

Notes for What is Kappa Omicron NU ?

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The Kappa Omicron Nu mission, empowered leaders, reflects the intention of the organization. The mission or outcome of the program and activities of the organization is an ambitious one; members are challenged to make this mission a life-long quest. The adjective, empowered, in this connection is defined as “focusing . . . energy in . . . [one’s] Circle of Influence. . . . It’s acting with integrity to create the environment in which we and others can develop character and competence and synergy (Covey, Merrill, & Merrill, 1994, p. 238). And the ultimate outcome of empowerment is a community “worthy of the best we humans have to offer” (Terry, 1993, p. 275).

Block (1987) refers to the essence of empowerment as enacting the vision. He further explains that definition with his insights that we must develop a personal vision of greatness and must balance autonomy and dependence. It takes courage, too.

Enacting the vision in organizations and groups is described by Nanus (1992): “A vision is little more than an empty dream until it is widely shared and accepted. Only then does it acquire the force necessary to change an organization and move it in the intended direction” (p. 134). He goes on to say that a vision to be achieved requires empowered people, appropriate organizational changes, and strategic thinking.

The danger in articulating empowerment as a mission is that the concept will not be supported with the kind and depth of education that will move it from a fad to a sustained behavior. The challenge is, therefore, to make leadership development a priority; Reflective Human Action (leadership theory) is part of the infrastructure of Kappa Omicron Nu, and program sessions are posted on the KON Web site for chapter use.

References:

- Block, P. (1987). *The empowered manager*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Covey, S. R., Merrill, A. R., & Merrill, R. R. (1994). *First things first*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Terry, R. (1993). *Authentic leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Kappa Omicron has a tradition of being more than a recognition society. A true honor society has greater expectations of stimulating intellectual development and leadership.

Scholar program grants are distributed to chapters every two years for local scholarships. New criteria have been developed for the 2003-2004 academic year. So, your chapter should expect to review the options and choose new criteria for your chapter awards. This will be discussed later.

The Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences, a new initiative in partnership with administrator groups in the human sciences, demonstrates our commitment to research. Our fellowships for master's and doctoral graduate work and our research grants continue that commitment. Those fellowships can be found by clicking on "fellowships and grants" on the KON Web site home page. Posters are also distributed each academic year to the chapters.

One of the least known benefits is the opportunity for preference in Federal job applications. Entry salary level two pay grades higher means at least a \$5,000 benefit. Each Federal job application asks for organizational memberships; you should list Kappa Omicron Nu and note that it is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies.

Perhaps you wonder why the mission of Kappa Omicron Nu is empowered leaders. New findings regarding leadership development are telling us that leadership skills are largely developed before beginning the career path. Development after that time relates to consolidation of strengths. If you have the desire for leadership in you career, you need to take advantage of the leadership opportunities in student organizations and of learning about leadership during your undergraduate program. Your career success in the future will depend more on lifelong learning, taking responsibility for your own learning, and your ability to provide leadership on the job and in related activities. Because of the fast pace of change, content knowledge held at graduation will no longer do for a lifetime. Further, leadership today is less dependent on designated leaders and is required by all members of a group—at work, in communities, and at home.

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Kappa Omicron Nu membership benefits continue during your professional career. The KON Web site and publications offer personal benefit as well as resources for use on the job and in related organizations. In many ways, all professionals are educators in a fundamental way. Members have used KON materials for training programs, for continuing education credits, for course credit in graduate programs, for programs in professional organizations, for organizational development processes. One example: an IBM trainer is using the Self-Managed Mentoring course as a basis for a corporate emphasis on mentoring.

Kappa Omicron Nu materials are focused on generic topics that serve all specializations, thus serving the leadership needs of professionals.

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As discussed earlier, the Undergraduate Research Initiative is a major new focus supported by about 30 Deans and Department Heads through the Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences. Students in all units may participate whether or not the institution has signed on as a partner. It is anticipated that chapters will collaborate with administrators in developing an institutional plan for expanding undergraduate research opportunities.

Earlier the Scholar Program was discussed as a benefit of chapter members. In order to make a greater impact as a national network, Kappa Omicron Nu will be focusing on four award initiatives: undergraduate or graduate research, service learning, excellence in writing, or leadership of a campus change project. Each chapter should review the options and communicate the criteria to National. Chapter grants will be distributed for the new award programs filed with National beginning in the 2003-2004 academic year.

Another new direction is the Required Program. Packaged program options will be posted on the Web for chapter selection. This initiative begins with the 2002-2003 academic year. Annual options will be communicated in the Spring for the next academic year. These programs have been selected in order to make an impact nationally and aid chapters in accountability for achieving the Kappa Omicron Nu mission. Chapters are not limited to the minimum content of the packaged program and are encouraged to enhance the topic, if desired.

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Send feedback to

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