This document presents a recommended timeline and ceremony. Each circle should make the initiation of members meaningful to your school. This format is only a suggestion to aid circles in the cycle of planning for initiation.

**Initiation Ceremony Planning**

This document is a general guide to planning theInitiation Ceremony. The official Initiation Handbook is available online and in print form (contact the National Headquarters for a copy). The National Bylaws dictate the ritual, and may not be changed. Enhancements to the initiation ceremony, like a keynote speaker and reception, are at the discretion of the circle.

**General Notes**

Consider the planning and execution of the initiation ceremony or ceremonies a circle activity that involves all active members of the circle. It is not just the responsibility of the student president and advisors. Here are a few general tips.

1. Make it formal. The more reverence given the ceremony, the more important the members feel.
2. Make it public. ODK ceremonies are never secret. Invite the campus. Specifically invite senior administrators and faculty to participate. Invite family and friends of the initiates. This should be a public celebration of leadership.
3. Make it memorable. Including an important speaker, inducting well-known institutional members as honoris causa, and creating a tradition that is unique to your circle will make the event one that members, families, and guest remember for many years.

**Pre-Planning**

The initiation date should be determined in the semester prior to the event. Two rooms for the initiation should be reserved. You should have one room for the ceremony and one room (or area) to gather the initiates before the ceremony.

Reserve the rooms at least one semester before the planned ceremony. For example, during the spring or summer, reserve space for fall and during the fall, reserve space for the spring ceremony. If your institution has an annual space reservation process, take advantage of that to reserve space for all ceremonies.

**Three Months Prior**

1. Ensure that the rooms are reserved and the reservations with all equipment and needs are finalized and secured. A circle advisor should inform National Headquarters of intended date of the initiation.
2. Check the circle ceremony supplies list and order/purchase necessary supplies.
3. The selection process should be under way at this time.
4. Create the Initiation Committee (IC) (ex: President, Circle Coordinator, Social Chair and Elections Chair). They should meet to discuss ceremony plans. Remember to inform all candidates of the ceremony date and time and that participation is required to be a member at the time applications are available.
5. If a speaker and musicians is required, send invitation(s) no later than three months prior to the ceremony.

**Two Months Prior**

1. Make sure the ceremony is on all members’ calendars and that the IC assigns roles for preparations and execution.
2. Finalize the speaker topic, travel arrangements if any, and other logistics for the speaker.
3. Secure a photographer for the ceremony. This should be a volunteer or someone willing to work for a very nominal fee. This is mostly to get candid shots of the ceremony and to take the official picture at the end.
4. Secure a caterer, if necessary, at this time even if final menu is not.

**One Month Prior**

1. Selection of new members should be complete by this time or least very close to complete.
2. The IC updates menu with caterer.
3. The IC reviews script and updates the various speaking parts, starts adding names of candidates as they pay dues, etc. Make sure to use the most recent script. Locate it on the OΔK website.
4. The Selection Committee or Advisors send invitations to join to the candidate with instructions on how to pay the National Lifetime Membership Fee.

**Two Weeks Prior**

1. All National Lifetime Membership Fee payments should be complete.
2. The Circle Coordinator or Faculty Advisor completes the Membership Certificate Order Form for certificates and pins. This requires a minimum of seven calendar days. For circle award eligibility, submit the order 14 calendar days before the ceremony.

**One Week Prior**

1. Complete the Ceremony Program with names, order of ceremony, etc.
2. Food order finalized with caterer.
3. Finalize any last minute changes to room set up with the local event planning office.

**Day of Ceremony**

1. Assemble the circle officers at least one hour prior to the ceremony to set up the room and ritual elements.
	1. Place name cards on seats
	2. Set up table according to Initiation Handbook
	3. Place scripts on the podium
	4. Ensure area for reception is set and catering has arrived
2. Make sure that all room preparations are complete before the guests and initiates arrive.
3. Have initiates gather in the separate room or area at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony
4. If there is recorded or live music, this should start no less than 15 minutes prior to the ceremony.
5. The IC leader or Circle Coordinator should explain the process of signing the Record Book, receiving the pin and certificate to the initiates.
6. Begin the ceremony with the march of the candidates who enter the room and take their seat.

**Post Ceremony**

1. Pack and store all supplies so they will be ready for the next ceremony.
2. If there are any members not initiated in a “desk ceremony,” return those certificates and pins to the national headquarters as soon as possible (within 30 days).
3. Send thank you notes to speakers and any special guests who attended.
4. Add all new members to your communication rosters.

**Initiation Ceremony Supply List**

For room set-up, see diagram provided. Depending on the room, alter these to accommodate shape or size.

Head Table Area:

* Banner or podium cloth
* Stoles for officers and advisors
* Safety pins/tape
* 5 candles with lighter or battery candles with extra batteries
* Official Record Book and pens
* Bronze Key
* White table cloths
* Certificates and pins
* Flowers

Seating Area:

* Name tags for seats
* Programs
* Cord or ribbon to rope off seating for  officers and initiates.

Food tables:

* Table clothes
* Decorations
* Punch bowls
* Food
* Plates, cups, napkins and Utensils (don’t forget serving utensils)
* Ice bucket to refill punch bowls
* Quart and Gallon sized Zip bags for leftover food