend an enhanced discount on your premium.

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If you would like additional information on the PipeBurst Pro product, please contact Bob Hearn, VP Sales US, Total Leak Concepts | 678-300-2664. | bhearn@totalleak.com



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ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Our thanks to Pennington & Co. for this information

We must strengthen our volunteer boards.

The number one reason why people give and volunteer is because they were asked! In asking someone to give of their time, we take the same approach as soliciting someone for a major financial gift. To be successful, be specific on why you need them to volunteer. Share a volunteer job description that includes time commitment and the impact they can make through giving their time.

Use technology to make volunteering easy.

No longer do we have to worry about finding volunteers who live within a 50-mile radius of the campus. Over the last year, volunteers from all generations have embraced technology and enjoyed connecting using video conferencing platforms like Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams. This technology has made it easier for alumni to get involved regardless of their location and age.

HMFP RESOURCES

[Winter Break Checklist](#)

[Summer Break Checklist](#)

[Workers' Compensation Guide](#)

[Contractor Checklist](#)

[Crime Prevention Checklist](#)

[What Do I Do For A Property Loss?](#)



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