

Training for Leadership: It's a Fact, not Fiction

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How do leaders become leaders? There are many complex responses to the question. Perspectives on leadership have outlined many concepts regarding how one becomes a leader. Some perspectives assert leaders are simply born with all the qualifications to be a leader. Others maintain individuals become leaders when they are given a title or denoted in some way that they are in charge. Still other perspectives posit anyone can be a leader if given the tools and experience matched with personality characteristics. These characteristics focus on strong values, confidence, desire to influence, and the ability to work well with others. If this perspective is true, providing training, coaching, and experiential learning coupled with personality characteristics can help aid an individual to become an effective leader. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. follows this philosophy by providing training for their best and brightest undergraduates to prepare them for leadership roles in and outside of the fraternity. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. has a fundamental belief in the philosophy of training for leadership. The organization focuses upon preparing any brother of the Fraternity for the demands of leadership. Finding time to train and provide the structure for optimal learning is a challenge and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. has developed an approach which challenges, celebrates, and cultivates its undergraduates.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. began a leadership training program 10 years ago with the focus of providing experiential learning, balanced between skills necessary to be successful in college and the corporate world, and fostering the need to give back to the community. The Fraternity charged two brothers, Jwyanza Nuriddin and Kevin W. Bailey, with the organization and development of this institute. Brother Nuriddin is the Director of the Institute, while Brother Bailey serves as the Dean of Curriculum. These brothers are the cornerstones of the institute and have been involved since its inception.

The Fraternity established a partnership with General Electric (GE) Company. Together, the two organizations focus on the growth of African American male leaders. The best and brightest undergraduates are invited to apply to participate in this intense training. GE assists in the cultivation and maturation of these young men, some of which gain opportunities for internships and employment with GE.

The Undergraduate Leadership Institute is a highly structured and intense leadership experience designed to increase undergraduate leadership in multiple contexts - in the fraternity, on campus, and/or in their communities. The program focuses on the following core concepts:

1. Learning ways to improve one's chapter;
2. Networking and fellowship with Fraternity leaders and undergraduate brothers;
3. Understanding and appreciating leadership styles similar to and different from one's own;
4. Engaging in meaningful dialogue about the concept of leadership in the 21st century;
5. Developing skills related to managing one's "brand" and career;
6. Learning about career opportunities at the corporate world.

Through the teaching of these concepts, participants gain a vast understanding of leadership that transforms them to be great leaders which lead their respective chapters to meet and surpass the goals and objectives of the Fraternity. This is accomplished through



classroom instruction, small and large group discussion, experiential learning, and one-on-one coaching. The groups of undergraduates are broken into chapters and connect in these smaller groups, which create bonds lasting far beyond the end of the leadership institute. Alumni from the Fraternity are asked to assist in the learning of the undergraduates by participating as guest speakers, working as chapter advisors, or being engaged as the leadership team managing all aspects of the Institute.

One of the core aspects of this institute is to bring many undergraduates from across the Fraternity together to share thoughts, ideas, and establish relationships to move the Fraternity forward. As the Grand Polemarch William "Randy" Bates, Jr. Esq. stated, "There is no greater opportunity that an undergraduate Kappa man has, than to spend quality time with collegiate brothers from chapters throughout Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity." Bringing together different points of view and perspectives provides the rich learning opportunities and growth to broaden these undergraduate minds. This allows them to incorporate new ways of thinking while challenging them to identify their own blind spots.

This program has trained over 300 undergraduates who have become Kappa Fellows. Undergraduates find their experience invaluable. For Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., the philosophy of training men for leadership proves factual. The Undergraduate Leadership Institute provides training which goes far beyond what is learned in classrooms. Many Kappa Fellows leave this experience changed and demonstrating their newly obtained level of maturity gained from attending this program.