

A Pep Talk To Fraternity/Sorority Advisors

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Happy National Advisor Appreciation Month! I extend a great THANK YOU to all those who serve in this crucial leadership position for all fraternal organizations. It is not an easy job to do, and often times the work we do goes unnoticed. From volunteering your time assisting with recruitment events, to late night executive board meetings, to difficult conversations with members, advisors play an essential role in the operations of our organizations. As an advisor for the last five years, I truly appreciate all the lessons learned in how to be a better leader for my community and a better sibling for my fraternal peers. Kid President's wise words give me the perfect foundation to share these lessons with you.

In order to build a solid leadership in the organizations I advise, I keep updated on national fraternity/sorority community trends, and the personal and social interests of my members. I utilize social media in my work to help empower and motivate students, from utilizing BuzzFeed videos in my curriculum to celebratory shout outs on Instagram after a successful program. Pop culture references give me an outlet to teach members about what is going on in the world. This is one of the primary reasons why I enjoy YouTube sensation Kid President. His joyful and genuine nature reminds me of the kind of leader and advisor I wish to be. I share with you my inspiration from 10-year-old Robby Novak's video "A Pep Talk from Kid President" on how to be a better advisor—because we all need a pep talk:

"Life is not a game, people. Life isn't a cereal, either. (Well, it is a cereal.) And if life is a game, are we on the same team? I mean really, right? I'm on your team; be on my team."

I have been fortunate to work with other advisors who have provided me with guidance and support, while demonstrating compassion and patience. I found this mentorship the most valuable tool I could receive as a young advisor. Reflect on why you felt the call to serve your organization. It could be because you wanted to give back to your community. Maybe it was to provide a better sense of belonging for younger members. Whatever the reason may be, it takes many people with different talents to make a great team. We should celebrate the talents we possess and the talents of others, so we can effectively identify which spaces and situations those talents might be maximized. Kid President encourages us to learn from each other because together we can be more AWESOME!

"This is life, people. You got air coming through your nose; you got a heartbeat. That means it's time to do something!"

As the landscape for fraternity and sorority life continues to evolve, it is important for advisors to continue to educate themselves on current national and global events and their impact on our members. While I understand we cannot force our members to care about certain social issues, we have a duty and a responsibility to build the future leaders of tomorrow. This means engaging in difficult conversations and challenging others to see the world with multiple lenses. One way to open the door for this is by connecting your members to their campus and greater community. Stay informed of events happening at the institution you are serving at. Encourage your members to attend lectures, workshops, and events exposing them to new ideas and perspectives. Let's work together to set the stage for meaningful teachable moments to flourish.

"Get a better dream, and keep going, keep going, keep going, keep going."

When I first began advising, the journey was not easy. I had never advised a sorority before or even served in a major leadership role with my chapter as a collegian. There were days I felt inadequate because I did not have the answers, or did not know how to manage certain situations, or made a

mistake on something. There are many days we are going to make mistakes as advisors: paperwork we did not review closely enough, questions we forgot to ask, and outreach we did not do. It happens to all of us! However, don't let that discourage you from taking the leap again. You live. You listen. You learn and try again. Practice takes time and patience. As Kid President points out, if Michael Jordan had quit in his basketball journey to the NBA, he would have never made *Space Jam* (and I, too, love *Space Jam*).

“What will be your Space Jam? What will you create that will make the world awesome? ...This is your time. This is my time. This is our time.”

Advisors hold a very special position within the executive board of the chapter. You bring a unique lens to the group in building the leadership of your chapter, and in turn YOU will serve as their main example of how to do so. They will be observing how you treat others, how you engage with your organization's members, and how you navigate challenging situations. But most of all, your members are going to observe what lifelong membership in your organization looks like. Your service is the legacy you leave behind. So give your members a reason to dance, and they will continue to build a better world for everyone.

Advisors, keep advising. You have just been pep-talked!