Student Organization Leadership Consultant SOLC Shadow Experience

Luckson Omoaregba

University of Rhode Island

The retreat was for Chi-Omega, a sorority on campus. The retreat was held on Saturday November 2nd. There were about 80 Chi-O girls at the retreat, old members and new members were in attendance. The goals of this retreat were:

* Raising morale and spirit in the house
* Remind members of the importance of respect
* Increase Communication
* Bridge gap between Executive- Board and General Members

When planning for this retreat, the activities we did really needed to help the group have conversations that would help them get through their storming phase. During the retreat I felt like all the activities we choose, helped the group bond and speak on issues the women in Chi-O needed to have. When my partner and I had our group for the poster activity we were able to help the women of the sorority think about what the sorority offered and what they would add to the sorority. Since we had a mixture of new and old members in the room the group was able to see and hear perspectives and hear things from their sisters that they did not know. Although we had some distractions during the poster activity, thanks to a bee, my partner and I were able to help the members refocus and get back to the activity. When we all reconvened, each group from the break out sessions had to choose on speaker to talk about what went on in their group. One of the older members had been initially chosen to speak for our group, before she went up to present I suggested to her that since she would have no problem talking in front of her sisters, she should ask one of the newer girls who wasn’t so vocal during the poster activity. She agreed and presented with the newer girl, fortunately every group that presented their poster had a newer member paired up with an older member.

What also went well was the on the bus off the bus activity. They older members were really committed to the activity and were able to be as honest as possible with each other. During the de-brief the members were not hesitant to speak their mind. Everyone was respectful and for the most part adhered by the rules the group as a whole agreed on. Since one of their goals was to bridge the gap between executive members and general members we made sure the members discussed any issues or conflict that was going on between the leaders in the sorority and the members of the sorority. Based on observations the members took away a lot from the conversation. So much so that after the activity one of their members suggested they start having conversations more often. They discovered that airing out problems and issues is the best way for them to move past the storming stage they were in.

During ‘Teepee shuffle’ I was not able to de-brief as well as I would have wanted. I made a mistake of not looking over facilitation questions for that activity. I found myself struggling to connect the activity to their sorority. What I also thought could have gone better were the transitions from one activity to another. Last but not least the last activity we did not go so well. I felt it went too long and the instructions were not were not given very well.

Since this was my first time being involved with planning and executing a retreat, I learned that listening is the best way for any facilitator to get the best out of any retreat. During the de-brief for ‘On the Bus, Off the bus’ the conversation was really driven by the ladies in Chi-O. By just listening to them we were able to help the member have a deep meaningful conversation about the problems they were having.