

The FTC Experience

By Ethan Wynne, CSULB



FTC... hearing it is even sweeter than payday itself! Circle K International is filled with truly memorable experiences and amazing opportunities, but FTC takes the cake as the – in my opinion – the most impactful event you can experience.

So what is FTC? FTC stands for Fall Training Conference and it is, as the name says, a training conference that spans over three days. FTC begins on a Friday, and this first day is considered the arrival day. CKI'ers are coming from all over the CNH District to Sonora, CA, so everyone arrives at different times. No matter what time you leave at, the first stiff steps outside our stuffed cars is the greatest feeling ever as our car trip is normally between 6-8 hours. The long drive may be discouraging, but the hours of laughing, sharing stories, and bonding is a large part of what makes FTC so special. After moving the luggage into the cabins, the night concludes with the opening ceremony bursting with spirit and excitement.

After the rush of being at FTC, it's quite difficult to fall asleep that night, but it is more than necessary because the next day is jam-packed with fun and excitement from the early morning to the late night. Early morning is kick-started by friendly competitions and breakfast between teams comprised of members from all over CNH. This allows the wonderful members of CNH to intermingle with each other and get to know people they would've never met otherwise.

These games always occur simultaneously with dining hours, so between breakfast, lunch, and dinner is a variety of workshops, tailored to make us all more well rounded CKI members, students, and people overall. Whether it is a spirit, a public speaking, or even a self-defense workshop, each in one way or another teaches very valuable and useful skill that we can utilize as we go through life. Workshops make up a majority of the day, as it is the training aspect of FTC. At the end of the day after dinner, all the clubs gather in the auditorium for a series of events.

First, the member induction ceremony takes place where each member is awarded their member induction certificate and has a moment in front of all of CNH! The rest of the ceremony is so powerful and special that I have to keep this unforgettable experience a secret in order to preserve it for the future attendees. Next, there is a fashion show where each club presents their t-shirt for the year by having their models "walk" across the stage to say the least! The thrills continues as everyone moves from the Auditorium to the outside amphitheater for campfires skits! After these amazing performances, we dance the night away on the dance floor, sing our hearts out at the karaoke station, and have a blast playing all the carnival games. As we enter the early hours of the morning, many members bond around the multiple bonfires before our curfew of 2 am.

The final day is much more relaxed yet melancholic as it is time for us to leave this CKI paradise back to the reality of college. We are free to get breakfast anytime before the final general session, and most members, understandably, sleep in for as long as they could. Then the final general session arrive, and bring FTC to a close. The final cheers and roars of each division are bursting with so much passion and pride that it seems like the building is going to come crashing down! The meeting recaps the amazing moments of the year's FTC with sensational speeches and presentation of many awards to a variety of clubs. Wishing everyone a safe journey home, the district governor officially concludes FTC with a ring of the bell.

Without a doubt, FTC is one of the most wonderful and unforgettable experiences in my entire life. However, it was not the scheduled events and activities that made the weekend so memorable, rather it is the people, our fellow CKI'ers, that made my weekend truly special. Spending the weekend with so many friendly, caring, and genuine people has to be the reason why I can't wait to return! I have to especially thank my CSULB family; I have never met a group of people so selfless, fun-loving, caring, and inclusive in my entire life... I couldn't be more proud or grateful to stand alongside each and everyone one of my 49'ers!