



P.E.O. for Life

*2013 Period of Instruction, Convention of Ohio State Chapter
Adapted from International Chapter Membership Team 2013*

Slide #1 (Title page)

At our preacceptance counseling, we were informed that P.E.O. is a lifetime commitment. Today, we are going to look at a guide for encouraging active participation from the time of initiation to Chapter Eternal.

Slide #2 (Quote from *Out of the Heart*)

P.E.O. is a sisterhood based upon the principles of friendship and loyalty. Our Founders created P.E.O. because they wanted to remain friends forever. P.E.O. is not just another club or women's group; it is a sisterhood in the truest sense of the word.

Listen to this quote, adapted from "Out of the Heart":
"With the passing of each year their friendship had deepened. It was dear to them and they wanted it to be a lasting thing...The logical solution was a society of their own, one which would commemorate their cherished friendship.

Slide #3 (Picture of seven Founders)

So, on January 21, 1869, in the music room of Main Hall, Iowa Wesleyan University, Mary Allen, Alice Bird, Hattie Briggs, Alice Coffin, Suela Pearson, Franc Roads and Ella Stewart organized P.E.O...."

It's clear our Founders intended P.E.O. membership to last a lifetime. But how do we strengthen friendships in our chapters so that members are more likely to remain active from the time they take their vows until the time they enter Chapter Eternal?

Slide #4 (List of steps)

There are simple steps we can follow to create value, strengthen friendships and accomplish the work of P.E.O.

- Choose new members carefully.
- Educate about P.E.O.
- Provide opportunities for members to develop close relationships.
- Love and support sisters when they cannot actively participate in chapter life.

Slide #5 (Choose new members carefully-baboon)

While it's important for our membership to grow, it's more important to extend invitations to women who share our values and support our philanthropic mission.

When we initiate women who understand what P.E.O. is and what we expect of them, they will be more likely to participate actively in chapter life. Let them know membership carries responsibilities—among them, attendance and participation, as well as rewards—lasting friendships and loyalty to each other.

A quote from a Guide for Organizing a New Chapter brochure sums up our invitation process perfectly:

“P.E.O. is not just another club; we do not merely add members, we choose sisters.”

Slide #6 (Public side of website)

Several resources are available to help you educate nonmembers. The names and locations of the following documents and brochures are listed on your handout for your convenience:

Did you know the public side of the **P.E.O. website** contains a lot of information for nonmembers? Share the address with nonmembers who want more information about P.E.O., but please remember our username and password are for members only.

Slide #7 (Brochures)

The **P.E.O. A Philanthropic Educational Organization** brochure is available from the Supply Department and is a great informational piece to give any nonmember who wants to know more about P.E.O.

The **Guide for When You Are Invited** brochure will answer many questions for women to whom you’ve extended an invitation. It is also available from the Supply Department.

Preacceptance counseling information is available in the P.E.O. **Counsel for Membership Booklet** in the president’s supplies or as a PowerPoint presentation in the Local Chapter Membership Committee Tool Box. Both versions have excellent suggestions

and guidelines for what to say and materials to share during your visit.

Slide #8 (Educate new sisters)

What happens in your chapter after you've initiated a new sister? **Postinitiation counseling** should take place before she attends her first meeting. A Guide for New Members states: "A group of members will guide you in learning about our traditions and customs as you become a fully participating member."

Our Sisterhood isn't complex, but it does have its own customs and traditions. **Assign a mentor** for her first three years so she has someone she can lean on. Encourage her to attend **convention** and perhaps pay for her convention expenses. Convention offers a wonderful way for new members to see "the big picture" of P.E.O. and all we do for women.

Resources to help you with this responsibility include the Guide for New Members Booklet, the P.E.O. Counsel for Membership Booklet and the Postinitiation PowerPoint Presentation found on the International website.

Slide #9 (Develop individual growth opportunities-giraffes)

When you are initiated into P.E.O., you become a member, but it takes a while to **become** a P.E.O.

A new member acquires what it means to **be** a P.E.O. through constant nurturing, getting to know her chapter sisters, and learning the correct P.E.O. procedures and terminology. These

are all valuable assets as she develops her strength of P.E.O. character.

Here are several ideas to help her in this process:

- **Involve her in the projects.** Our philanthropies and the opportunities they provide for women is an important reason for belonging to P.E.O. Friendship is the foundation of our organization but the projects are our work.
- **Encourage personal growth and leadership opportunities within P.E.O.** Share the workload. Each member should be involved in some way in the work of the chapter. A new member can enjoy participating in various committees, and with time, can become part of the chapter's leadership team. Throughout the life of a P.E.O., each member will find time to serve her chapter in various responsibilities, and she will help to keep her chapter viable and strong.
- **Make her time worthwhile, keep meetings brief and efficient.** This shows sisters that you value their time and allows for more informal interaction between members.

Slide #10 (Develop close relationships- animals)

Provide opportunities for members to develop close relationships. Results from our market research indicate that women value the friendships and support networks they form in P.E.O. the most. Members want to feel they belong and are a valued member of an organization of high caliber women.

The stronger the friendships between members in your chapter, the more likely members will be to participate actively and introduce their friends to P.E.O.

Slide #11 (Strengthen friendships)

Strengthen friendships.

- **Create opportunities to have fun together outside of chapter meetings.** Are there sisters who may enjoy hiking, needlework, reading books or playing golf together? Small interest groups can provide endless possibilities for sisters to get to know each other on a personal basis.
- **Look locally to find fun places to visit socially as a chapter,** such as museums, garden shops, antique stores or historic landmarks.
- **Consider inviting the other P.E.O. chapters in your area to attend your next social meeting or small group activity.** This gives members a chance to meet other P.E.O. sisters as well as creates familiarity for members needing to make lateral transfers.

Slide #12 (Healthy chapters-flowers)

Healthy chapters produce enthusiastic participating members. However, healthy chapters are like growing gardens -- they need to be tended to frequently. Everything has a season. Be aware of the changes occurring within your membership.

- **Does everyone feel like they belong?** Find ways to lovingly include all members in chapter activities. If they cannot attend meetings, look for ways to include them. Create an

environment of inclusion so everyone feels they are welcome and needed.

- **Is your chapter “too big”?** Is it difficult for your chapter to meet comfortably in members’ homes? According to our Constitution, a chapter shall not limit the number of members, so if you’ve answered “yes” to this question, it may be time to consider organizing a new P.E.O. chapter. Read how other sisters have organized new chapters in their communities in **Is My Chapter Too Big? When to Organize a New Chapter**, an article published in the 2012 Jan-Feb Record.
- **Take time each year to evaluate the health of your chapter.** Set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) and create an action plan to achieve these goals.
- Helpful **resources** to create value and strengthen friendships are listed on your handout. They include several documents in the Local Chapter Membership Committee Tool Box, such as: The **Small Interest Groups** document, the monthly **Hot Spot newsletter** and the step-by-step, scripted **Goal Setting** program.

Slide #13 (Support all sisters-generational pictures)

Support sisters when they cannot actively participate in chapter life. We all have times in our life when we are unable to participate. Maybe we work or go to school. We might be caring for young children or elderly parents. Perhaps our health prevents us from being active. Sisters who cannot participate give us an opportunity to put into practice the responsibility we pledged during her initiation ceremony. By staying connected

to our nonparticipating sisters, even in small ways, we make it easier to come back to active participation when the time is right.

Slide #14 (Support-yellow flowers on trellis)

So how can we support our nonparticipating sisters?

If sisters have moved, **help them find new P.E.O. homes** in their communities using the Notice of Members Moving form.

When family, health or work responsibilities prohibit active participation, **stay connected** through phone calls, newsletters and personal visits and provide help whenever possible. Keep members updated about these special sisters.

Sometimes a member cannot participate because her work or school schedule has changed. If her schedule has temporarily changed, support her through this life event. If it's something permanent, **lovingly encourage her to laterally transfer** to a chapter that meets at a more convenient day and time.

Be sensitive when assessing dues. If you know of a sister who may need help paying her dues, consider asking the chapter to pay them for her.

The following **resources**, listed on your handout, help you provide support for your nonparticipating sisters.

Resources in the Local Chapter Membership Committee Tool Box include:

How to Care for Nonparticipating Members PowerPoint and the **Notice of a Member Moving** form.

The **Guide for an Unaffiliate** and **Guide for a Lateral Transfer** are brochures available from the Supply Department for members who are unable to attend your chapter meetings.

Slide #15 (Once a P.E.O., always a P.E.O.)

We often say “once a P.E.O., always a P.E.O.” It’s nice to know that we belong to an organization that loves and supports us unconditionally from the moment we take our initiation vows. No matter what life’s circumstances we face, how far we move away, or how old we become, P.E.O. is a lifetime commitment.

Slide #16-25 (P.E.O. Creed)

The P.E.O. Creed was written by Effie Hoffman Rogers in 1889. It is a beautiful declaration of what we believe -- both about P.E.O. and each other as sisters. Would you please stand and join me in reciting it together?

***PAUSE – WAIT FOR ALL TO STAND THEN
GIVE ANNE SIGNAL***

Slide #17

I BELIEVE in P.E.O. and in all that it stands for, not alone in fact, but in act.

Slide #18

I BELIEVE in my sisters, in the honesty of their intentions, in the purity of their motives, in the integrity of their character, and in the loyalty of their friendship.

Slide #19

I BELIEVE in the sweetness and helpfulness of friendship, and in the joy of serving others.

Slide #20

I BELIEVE in the virtues Faith, Love, Purity, Justice, and Truth, and in the hope that lures us on.

Slide #21

I BELIEVE that life does not consist in the abundance of the material things we possess, but in the abundance of things we are and do.

Slide #22

I BELIEVE that it is within our power as P.E.O.s to help each other, that the rough places may be smooth, and the crooked places straight,

Slide #23

the burden less heavy and life a continual joy and blessing, ever increasing, growing richer and richer.

Slide #24

I BELIEVE in the present of our Sisterhood with its opportunities, in the future with its obligations, in the divine joy of living here and hereafter,

Slide #25

in the enlarged and ever enlarging sphere of usefulness that is opening up before us each year.

Slide #26 (P.E.O. for Life)

Thank you.