

Helpful Hints on Hybrid Meetings

Is your chapter struggling with the technology to handle hybrid meetings? The new rules allowing sisters to stay at home but still log into or call into a chapter meeting can keep housebound or traveling sisters active participants in chapter life. Here are some options to incorporate these sisters into the flow of a meeting.

1. Schedule a Zoom meeting - Sisters can log in "Brady Bunch" style to your meeting. This will require a laptop computer connected to the host sister's wifi account (or via a sister's cellular data hotspot). Try to position the laptop pointing it toward the president and far enough away from her to incorporate as much of the room as possible. Members will have to speak loudly to be heard by those online, and the president (or an assigned sister) will have to keep an eye on the laptop screen to see if an online sister is signalling to speak.
2. Use Facetime or a similar program - Start by assigning a "connection buddy" for each sister who cannot physically attend. This sister will then Facetime the at-home sister using their personal cell phones. The buddy can manipulate her cell phone so that the at-home sister can see each speaker, span the room, watch the president, and view the program. This method allows for more flexibility and may have improved sound.
3. Boost your technology
 - a. Does a chapter sister have a webcam? If so, mount it (or multiple cams) to capture as much of the room as possible so remote participants can see who is speaking. If possible, have a second webcam connect to focus on the president and speakers. Attach these webcams to individual laptops, sign each laptop into the Zoom meeting and "broadcast" what each webcam is recording.
 - b. Does a chapter sister have extra monitors? In addition to the main screen in the center, set up two additional large monitors — one on each side of the room — showing “life-size” panes of the remote sisters.
4. Plan ahead - Go over your technology needs with the hostess sister and the president to eliminate as many tech problems as you can before the meeting begins. It is highly recommended to have a specific sister assigned to ‘manage’ the equipment being used (either the VP or Tech Chair). The president should not be dealing with that while trying to conduct a meeting. Tweak your set-up as the year progresses and encourage feedback from remote sisters.

Things to keep in mind:

1. Audio quality - The microphones incorporated in your laptop may not be powerful enough to hear comments from around the room. If so, consider connecting a handheld microphone to the laptop and then have in-person sisters pass the microphone around the room as sisters speak. Be aware that this may require a very long microphone cord or will necessitate sisters approaching the

president's table to address the chapter. This will have to be balanced with current Covid restrictions as to social distancing and sanitizing of the microphone. Chapters might consider purchasing a wireless microphone/speaker device such as Jabra Speak's wireless speaker system. It acts as both a microphone and speaker, gives good quality audio, and can sit in the middle of the room. It does not need to be passed around. However, it can be 'pricey' (about \$150).

2. Consider how the video looks from the perspective of the at-home sisters - Try to position the Zoom laptop so that at-home sisters can see and hear as much as possible. Be open to changing its position during the meeting if necessary so that at-home sisters can see the speakers. From Facebook, we have learned of a chapter that puts the laptop that has the camera on a lazy susan - so they can easily 'swivel' the camera to whoever in the room is speaking. Using Facetime may make this perspective problem easier as the "connection buddy" can simply move the face of her phone to follow the action.

Please contact your NJ State Technology Committee if you need help or have any questions. We are here to help P.E.O. Bring Happiness to your chapter meetings.

NJ State Technology Committee

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