

Note: *The Chapter Guide* is **SEARCHABLE** using the “FIND” feature:

Hold down the Ctrl (CONTROL) button while pressing the “F” (FIND) key and type any word or phrase (e.g. X-A-3, president, associate membership, etc.) in the FIND box. The FIND feature will take you to every instance of the word or phrase you typed in the FIND box.

CHAPTER GUIDE

SECTION XII:

CHAPTERS IN

TRANSITION

Chapters are made up of people and people change. Therefore, it is not uncommon for chapters to undergo change as well. To enable chapters to be flexible – to bend rather than break – the international organization recognizes the following organizational options:

CHAPTER REVITALIZATION

If a chapter is unable to recharter by the June 30 extension deadline, chapter leaders may request that the regional education and membership coordinators grant a revitalization status. Revitalization gives chapters that are experiencing temporary setbacks, such as the sudden loss of members due to a chapter split or the loss of a chorus director, a year to regroup. (An extension to this time may be granted by the education coordinator and the membership coordinator in specific cases.) Though many regions offer specific programs to assist chapters in revitalization, the rebuilding process is primarily the responsibility of the chapter members. (See the *Policy Book*, Section III, Div. A, 4.)

CHAPTER CONSOLIDATIONS

A consolidation occurs when two or more chapters each discontinue their independent existence to form a new chapter. The most compelling reason for consolidation is growth, or combining complementary talents and attributes to form a stronger chapter. Consolidation guarantees that members of both previous chapters have equal status in the formation of the new chapter. Specific rules must be followed when consolidating two chapters, and a minimum of six months should be allowed to complete the process.

One of the consolidation rules maintains that the new chapter must include the memberships of both consolidating chapters as well as assume their assets and liabilities. If it wishes, the new chapter may retain the longevity date of the oldest chapter by notifying international headquarters. The new chapter formed by the consolidation retains the charter documents of both dissolving chapters for historical purposes.

Another aspect of consolidation to consider is how it affects competition. For example, suppose Chapters A and B decide to consolidate following their regional competition. In the regional competition, Chapter A won a first-place medal. However, when Chapter A dissolves to form the new, consolidated chapter, the former members of Chorus A lose their opportunity to compete as a contestant at international competition.

Usually the chapter formed by a consolidation receives a new name, but if all members are in agreement, the new chapter can take on the name of one of the previous choruses. Retaining a previous name might be done if the chapter had high name recognition or significant historic value.

Consolidation Procedures

The formal consolidation procedure begins with a vote to dissolve. Each dissolving chapter must vote on the following motion:

“The _____ Chapter is dissolved in order to consolidate into the proposed _____ Chapter, such dissolution and consolidation to be effective on the date the charter for the new _____ Chapter is approved by the International Board of Directors. “

In order for this action to be valid, affirmative votes must be cast by at least 2/3 of all members present and in good standing. Good standing for the purposes of dissolution is defined as being up-to-date in the payment of dues.

The vote for dissolution and consolidation can be taken at any regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose provided that, in either case, notice of the question to be considered has been furnished to each member at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Voting may be in person or by absentee ballot. To be considered valid, any absentee ballot(s) must be received by the chapter president prior to the meeting.

To help defray the cost of the paperwork necessary for a consolidation, each chapter involved shall remit a fee to international headquarters. This fee must be paid by each chapter involved before any paperwork is processed. The fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable.

If two or more chapters dissolve in order to consolidate, the former chapters' assets are retained by the newly consolidated chapter. Each consolidating chapter must submit to international headquarters a complete financial statement covering its remaining assets at the time of its dissolution and application for consolidation.

If one or more of the consolidating chapters is incorporated, chapter leaders must consult a local attorney to determine proper procedures for dissolution in its particular state.

When a chapter does dissolve, it is required by chapter bylaws that certain rules be followed as described in the *Policy Book*, Section III, Div. A, 6.

CHAPTER SEPARATIONS

A chapter separation (“split”) occurs when members of a chorus leave their original chapter to form a prospective chapter.

Turmoil within a chapter that eventually leads to a “split” can be an emotional roller coaster ride for most chapter members. It is a time of unrest; a time for examining personal goals as well as chapter goals. Many chapter members are astonished to look back a year or two later and realize that the split was a positive action, both for the remaining members of the original chapter and for those who voluntarily left.

Most splits occur because of a division of goals involving the chapter’s musical product or because of power struggles. If chapter members cannot reach consensus on an important issue or agree to a compromise, the chapter remains in a constant state of anxiety and turmoil. During such a time, it is unwise to attempt any kind of membership growth program. Visitors are reluctant to join a chapter in upheaval.

When all attempts to resolve the controversy are futile, it is usually best for the group within the chapter that finds its goals and opinions in the minority to leave the chapter and begin anew. In the final analysis, it is not a matter of who is right or who is wrong, but an expression of differing philosophies, goals and personal preferences.

One of the largest issues involved in determining which group will leave the chapter revolves around finances. According to the Policy Book, the financial and physical assets of the chapter are retained by the existing chapter. Although the existing chapter has control of the assets, its members have the option to donate a stipulated sum of chapter funds to the departing group’s newly established prospective chapter.

Departing members are subject to policy regarding transferring membership. (See Section III, Div. C, 6 of the *Policy Book*.)

The regional management team can be of great value in assisting both groups involved in a split to rebuild and forget bruised feelings. An amiable chapter separation is of value to both groups. After all, both chapters will continue to interact as members of the regional “family.”

CHAPTER DISSOLUTION

The most common reasons chapters dissolve is because the chorus cannot attract or retain the minimum number of members needed to recharter. It is a sad time for chapter members when their chorus' options have dwindled down to dissolving the chorus. However, dissolving the chorus does not have to mean the end of the members' involvement with Sweet Adelines. Members of a dissolving chapter are urged to visit other chapters within their vicinity with the hope of transferring their membership. Members of a dissolving chorus also many join chapter-at-large or member-at-large. In a year or two, conditions within the city or rural area where the chapter once existed may improve and new members may regroup with previous members to form a prospective chapter.

Chapter Dissolution Procedures

Dissolution of a chapter must be voted on by the membership. A special meeting should be scheduled, and all members should be notified as to the purpose of the meeting at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date. Dissolution of a chapter requires a 2/3 vote of the membership present and in good standing. A simple majority vote of those present is not considered valid.

If the chapter votes to dissolve, the following procedures should be followed:

- The regional marketing and membership coordinators should be notified.
- International headquarters should be notified.
- The business of the chapter should be finalized. All money due to the chapter should be collected and used to meet any outstanding debts.

If a shortage of funds exists, debts should be paid in the following order:

- Vendors (from outside the organization)
- Regional obligations
- Chapter members (expense reimbursements, dues in escrow, etc.)

Physical property of the U.S. chapters, such as risers, costumes, etc., may be sold prior to the final accounting or donated to another Sweet Adelines International chapter or another nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. It is the chapter's responsibility to determine the tax status of a recipient.

If the property is sold, money from the sale must first be used to settle any outstanding debts. Any money returning from the sale of physical assets and all other chorus assets must be turned over to the International Organization with a final accounting report. (See Standard Form Chapter Bylaws, Article II, 4).

A final accounting report on the physical assets must be prepared and submitted to international headquarters. The report should include income/expense statements and a brief statement regarding the disposition of assets and funds. All physical assets held at the time dissolution commenced should be listed in the report as well as the book value of the assets. A copy of the report should also be sent to the region.

Regardless of the amount of annual gross receipts, the dissolving U.S. chapter should prepare the appropriate 990 Form, file it with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, obtain the confirmation of filing, and provide a copy of the filed 990 Form and the confirmation to International Headquarters. (See Section V of this guide.)

Before the dissolution of the chapter is complete, several miscellaneous details should be taken care of:

- Return charter document, if it can be located, to international headquarters.
- Cancel performances scheduled for future dates as well as listings with local Chamber of Commerce, arts councils, community calendars, telephone company, etc.
- Distribute chapter-at-large (CAL) or member-at-large (MAL) applications to any members wishing to apply for transfer to CAL or MAL.

If the former members of a dissolved chapter wish to rebuild, they may apply to the membership department at international headquarters for prospective status. If prospective status is granted within 90 days after the dissolution, the chapter may retain its assets. Just like any prospective chapter, a rebuilding chapter must go through the *Steps* procedure beginning at *Step Two* and charter as a new chapter.