Carolinas District Leadership Guide

The Carolinas District of the Barbershop Harmony Society was chartered in 2010 after a multi-year process of justifying and planning for a new District. There is a detailed history that chronicles the events, thought processes and actions taken to establish the District.

The founding thesis for the creation of the District was that a smaller district, both in terms of its geography and its number of Chapters, could better serve its Chapters and Members. The District was defined as "Chapter-Driven" to emphasize the importance of Chapters in setting priorities and providing leadership for the District.

The Chapter Presidents and other Chapter Leaders that they identified were intimately involved from the beginning in defining the Mission, Vision and Values of the District. The Bylaws and Code of Regulations of the District were written with the intentional purpose of assuring that the power to govern the District would reside primarily with the Chapters by limiting the voting power of the elected Board of Directors in the House of Delegates, requiring that quorums be based on Chapter representation, and placing term limits on elected Board of Directors positions. The House of Delegates meetings are designed to encourage meaningful participation from the Chapters, with thorough discussion and decisions of important topics, in day-long working sessions not associated with Conventions.

The Mission, Vision and Values statements of the District very clearly place the health and well-being of every Chapter and its Members as the District's first priority. The District Leadership is to keep the needs of the Chapters and Members foremost in its planning and conduct of all events and activities sponsored by the District. Some examples of doing so include:

- Leadership Academies which offer comprehensive opportunities for development of leadership at all levels, both administratively and musically, have been conducted at minimal cost to the chapters and attendees. The response from the chapters has been phenomenal in terms of participation levels and positive feedback.
- Conventions designed with cost-consciousness, appeal to spouses and family, and well-run contests have been largely successful. The percent of chapters participating in chorus-competition conventions has been measurably higher than under the previous District design.
- The District led in the call for Society rule changes that allowed for a single International Qualifying Convention to reduce the cost to Chapters and Members to support two fully-staffed competitions. The House of Delegates replaced the traditional Fall Convention with a Festival with a single judging panel and high-level coaching opportunities for Choruses and Quartets.
- Fifth-man teams have been made available to provide coaching and advice to Chapter leadership who request help with problems hindering the success of their Chapters.

- Musical coaching opportunities have been made available to registered Quartets and Chapters of all levels of ability at festivals, quartet retreats and individual chorus events at very affordable or no cost.
- The District attempts to assure that every Chapter is visited at least once a year by a leader in the District to let the membership know that the District is interested in them, to attempt to answer any questions they may have about the District, and to identify potential District leaders.

The District casts a broad net across the Chapters in identifying leadership. District leadership should always be on the lookout for members with leadership, technical, musical or other skills that might be helpful, and should pass that information to the Nominating Committee. It is important to involve members from as many chapters as possible in District operations.

The District also has a high priority to identify interest and opportunities for the formation of new chapters. Since its inception thru 2015, three new chapters (Mt Pleasant, Brunswick County and Fayetteville) have been chartered in the District. District Leaders must encourage the formation of new chapters where they make sense and support the efforts of local spark plugs to generate the interest and develop the strategies to be successful.

Successful Chapter Quartets are also an important part of healthy Chapters. A Chapter with one or more active quartet is more likely to be successful musically which can lead to success in other aspects of the Chapter. While the Leadership is to be ever mindful of the needs of Chapters and individual Members, the needs of Quartets in those chapters should always be considered as well.

Finally, in all they do, District leaders are to honor the uniqueness of each Chapter, conduct themselves with honesty and integrity, hold themselves accountable, display a consistent standard of excellence, communicate openly and transparently, show respect, teamwork, initiative and professionalism, and seek to develop their leadership and personal skills.