

Hello,

As chair of the TNSO Planning Committee, I have some information to share with you. The Planning Committee conducted a survey of all state chapters concerning the updating of their chapter strategic plan. The information gleaned from this survey is very enlightening and needs to be shared with all the stakeholders involved.

If you would like a copy of all survey results in an Excel spreadsheet, I would be happy to share it with you. Contact me at elainewarwick@att.net.

Below is a summary of the responses to each survey question. 53 out of 62 chapters responded to the survey.

What are your chapter strengths?

Chapter Strengths:

1. Relationships, Caring, Mutual Support, Generosity, Fellowship
2. Community Projects and Involvement
3. Member Participation/Faithful Members
4. Engaging Programs
5. Collaboration and Teamwork
6. Support of Education
7. Leadership
8. Communication
9. Diversity
10. Membership Growth/Retention

Comments from Planning Committee members:

The overarching themes for strengths are membership/friendship and project/programs. Membership/friendship is the strongest strength, but projects/programs should also be included because so many chapters listed and detailed how important those were to members/chapters.

Chapters most often mentioned the relationships and the bond shared by their members. Growing out of those relationships and bonds shared by members was their collaboration in the areas of community service and the support of educators/education. Some mentioned the strength of diversity.

The survey was a great opportunity for chapters to brag about what they have accomplished. We all need to be commended for doing good and we need recognition for our efforts.

The chapters that involve themselves in community events and projects have an opportunity to let their light shine and inform folks of what they stand for and who they are.

What can we glean from the strong fellowship and community within many chapters to apply to the needs for each chapter?

What is your chapter focus this year?

Chapter Focus:

1. Membership
2. Leadership
3. Participation
4. Community Involvement
5. All others (Collaboration, Participation, **Survival**, Mentoring, Communication, Relationship Building)

Comments from planning committee members:

The themes for concerns are recruitment and leadership. Recruitment is the strongest theme, but I think leadership should be included because it appears so frequently.

- Keeping/Recruiting membership
- Recruiting Chapter Leadership

In the "Focus" section, recruiting, retaining, and reinstating members was in the majority. Encouraging members to step up to leadership positions and participation were also mentioned frequently.

Chapters wondered if they were the only ones having issues with retaining and recruiting members.

How Can the State Organization Help?

1. Reinstatement Campaign
2. Leadership Training
3. Chapter Visits
4. Tips and Ideas on Recruiting and Retaining Members
5. Opportunities to Collaborate with Other Chapters
6. Ideas for Quality Programs
7. Encourage Smaller Chapters

Comments: As regards "How We Can Help as a State Organization", the responses were varied, but there seemed to be an outcry for help in finding ways to recruit and retain members and strengthen struggling chapters.

Some chapters are barely holding on.

The fact remains that the state officers and state committee members can do many things to encourage chapters, such as offer workshops, zoom meetings, seminars and give recognition at conventions etc. We can offer to make visits to chapters for encouragement or to help with a project. **But each chapter has to take responsibility for the desire to do more for teachers, ask for help and be willing to follow through with suggestions.**

Chapter Successes:

1. Support of Education/Educators; Scholarships
2. Community Projects
3. Growth/Retention
4. Attendance
5. Awards from the State Organization
6. Leadership Positions
7. Collaboration with Other Chapters

Comments from Planning Committee:

Looking at some of the chapter programs, there are some great ideas for chapters to share at convention. Could this be a tool to share with the convention steering committee to "recruit" members to be present at convention?

General Comments and observations by Planning Committee members:

I believe this analysis shows how cohesive and unified our state is and how many of our strengths and concerns resonate across the 53 chapters that responded. I believe that bodes well for our state's vision and our chapters' views of themselves. Based on Becky Sadowski's work at the international level, I would think this would be good news for her to share, if she decides to do that.

Further, I think it points to a clear path to help both the TNSO Chapter Strengthening and Membership Committees as they plan to help chapters with these concerns – going forward. Additionally, I believe it should also give those committees an obvious path to praise chapter strengths and discover ways to share those among themselves to continue to foster the state's unity and cohesiveness.

In my experience with revitalization at the international level I often hear state organization leaders facing concerns/issues similar to the ones identified by chapters in the survey. Engaging with leaders from other state organizations to share ideas and experiences seems to be very helpful. Perhaps we could use that model to encourage more discussion among our chapter leaders. **Area Directors might consider having occasional Zoom sessions with the chapters in their respective areas to do some of this sharing and problem solving. I know they often attend meetings of individual chapters, but this kind of initiative provides a chance for the participants to learn from each other particularly regarding recruiting and retaining members.**

We have also discovered that chapters often provide leadership training for chapter officers, but they have not focused as much on leadership development opportunities for their members. I am hearing recently about several chapters that are located in fairly close proximity offering a "Leadership Day" meeting to focus on developing future leaders.