

Jennifer S. Graber, EdD, APRN, PMHCNS, BC, Jennifer Saylor, PhD, APRN-BC, Jacqueline Fabricatore, BSN, RN, Pia Inguito, PhD, RN
University of Delaware, School of Nursing

Background

The Chapter Key Award, established in 1991, honors Sigma chapters that excel in chapter-related activities such as:

- Membership recruitment and retention
- Publicity and programming
- Professional and leadership development
- Local, national, and international collaboration

The Chapter Key Award is presented each biennium at Sigma's biennial convention.

Objectives

1. The learners will be able to identify best practices for chapter operations
2. The learner will be able to formulate a Strategic Plan to apply for the Key Award

Key Tip: Procedure Manual

- Incorporates members at all levels
- Reviewed annually by the Governance Committee
- Additions or revisions are made in collaboration with the responsible officer/ committee
- Guides Chapter in upholding Sigma's Strategic Plan and developing the Chapter Strategic Plan
- Assists chapter members in Key Award application
- Aligned with the Sigma International Presidential Call-To-Action



Important Key Tips

Establish a Board and Executive Committee that mirrors the members of Sigma on an international level

- Comprised of members at all levels of their career as well as from various settings including hospital administrators, bedside nurses, and nursing faculty at the university

Incorporate chapter operations outside of regular board meetings to cultivate creative visionary thinking through an annual retreat

- The retreat is a venue to engage members that are interested in becoming more involved with the Board or Executive Committee
- During this time the chapter reflects on accomplishments as well as future direction based on the Presidential Call To Action and the Key Award



Develop a Strategic Plan to help guide all activities for the chapter throughout the year

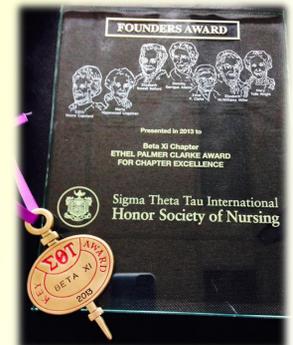
- As part of the Strategic Plan, the chapter can connect and collaborate with members and local partners to cultivate future leaders through informal and formal mentoring
- Focus on connecting with not only members, but also fellow nurses and partners to collaborate and share chapter and Sigma mission, opportunities, and accomplishments through meetings, events and technology
- Develop a sound operating system within the chapter to connect members and meet the criteria for the Key Award

Getting Started

Key Award application preparation takes planning and commitment from all chapter members and leaders. If members feel engaged, they are more likely to participate and give back to the chapter in a variety of ways.

Where to begin:

- Know the criteria – this can be found on Sigma's website
- Know the Presidential Call To Action
- Develop a Strategic Plan
- Assign parts of the Strategic Plan to members
- Set goals to incorporate the Presidential Call To Action into chapter activities (this will also help your chapter achieve the Chapter Excellence Awards)
- Ensure that the chapter is reaching annual goals with the Strategic Plan
- Review the plan at least annually – have members report back on their assignments
- Do not wait until the last minute: this should be an ongoing process



Conclusion

Developing effective chapter operations is crucial to catalyzing your chapter to the Key Award. Having a well defined policy and procedure manual and Strategic Plan are crucial steps toward achieving this prestigious award for your chapter. With dedication and hard work from the Board, Executive Committee, and members your chapter can attain the Key Award!