

Retreat Planning Guide.

Throughout this document we will outline, topics to consider, folks to include, and key items to consider while planning a retreat.

Re-treat (verb): *change one's decisions, plans or attitude as a result of criticism from others.*

While there are many definitions for the actual word; this felt fitting for two reasons. First, it is a verb, it shows action. As we plan a retreat it should be focused on actions, next steps, pivots, movement to a better future. Second, the line “as a result of criticism from others” a quick google search will provide all you need in this department; however, this should fuel your council planning time.

It is your time, with your council and community to come together and collectively begin to show action and change.

CHOSING A TOPIC

What do you want to gain from this experience? What do you want IFC executives and chapter presidents to leave with?

- Be specific, at time the concerns in our communities seem to outweigh the items to celebrate. Being specific allows for attendees to know why they are attending and what their time will be spent doing.
- Be clear, don't waste people's time.
- Ask attendees their thoughts/needs prior to the retreat. What do they want to see, what do they want to get out of their time together? What topics are important to the community?
- Deliver a clear plan on how their time will be spent – ahead of time.

CHOSING A SPACE OR LOCATION

Environment matters. There is something to be said to pack up and leave campus for a day or two. A different environment fuels creativity and encourages relationship building.

- Know your budget – if money is tight, consider an alumni or athletic department spaces on campus or at someone's home. Or maybe everyone is willing to chip in some money for a nice meal together after the formal work is complete. If there are dedicated funds, consider a hotel meeting room, Airbnb, or co-working space to mix things up.
- Think Maslow's hierarchy of needs – plan for sleeping, plan for food/snacks/drinks, plan for retreat materials; pens, paper, chart paper, post-its, print offs of documents, etc.

ATTENDEES AND SPEAKERS

Adequate planning needs to happen – i.e. calendar invites more than 2 weeks in advance. As the IFC and chapter presidents think through needs and topics, who else do you need in the space and when should they be there? Things to consider as you build your guest list.

- Who to ask? Fraternity and Sorority Advisor, Student Conduct, NIC Staff, Chief of Police, Alumni IFC President, etc.
- Check on technology capabilities for the space, teleconference could be a great option to include the right folks within the budget and time.
- While each of these stakeholders is important, there is value to time as student-leaders. Another option would be for each of these critical partners to be included in the planning and creation portion, but the time together is dedicated to peer to peer time and realignment.

ROLES

The IFC President should lead the planning and development. Be sure to communicate ahead of time to speakers and other council members who will lead portions of the retreat. This will allow for adequate prep and good content to be delivered.

BREAKS

Be sure to factor in downtime. Whether it is 10 or 30-minute breaks, a lot of the “secret sauce” of retreats happens during the unprogrammed time.

TEAMBUILDERS AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Check out **THIS** resource to review different teambuilders to build into the time together. Teambuilders are helpful to create a level playing field and help folks begin to build relationships across chapters.
- Relationship building and trust building should be woven throughout the time together. Change is rooted in relationships and trust. Retreats are a great time to lead with vulnerability, discuss fears and concerns, and find community among peers.

FEEDBACK

Much like in the planning process of asking the IFC and chapter presidents what they wanted and needed. Time for feedback and surveying the attendees is critical. Feedback allows for improvement for next year.

- Consider a survey, one that can be distributed before the retreat is over to ensure they take the time to complete.
- Share the results with your community. The more transparent the IFC is, the more trust and confidence is instilled in all that the council will do.

Advancing fraternity.

The mission of an Interfraternity Council (IFC) is to foster a healthy and vibrant fraternity community on campus and provide interfraternal leadership and positive change. nicfraternity.org/ifcsop

