



Chapter Retreat Planning Guidelines

Chapter retreat is a scheduled, one-time event per academic year that sets aside purposeful time for all members to come together as a chapter. Retreat allows members to:

- Develop the bonds of sisterhood and friendship.
- Renew their commitment to Delta Gamma.
- Work on chapter goals set by the chapter management team (CMT).

Chapter retreat is also a time to enjoy one another, have fun and celebrate the finest women's Fraternity in North America, Delta Gamma!

WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DO I PLAN A CHAPTER RETREAT?

When do I host it?

- Chapter retreat may take place during the fall or spring semester, but should occur before spring break.
- Chapters with deferred recruitment may wish to schedule the retreat in the fall and incorporate a Recruitment Preparation Workshop.
- Chapters with fall recruitment may wish to schedule their retreat early spring semester or in the winter term if fall semester is over programmed.
- The retreat should be a minimum of 4-6 hours. Chapter retreats do not have to be overnight.

Where do we go?

- Ideally chapter retreat is held at a location where members can get away from everyday distractions and focus on Delta Gamma.
- Consider reaching out to area alumnae for assistance with booking local venues. Many times local alumnae can help the chapter locate and book space for a retreat.
- If the event is held off campus, an Event Guideline should be completed and approved by the ATC.
- Whatever venue is chosen, chapter leadership needs to ensure the space allows for all members to be together and meet the purpose of chapter retreat.

How do I start planning?

The vp: programming and the programming crew plan chapter retreat with input from CMT and using the chapter goals as reference. Before vp: programming starts planning, consider asking for chapter feedback on previous retreats through a survey.

- **All about that Theme!** Choose a theme you can center the retreat around in the form of nametags, decorations, handouts, names of activities, music and food. A little creativity can go a long way.
- **Utilize your crew.** Make sure the vp: programming is not the only one doing the work. Even though she may be able to do the entire retreat by herself, it doesn't mean she should. Figure out what the crew's strengths are and plan tasks accordingly.
- **"You are cordially invited."** Consider making or sending e-invitations to chapter members. Invitations help break down the stigma that chapter retreats are boring requirements. Keep in mind chapter leadership can set the tone by saying, "You are invited," rather than saying, "You have to be there at 8 a.m."

Prepare a three-part agenda that includes:

1. **Introduction** – Give an overview of the agenda, purpose of retreat, and kick-off with an icebreaker.
2. **Core** – Plan activities that align with Article II and promote bonding.
3. **Conclusion** – Wrap up the time with a meaningful ritual.
 - a. **Tip: Plan.** As the agenda is developed, note the objective or hopeful outcome of each activity and time period expected. Do you have enough breaks? Is the agenda fun? Do you have different speakers and presenters?
 - b. **Tip: Balance.** Make sure more serious topics are being discussed, but don't forget to schedule breathers, snack breaks and phone breaks. This helps to break up the day and keep attention longer.

To meet the three purposes of the retreat, plan an agenda with activities fulfilling each major element:

✓ **Develop the bonds of sisterhood and friendship**

Incorporate activities to allow members to interact and get to know sisters they may not know very well. You will need to divide the chapter into smaller groups to facilitate. These activities may be done all throughout the retreat.

- **Tip: Plan the Groups.** Be strategic with selecting members for small discussion groups. Break-up member classes, established friend groups and chapter officers.

✓ **Renew commitment to Delta Gamma**

Rituals may be incorporated during the Introduction, Core and Conclusion, or all three!

- Consider a discussion on Article II, our purpose and core values, or break it down and explain the Oath of Friendship.
- In small groups, discuss what makes Delta Gamma special and unique. Allow time for members to reflect on their personal experiences and the individual legacies they hope to establish.
- Select a positive theme for a fireside. A retreat is an ideal time to hold a fireside. Consider starting off the fireside with sentence starters such as:
 - Hope is...
 - I've learned from Delta Gamma...
 - They didn't tell me on Bid Day...
 - Delta Gamma is...
- Consider focusing all core activities on Delta Gamma values and rituals if commitment to Delta Gamma is a chapter goal. Activities can include living our rituals in areas such as group living, respecting your sisters or values-based conversations during recruitment.

✓ **Work on chapter goals**

Select activities and programming to allow members to work toward overcoming challenges. If the retreat is held in January or February, CMT may wish to host a step of the [Article II Chapter Assessment](#).

- **Tip: Chapter retreat allows for all members to use their voice.** Consider using small groups to brainstorm solutions and action plans for chapter goals.

SAMPLE RETREAT AGENDA & SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

9:00 – 9:05 a.m.	Review agenda and purpose of retreat
9:05 – 9:20 a.m.	Icebreaker or Connection Activity Tip: Set the stage. Play music as the membership arrives and ask the programming crew or chapter leadership to stand at the door of the venue and welcome sisters as they arrive. Tip: No phone zone. Encourage all members to put their phones in a tub/basket. At breaks or at the end of retreat, select a phone from the container. The owner of the phone that gets pulled wins a prize. Tip: In the know. Keep everyone in the know by posting the agenda with times and breaks around the retreat space. Utilize large posters/sticky notes for posting the agenda as well as any discussion points that arise during the retreat.

Core Activities

9:25 – 10:10 a.m.	Activity #1
10:10 – 11:40 a.m.	Activity #2
11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.	Lunch Break
12:20 – 12:35 p.m.	Activity #3
12:35 – 1:35 p.m.	Activity #4
1:35 – 1:45 p.m.	Phone Break
1:45 – 2:15 p.m.	Activity #5

Tip: Refer to the [Calendar Planning Guide's Cable List](#) for activity/event suggestions. Examples of include, but are not limited to: Recruitment Preparation Workshop, fireside, Chapter Goals and Watchword Presentation, program to explore our ideals and standards/living our ritual, program on social awareness, program on our rituals/heritage, scholarship enrichment or [Anchors of Discovery](#).

Have you tried any of the following activities?

- **Life Map Experience.** Ask members to draw out their life using a timeline of 3-5 major life events/influential moments that have shaped the person they are today on a piece

of paper. Life maps can only include pictures, everyone is an artist. Can include accomplishments, life changing events, anything that the member finds important. In small groups, ask members to present their life map in 2-3 minutes. Life maps can connect people together as well offer a deeper understanding for what a sister experienced. Ask the group to reflect what connects them as Delta Gammas and what makes them unique.

- **Sister Speed Dating.** Ask members to form an outer circle and an inner circle. Members in the outer circle should be facing the members in the inner circle. Ask each member to line up with a member. The leader of the activity asks a question of the group. After question has been answered, the facilitator instructs the circles to turn opposite ways.
- **Letters to Me.** Ask chapter members to write a letter reflecting on their Delta Gamma experience. Ask members to address the envelope to themselves. Present the envelopes to the members at a later date. For graduating members, consider giving to them at a date on/around graduation.

Conclusion

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| 2:15 – 2:20 p.m. | Ask the director of rituals to host a ritual from Think Anchor Deep . |
| 2:20 – 2:40 p.m. | Courage Circle
<i>All members form a large circle and each participant shares a commitment she will make as a result of the retreat. Each sentence should begin with, "I have the courage to..."</i> |
| 2:40 -3:00 p.m. | Oath of Friendship and concluding ritual. |