



Big Brother/Little Brother Program

Materials: none

The Task: The Big Brother is a very important part of the new member education program. Regardless of what name your chapter uses for these brothers, the goals of the program are the same.

The relationship between a Big Brother and a Little Brother often lasts much longer than the orientation period. It becomes meaningful to them during both undergraduate and graduate years. The Big Brother should not only see that his Little Brother is initiated, but that he also enjoys a strong collegiate experience and receives his degree.

The brothers in the chapter who are not Big Brothers also have a very important responsibility. New member education is the concern of the entire chapter, not only the New Member Educator, his committee, and the Big Brothers. Every member should have an interest in every new member.

Selection Process:

The selection process for Big Brothers should not be hasty or random. The Big Brother program and its full intent should be reviewed during the first week of the program. After a full understanding and a conscious decision, Big Brother selection should take place. Each new member should list his first three preferences for Big Brother. The New Member Educator and his committee will match the Big Brothers with Little Brothers using proper judgment. Prior to the Big Brother announcement, all members selected to be Big Brothers should be asked if they are willing to participate.

There are a number of criteria which should be taken into account in the selection process. These criteria should be reviewed with the new members prior to their listing of Big Brother preferences. These criteria should also be used by the New Member Educator and his committee during the matching process. Use the following as a guide in formulating your own list:

Academics: The same or similar majors or curriculums can be matched in order to help foster a relationship which will allow the Big Brother to assist the Little Brother in his studies. It is important to select Big Brothers who will have a positive influence academically on the new members. A minimum grade point average for Big Brothers should be established.

Dependability: Strong role models with the proper attitude should be selected for the Big Brother positions. Poor and negative attitudes have a strong possibility of being transferred to Little Brothers.

Personality: Big Brothers and Little Brothers should have complementing personalities. Communication, style, and sense of humor should be matched.

Graduation date: Members who are expecting to graduate in the coming few months should not be allowed to be Big Brothers as this would not allow for the proper amount of exposure to the Big Brother program.



Interests: Similar hobbies should be used as a criterion, as they can automatically stimulate a strong friendship.

Hometown: Brothers and new members from the same hometown or who are currently very good friends should not be matched. The Big Brother program is designed to create new friendships.

Responsibilities

In order to make the Big Brother an effective part of the program, they must have specific responsibilities. They should be written and distributed to the Big Brothers for their reference and use. The following is a list of expectations and responsibilities which serve as a guide in helping you develop your own list.

A Big Brother should...

- Be in good standing with the chapter (have a zero account balance).
- Be at or above the all-men's grade point average.
- Attend all new member meetings with his Little Brother.
- Serve as a positive role model for his Little Brother.
- Have similar fraternal and personal interests.
- Monitor academic performance.
- Assist in the Little Brother's social adjustment.
- Establish a relationship with the parents of the Little Brother through letters and telephone calls.
- Act as a sounding board when needed.
- Give introduction and explanation of chapter customs.
- Hold weekly meetings with the Little Brother.
- Expect his Little Brother to perform the responsibilities listed below.
- Work in close cooperation with the new member educator.

A Little Brother should...

- Meet with his Big Brother at least once each week.
- Not select a best friend, but an ideal person to emulate.
- Demand continual involvement from his Big Brother.
- Discuss any difficulties and problems with his Big Brother.
- Use his Big Brother as a link for fraternal, academic, and social issues.
- Expect his Big Brother to perform the responsibilities listed above.

Source: p. 33-34 The Fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta, Handbook for Pledge Education: A Fraternal Approach to Pledge Education