

Guide to Running for District Office

Northeast District of Tau Beta Sigma

Updated February 2017



I. Getting Started

One of the greatest opportunities that Tau Beta Sigma affords its membership is the chance to constantly be exposed to leadership opportunities. One of these opportunities is running for a District Office and giving back to the organization you have come to love. If you are reading through this packet that means that you have either already made the choice to run for Office, or are considering it at some point in your course of active membership. That is great! Being a District Officer and having the opportunity to serve our District and get involved on another level is a great experience.

This guide is designed to serve as a resource for all Sisters interested in running for Office. This document will inform you on what is required of you to run for Office, but it also gives recommendations, suggestions, and helpful tips while you seek to serve as a District Officer.

II. Choosing the Office

One of the first things to think about, once you have made the decision to run for District Office, is to decide what Office you should run for. One of the most important items is to consider the different responsibilities of each Office. Be sure that before you make your decision, you have a very concise understanding of the different Offices and their obligations. The Office you choose should reflect your background, experience, interest, and strengths. However, also keep in mind that just because you may not have a particularly large amount of experience in one area, that should not keep you from running for Office.

Steps to finding out about the different Offices:

- Ask current (or former) District Officers about their position
- Review the National Constitution and District Constitution
- Refer to the role and expectations of District Officers portion of this guide

III. District/National Requirements

Before you dive in head first, you need be aware of the constitutional requirements to running/becoming a District Officer. The following requirements come from the Tau Beta Sigma National Constitution and Northeast District Constitution, respectively:

- According to the National Constitution, a District Officer must:
 - Serve from convention to convention

- Be at least a sophomore student and an Active member of the Sorority in good standing at the time of election
- Have exceptional business or professional ability
- Be capable of representing the Sorority and District when called upon to do so
- Have the best interest of the Sorority at heart
- Be willing and able to devote the necessary time to do their job
- Actively participate in or serve bands during their term of office
- Serve without compensation
- If they are completing their final year of college, they may serve out the term of office provided that they complete a Life Membership application, including all fees, and file it with National Headquarters prior to their graduation

IV. Qualifications to Think About

As part of choosing the Office that is right for you, you must consider the qualifications that all District Officers are recommended to have and what the individual Office qualifications may be. Remember, these are all recommendations and not "requirements" of individuals who wish to run for District Office.

GENERAL EXPERIENCE

As part of your candidacy, you will need to be able to demonstrate the different leadership and organizational experiences you have. Types of experiences that should be considered:

- Have I ever held a Chapter/District Office or Committee Chair Position?
- Have I ever attended Sorority Events (National Convention, District Convention, Precinct Meetings, etc.)?
- What Committees have I served on (Chapter, District, and National Level)?
- Have I ever attended other Chapter Events (Degrees, Social Activities, Formals, Membership Education/Recruitment Activities, Anniversary Celebrations, etc.)?
- Have I held any positions in my band program that will lend valuable experience to a District Office?
- What other kind of positions outside of band and TBS have I held that are representative of my leadership skills?
- Have I received any special recognition/awards in band or TBS?

DISTRICT OFFICERS – GENERAL

There are general characteristics that all District Officers need to possess in order to fulfill their duties at the highest level possible. The following is just a glimpse of the basics in regard to what you can expect by serving as a District Officer.

- Good Communication/Correspondence Skills - Verbal and Written
- Ability to set goals and meet deadlines
- Ability to be proactive, plan ahead, and delegate

- Ability to be open-minded and willing to test new ideas/ways of doing things
- Ability to keep personal ambitions and emotional reactions from interfering
- Ability to separate yourself from your Chapter; you will represent ALL Chapters
- Understanding of all National, District, and Chapter Operations & Policies
- Have enthusiasm and passion for Tau Beta Sigma and its Ideals
- Have the best interest of Tau Beta Sigma and the Northeast District in mind at all times

DISTRICT OFFICERS – SPECIFIC

Along with all the above skills and qualities, below are some examples of experiences that will help you in specific Offices.

- **President:**
Experience as a Chapter President/Officer or Committee Chair is very beneficial, because then you will have had experience setting agendas, running meetings, creating goals, and holding yourself and others accountable. It is also advised that you are very familiar with overall Sorority Operations (such as the Constitution, Robert's Rules, etc.). This will help you in your ability to assist the District membership with any questions that you may be called on to answer. It is also recommended that you speak with the current District President and the District Counselors about other specific time requirements and duties.
- **Vice President of Membership:**
Experience as a Chapter Vice President, Education Instructor/TA, or position dealing with membership education or post-membership education is recommended, because then you will have had lengthy experiences with the national Membership Education Program, recruitment of new members, and ideals of the Sorority. This Office focuses on ways to improve Chapter Membership and Education and then continue those teachings on a District Level. Advisement on National and District Operations will also be needed, so being familiar with key points in those areas are recommended.
- **Vice President of Special Projects:**
Experience as a Chapter VPSP, Historian, Social Director, Ritual Chair, or Service Officer/Committee Chair is recommended. As the VPSP you will namely need to be able to execute the planning and promotion of old and new District and National Programs. You will also need to correspond with chapter VPS(P)s, service chairs, and district liaisons, offer service and program ideas, and promote the importance of Service in regards to the ideals and purposes of Tau Beta Sigma.
- **Secretary/Treasurer:**
Experience as a Chapter Secretary or Treasurer is very much encouraged, because in this Office you will need to be able to record minutes, correspond via email/phone/or snail mail, and have an understanding of bank ledgers and financial statements (specifically Excel spreadsheets). Experience organizing fundraisers can also be helpful.

V. Making the Decision

Once you have defined which District Office you possess the most skills and qualifications for, and once you determine which District Office the District membership would benefit most from you serving in, you only have a few more considerations before you announce your Candidacy.

It is recommended that you:

- Talk with your Chapter Sisters and the Chapter President to get their thoughts and suggestions
- If you have one, talk with your Brother Chapter to also get their support
- Talk with your Chapter Sponsor
- Determine if you will have the time to put the amount of effort that is required by holding a District Office

Important points to ponder:

- Do I fully understand the role and duties of the Office I have chosen?
- Do I want to run for/could I handle a Chapter Office for the same academic year?
- Will school and work schedules allow me the time needed to hold District Office?
- Will my Chapter and Chapter Sponsor approve of my running for Office?
- Do I have the financial capabilities that will be required of the position?
- Will I be able to attend ALL District events and meetings (National District Leadership Conference, National Convention, Summer Council Meeting, Winter Council Meeting, Precinct Meetings, District Convention, regular council meetings, etc.)?

VI. Announcing Your Candidacy

Once you have made the decision to run and your Chapter and Chapter Sponsor endorse this action, the next step is to announce that you are running for District Office.

Where and how do I announce my candidacy?

- Chapter:
You will need the approval of your Chapter in order to run for District Office, so announce to them first. This will give them a chance to give you feedback and ask questions.
- Brother Chapter:
Approval from your Brother chapter is not required, but if you have one it would look impressive to have their support as well. After all, a lot of the Northeast District events and programs are joint, so our Brotherhood/Sisterhood bond is just as important on the district level!
- Precinct Meetings:
You don't have many opportunities like this where a large portion of the district is together before Convention, so take the opportunity to announce your intent to run as well as mingle

with district members and share your ideas/get their feedback. Some of your biggest supporters will come from inside your Precinct. Hopefully, you have been to some District functions and have come to be familiar with the Chapters closest to you. At Precinct Meetings you will have the opportunity to inform them that you are running, and this is a great chance for people in your Precinct to talk with you about your qualifications and goals for Office.

- **Other Events:**
Anytime you attend an event for the District or a Chapter it is a perfect time to let people know you are running. This way when you get to District Convention people will know who you are and the extent of your experience and goals.
- **Northeast District Listserv:**
This is a great place to reach many Actives. Just send an email to the District Council announcing your Candidacy to forward on to the listserv. It is also very helpful to include what position you are running for, why you are running, and what past experiences you may possess.
- **Social Media:**
Need we say more?
- **Current District Officers:**
Inform the current District Council, because these Sisters can help you prepare the most for your running. They can answer questions, offer suggestions, and key you in on important aspects of running for Office.

VII. Materials Preparation - DISTRICT OFFICER PACKET

One of the items that you will need to prepare prior to District Convention is your Officer Packet. Your packet contains everything about why you are running and what you have to offer the Office and the District. The Nominations Committee and Chapters will use candidate packets as guides to determining the person they should select for District Office.

Here is what should be in your packet:

- **Letter of Intent**
A general letter about yourself and the reasons you are running for Office. It should state some past experience and future goals.
- **Resume**
Should include all Chapter, District, and National experience (events attended, positions held, etc.). Also, include outside leadership experience and musical involvement. You may include school status and employment status.

- List of Goals
These should articulate the vision for your role as a District Officer. Consider District operations, continuing old programs, establishing new programs, and more.
- Projected Timeline
A month by month outline of when you would like to complete the projects for your chosen Office. This is a good opportunity to outline the action items from your goals.
- Letters of Recommendation
You will need the following Letters of Recommendation:
 - Chapter Approval and Chapter Standing Verification Letter
 - Letter of Recommendation and Approval from Chapter Sponsor and/or DOB
 - Letter of Recommendation from a Professional Reference (such as job supervisor, professor, etc.)
 - Any other Letters of Recommendation (Brother Chapter, Director of Bands, etc.)

All of these items should be included in your packet that you will submit to the District Counselors in advance of District Convention and the Nominations Committee at District Convention. By including all of this info, you will save the Committee and Active membership a great deal of time, and they will have the opportunity to ask you specific questions rather than just having time to ask you the general questions. This affords you an advantage because then the Committee and Chapters will have more information on your goals and experiences specifically.

VIII. District Convention Preparation

The majority of your effort will go into preparing for District Convention. What often hurts Candidates is their lack of knowledge of what to prepare for the District Convention and what will happen regarding District Officer candidates.

What should I prepare for District Convention?

- Packets:
Be sure to bring enough copies of your packet. At the very least have enough for every member of the Nominations Committee (10), but you're welcome to bring more for other Sisters to review. If you don't want to print a million packets, you can also consider alternative ways of sharing information: business cards, QR codes, Facebook pages, websites, Tumblr pages, Google Drive, etc.
- Nominations Committee:
It is the responsibility of the Nominations Committee to interview all candidates and create a recommendation of District Officers, which is called a slate.

- **Interview**
The Committee will have you come in at a certain time to meet with them. This meeting should be taken seriously because it is the committee that makes the slate. They will ask questions about you, your experience, and goals. They will also evaluate you based on professionalism, character, communication skills, and presentation skills. Just like a job interview, this time with the committee is for you to have the opportunity to present to them why you would be the best person for the position. It is recommended to dress like you would for a job interview.
- **Slating of Candidates**
The Committee will make a slate, which will be released to the Convention delegation during a separate session at Convention. The slate is a recommendation of which candidates would fulfill the positions best. The slate is an automatic nomination, but other candidates may be nominated from the floor. Although the vote is not always reflective of the slate, very often it is.
- **Candidate Panel**
On Friday night of Convention, all candidates will be asked to participate in a panel in front of all TBS attendees. This will be an opportunity for all delegates and students to ask questions of the candidates. This time with you is very important for chapters to evaluate and decide who they think are the best candidates. Do not be nervous, and again it is not the best policy to tell the Chapters what you think they might want to hear. Just be honest and truthful about your answers and ideas.
- **Post-Convention meeting:**
This is scheduled for Sunday after Convention is done, so do not schedule a departure during this time. If you are elected, it is imperative that you attend a meeting with the rest of the new council and the outgoing council to transfer information and start planning for the term.

IX. Suggested Do's and Don'ts

There are some considerations and actions that can benefit you and then there are some that can hurt you in your quest for District Office.

- Don't lie about your goals or answers
- Don't promise things you are unable to do
- Don't be derogatory about your opposing Candidates
- Don't be unrealistic about your goals
- Don't run for Office, "just to run"
- Do take the Interview/panel seriously
- Do get to know the current District Officers

- Do talk to your Chapter about what they expect from a District Officer/want to see improved in the District
- Do think before answering questions
- Do put considerable amounts of effort into developing your ideas and finding ways to present them
- Do present yourself in a professional manner
- Do be confident in your experiences and abilities to fulfill this Office
- Do have FUN and BE YOURSELF! Remember, although it is a professional process, it is important to showcase your personality, enthusiasm, and sense of humor to the District!

X. Conclusion

Having the opportunity to serve as a District Officer can and will be one of the best experiences you will have. District Officers and the District Council as a whole are looked to for guidance from the District, as well as a source of input and information to the National Council. Prepare yourself for hard self-directed work, fun memories, and a lesson in leadership that is not commonly found.

Good luck with your candidacy and experience in running for district office. Hopefully you found this guide to be useful and helpful in preparing items for your candidacy. Utilize your experiences in Tau Beta Sigma to serve in the best capacity you can.

“It is an honor to be selected to serve.”

Appendix A:

So You Want to Be a District Officer?

Advice from the Current District Council

Please note that the following advice from the 2016-2017 District Council reflects current practices on the district level. Many of these practices will change based on the structural and organizational adjustments taking place at District Convention, as well as the vision and goals of the new 2017-2018 District Council.

Effective Officer Protocol

- Respond to all communications (email, message, text, call, etc.) within 48 hours.
- Communicate professionally
- Use @tbsigma.org email accounts for all NED related business, and always CC'ing the President and Counselors
- Know how to locate and use the Constitutions, and Guide to Membership Education, and other National Resources
- In regard to Chapter issues and communications cc: or bcc: the Counselor on all correspondence

- After visiting a Chapter, provide a summary of your visit to the rest of Council
- Know your constitutional duties and charges set for you
- Keep excellent records
- Work with the Webmaster to upload and develop anything for your office on the website

How We Get It Done

- In-Person Meetings:
 - Summer DLC (and National Convention on an odd year): The District Council attends Leadership training prior to National Convention
 - Summer Meeting: Meet face-to-face to create an action plan for the year.
 - Winter Meeting: Meet during intersession break (typically MLK weekend) at the host Chapter site for one day for Convention training.
- Virtual Council Calls:
 - The call schedule will be determined by the 2016-2017 NED President. Typically a doodle poll will be sent out.
 - Summer Conference Calls: Schedule set by the President. Before every call you should email an activities report to the Secretary. Attendance is mandatory unless you have an excuse deemed appropriate by the President.
 - Fall Conference Calls: Scheduled every 2-3 weeks at the discretion of the President. Before every call you should email an activities report to the Secretary.
 - Spring Conference Calls: following Winter Meeting there were **weekly** update calls to make sure that everyone was following through with aspects of their duties related to Precinct Meetings and District Convention. Attendance is mandatory unless you have an excuse deemed appropriate by the President.
- Individual Work:
 - The time commitment for this position will vary from week to week and will gradually increase with the approach of travel season. On average, District Officers should be prepared to spend about five hours per week working for the district. During travel season, the commitment will likely increase to 1-2 hours per day.
- Spring Meetings & Conventions:
 - Officers are expected to attend all Precinct Meetings and District Conventions unless there is an emergency.
 - Officers should also attempt to attend other Chapter's rituals and events as they can and are invited. In addition, they should participate in any District/Precinct Day activities.

President – Shelby Coleman – nedpres@tbsigma.org

Qualities needed to succeed:

- Patience
- Enthusiasm for the organization
- Confidence
- Time Management

- Persistence
- Ability to adapt to change
- Professionalism
- Ability to multi-task
- Good listening skills
- Comfort speaking in public
- Willingness to delegate

Projects this year: This year has been spent ironing out the wrinkles in our new officer system. As the District Council transitioned from six positions to four, it has been a learning process for all of us to ensure nothing was lost but no one was being overwhelmed with everything they had to take on. Beginning with Summer Meeting, we adapted the NED's Vision Statement to reflect our goals as a 4-person Council, which included adapting our big-picture ideas and adjusting the small details along the way. Planning the Precinct Meetings and District Convention has been my biggest project this year, and it was 100% collaborative with the KKPsi NED President. Aside from these two big projects, my third main focus was serving as a resource for the Presidents and other officers in our Chapters. I have given countless pieces of advice as well as assisted in the completion of chapter paperwork throughout the year.

Goals for next year: Now that we have successfully transitioned to the four officers, the biggest goal for next year should be to take what we have learned and streamline the duties of the District Council. This year, we have found a lot of things that do work, and just as many things that do not. Evaluate what we have done, identify the weak points, and make those the strong points of the 2017-2018 District Council. Ask the Chapters what they want to change, and then make those changes to best serve the NED. Plan ahead; start working on the difficult, long-term details as soon as possible. Don't get hung up on the small speedbumps, but rather consider them as an opportunity for growth.

Least favorite part: Planning this year's District Convention has been pretty stressful because we left NEDCon 2016 without a Convention Site, but that is nothing that cannot be managed with the support of your fellow Council members. Honestly, the positive aspects of this job far outweigh the negative aspects.

Favorite part: My favorite thing about TBS is meeting new people and talking to members throughout the District, because it gives you so much perspective on the Sorority. Seeing chapters reach their goals is so satisfying. As the President, you will interact closely with every single chapter President in the NED, and it's so rewarding to help them improve their chapters.

Vice President of Membership – Maggi McGarry – nedvpm@tbsigma.org

Information about the office:

The District Vice President of Membership is responsible for the projects and activities relating to Membership and Membership Education throughout the District. Because of the extreme diversity in our District, it is important to understand that not every chapter does the same things with regard to Membership. It is the VPMs job to understand these differences and work with the VPMs at each chapter. Vice President of Membership is an extremely rewarding position, and one that is essential to the bond that the District has formed.

How much time goes into it (daily, weekly, etc.):

- Dependent on the time of year, the time of the workload can range from less than an hour a day, up to about 5-7 hours a day
- Most work is concentrated during the Summer/early Fall with the collection and revision of MEPs (I highly suggest monthly revision week so you can focus your attention at one time during the month)
- After MEP collection and review, the amount of work required is dependent on what projects, such as Project Good Member, that you want to do. You will also need to assist in work for convention season.

Skills needed to succeed:

- Time management
- Organization
- Dedication
- Collaboration
- Understanding
- Open-mindedness - Knowing chapters do things differently sometimes
- Connections with chapters
- Professionalism

Projects this year:

- MEP Collection
 - MEP Revision Weeks really helped VPM's set goals for themselves and also helped me with focusing my attention to help VPM's during a set time.
 - This process includes collection of the MEPs by the VPM, their revision by the District VPM, President and Counselor, and feedback for the VPMs of each chapter before submission to Nationals
- Sisterhood Week
 - Being held this year the week before District Convention, this is a way for the entire District to get together while far apart and show their spirit and love of TBS.
 - Themes chosen for Sisterhood Week usually revolve around the 8&5, Purposes or other ideals of TBS, and give Sisters a range of ideas on how to incorporate these into their daily lives.
 - Sisters share pictures on the NED Photo Page, Twitter and Instagram so everyone knows what is going on throughout the District
- Project Good Member
 - Update Project Good Member to fit the district's needs.
 - Advertise it to the VPMs and encourage all chapters to participate.
 - Chat with the VPMs often to help them succeed with the project.

Goals for next year:

- Communicate effectively with the National Council and relay any new/existing rules regarding the Membership Education Program.
- Create a generic MEP from what the Counselors used this past year to distribute to the VPMs as an example for them to use.
- Make Project Good Member more accessible to everyone in the chapter to complete, not just the VPMs.

Vice President of Special Projects – Kaitlyn Devrous – nedvpsp@tbsigma.org

Skills needed to succeed:

1. Time Management
 - a. This position requires adherence to multiple deadlines each month. Often, these deadlines will overlap with one another and create a sizeable workload. Combined with college courses, this can become very overwhelming. You must be able to manage your time in a way that maximizes productivity and allows for flexibility.
2. Flexibility
 - a. There are always changes made to the council's original plans. With every council call, you must be prepared to alter and reconsider your plans and projects. The VPSP must be particularly willing to work with a changing list of responsibilities. Typically, if a project does not fall under the written duties of another officer, it will be assigned to the VPSP by default.
3. Communication Skills
 - a. One of the VPSP's most important duties is networking with each chapter's Vice Presidents of Service or Vice President of Special Projects. As district leadership, you will be expected to offer your advice, creativity, and opinion to these officers. It is very important that you make yourself available to the chapter VPS's/VPSP's, and that you are willing to take the time to truly listen to their questions.
4. Ability to Give the District the Lead
 - a. Be willing to take the advice and instructions from the district - they are the ones out there doing the service, so their voice should be the loudest. Though leadership in this position is needed, it is moreso your ability to hear the needs of others and let them direct you.

Projects This Year:

1. Check-Ins with each chapter VPS/VPSP
 - a. These check-ins allowed for me to introduce myself to each VPS/VPSP, to let them ask questions, and to discuss the different awards and projects that were happening this year.
2. Awards and Recognition Application
 - a. Description of each award
 - i. What are they?
 - ii. Who can apply?
 - b. Application instructions

- c. Awards should be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they fit the direction of the district. NED Awards include: Phenomenal Sister, All-Star Service, Unsung Hero, and Joint Relations.
- 3. "How to be a VPSP"
 - a. I created an informational packed for all new (or old) VPS(P)s to aid them in planning their term. It included sections on:
 - i. Service Ideas
 - ii. Qualities of a Vice President of Service
 - iii. How to effectively plan Service
 - iv. Record Keeping
 - v. And more.
 - b. I sent this out to all the VPS(P)s as well as put it on our website for use of any office.
- 4. "Service Trio"
 - a. I created the Service Trio as a new District-Wide service initiative to encourage chapters to try new types of service.
- 5. Helped promote the Focus on Five Campaign
 - a. The Focus on Five Campaign is a national campaign to encourage chapters to participate in the national programs. Adrienne Rall, National Vice President of Special Projects, asked each district Vice President of Special Projects to help promote this campaign within each district.

Goals for Next Year:

- 1. Update and promote the District Projects
 - a. Review the current District Projects and modify if needed
- 2. Continue to publicize and promote the district and national awards.
 - a. Promote awareness of each award
 - b. Encourage participation in applying for awards
 - c. Encourage chapters to nominate other chapters
- 3. Continue to promote the National Programs
- 4. Hold a District-Wide Service Day

Secretary-Treasurer – Brian Main – nedsectreas@tbsigma.org

Information about this position: The District Secretary-Treasurer encompasses the responsibilities Chapter Secretaries and Treasurers have. This person writes meeting minutes, saves important documents, communicates to National Council, maintains the District Council budget, and reimburses District Officer expenses.

How much time goes into it (daily, weekly, etc.):

This position requires around an hour every few days. If there are more things happening in the District at a given time, expect to have more work and set aside more time. If you plan things far in advance, it helps when sudden tasks appear and you would feel overwhelmed.

Projects this year:

- Chapter Officer Rosters

- TBS NED has 26 Chapters who elect Officers yearly (majority by school year).
- Maintaining an up-to-date roster helped the Council reach out to Chapter Officers when necessary.
- Updating the Council on changes throughout the year needs improvement. A simple email or social media post with the change is all!
- Meeting Minutes
 - Documented what went on during NED Council Calls.
 - We tried a new approach this year by keeping the meetings more informal and moved away from reports, which we found to be more discussion/conversation based rather than just reading off paragraphs to each other.
 - The NED President and Counselors review the minutes, which then get sent to the National Council.
- Email Distribution List
 - Maintained the Wiggio list of addresses for formal announcements.
 - Created new approach with Google Form.
- District Website (<http://tbsigmaned.weebly.com/>)
 - Handled edits and updates for our website.
- Pen Pals
 - Created pairings throughout the Districts based on common interests and provided sample discussion topics throughout the year.

Skills needed to succeed:

- Time management, organization, persistence, motivation, flexibility, approachability, creativity, professionalism, and budgeting and communication skills.

Goals for next year:

- Promote Joint initiatives and relations at both the District and Chapter level
 - This office coordinates mainly with the KKPsi NED Secretary/Treasurer and Member-at-Large for joint activities and the Secretaries (Recording, Corresponding, Alumni), Treasurers, Historians, and any other non-VP-or-President position.
- Continue pen pals in some fashion. Encourage inter-Chapter and inter-District conversations.
- Work on scheduling tasks throughout the year so it does not get overwhelming.
- Create unique, interesting fundraisers for the District to provide more opportunities to Sisters

Other comments:

Please do not hesitate to reach out to learn more about the position and remember that this (and any) position is what you make of it. There are a lot of tasks that need to be completed but the process in completing them does not have to be the same!