

How to Give A Bid



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Extending a formal invitation for membership into a fraternity or sorority is a big deal with life-changing implications for the recipient. It should be treated that way. Chapters across North America give bids in about as many ways as there are chapters. Some campuses require the bid to come from the university or the council. Some chapters give their bid in a big group. Some chapters have an associated ritual. Some chapters just pass out bids like they're candy at Halloween.

Whatever your traditions or campus culture, do everything you can to follow these 5 Rules for Giving a Bid.

- 1. PERSONAL.** This moment is intimate. You're asking this person to join you in a lifelong vow of loyalty. You're asking this person to make a very big decision. There aren't many moments that will impact a person's life (especially during their college years) more than this one. The more personal the better. One-on-one, or a small group of members offering a thoughtful, personalized, caring invitation is best. Look one another in the eye. Offer a handshake or hug to physically commemorate the moment. Honor the emotion and gravity of this decision. Make it a memory that will last for a lifetime.
- 2. RESPECTFUL.** Save the partying and celebration for later. This is an opportunity to demonstrate the parts of fraternity/sorority that go beyond our ability to have a good time. Don't make a scene. Don't put pressure on the recipient. Don't corner them into saying yes. ***In fact, you absolutely shouldn't give a bid until you've "Pre-Closed" the person (see that free resource from Phired Up for more info).*** Make sure they've had a chance to air their concerns and talk through this decision.
- 3. SET EXPECTATIONS.** The tone and tenor of this moment will set really important and long-lasting expectations of membership for the recipient. Take the opportunity to clearly go through all of the things you expect from this new member, and all of the things they should expect from you. Talk about consequences of not following through on your commitments (what happens if they don't pay dues, don't come to meetings, choose risky behaviors, don't keep promises, etc.?) If you set clear expectations here, you'll always be able to hold one another accountable by saying, "Do you remember the conversation we had when we asked you to join?"
- 4. DIRECT ASK.** Don't beat around the bush. Don't be coy. Don't be shy. "We would like to formally invite you to join our organization. This is a 'bid' (or an official invitation for membership). We're excited to give this to you. Will you join us?"
- 5. CLEAR COMMITMENT.** Have them sign a membership contract. Have them sign an official bid. Give them a copy of their signed bid. Have them shake the hands of all the members present. Have them verbally repeat what they've committed to. Have them immediately complete university or inter/national organization paperwork. If they aren't ready to, make clear how long they have to make a decision and when you'll be meeting them to get a clear yes or no answer. Do any and all of these items, just make sure everyone has clarity on the new member's decision right then and there. Never say, "Let us know when you're ready." Your organization is too important for that.

Ideal Bid Conversation

SETTING: Restaurant. Private booth. Three members and one prospect. At least one of the members has a strong, trusting relationship with the prospect.

MEMBER: Thanks for coming to dinner with the three of us. It's been fun getting to know you over the past several weeks. We have an important question to ask you. Is it OK if we get kind of serious for a few minutes?

PROSPECT: Sure! I'm excited. Thanks for the conversation yesterday when you asked me if I had any concerns about joining. It felt good to be heard like that. No other chapter did that.

MEMBER: You're welcome. Well, I want to show you something. [Pulls bid out of pocket] This is a "bid." It is a formal invitation for membership into our organization. It's a really big deal. This one has your name on it. I'm going to give it to you in a minute, but before I do I want to make sure you fully understand what it means. Are you OK with that?

PROSPECT: Absolutely.

MEMBER: If you accept this bid by signing on the dotted line, you're making a promise to me, to all of our current members, and to all the members who have come before us all the way back to our founding. You're promising to strive everyday to live by our values (you don't have to be perfect, but you must try). You're promising to pay your dues on-time. You're promising to take a leadership position in our chapter and help us build the future of what we can become. You're promising to never embarrass us, yourself, or your family. You're promising to focus on your grades and be honest with us if you're ever having problems. You're promising to always treat our members, new members, and all other people with respect, dignity, kindness, and thoughtfulness. You promise to never haze a member, never let yourself or another member get themselves into a dangerous situation, and to never act irresponsibly, dangerously, or in a way that could jeopardize your personal health or the health of our organization. Do you understand all that?

PROSPECT: Yes. I do.

MEMBER: If I ever notice you breaking those promises, you need to know that I can personally kick you out of the organization... And if you ever notice me breaking those promises, you need to know that you can personally kick me out of the organization. Do you understand?

PROSPECT: Yes. I definitely do.

MEMBER: I remember the night I got my bid. I remember this conversation that the president of our chapter had with me. That night changed my life. It made me a better person. I hope tonight will do the same for you. I'm going to give you this formal bid now. I'd like you to sign it to make things official. And if you're ready to do that... [stands up; extends hand]... I'd like you to shake my hand because I couldn't be more excited to invite you into our organization. Will you join us?

Prospect & Member shake hands, hug it out, and then the prospect signs the paperwork.

About Us

Phired Up (along with TechniPhi) delivers **TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION,** and **STRATEGY** to help transform the way people join fraternities and sororities. Our team of passionate fraternity/sorority professionals are engineers of a growth system that makes fraternities and sororities safer, healthier, and stronger. We want to help every chapter and every potential member feel the impact of that system.

Want to learn more about how we can help your Organization, Community, or Chapter? Visit our website at phiredup.com or click on the link below.

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