



ALPHA SIGMA PHI

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SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Scholastic performance is essentially an individual responsibility, but that responsibility can be maintained and encouraged by a group. As members of Alpha Sigma Phi, you must recognize that you have a personal and group responsibility to achieve excellent academic marks. A strong scholarship program can provide chapter members with the means of achieving this goal. Such a program must receive the support and approval of the entire membership.

A sound learning program must consider the following factors:

- Careful evaluation of potential new members
- Standards for membership
- Development of proper attitudes
- Maintenance of an academic atmosphere
- Incentives for academic excellence

VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBERSHIP ENRICHMENT

In order for a chapter to excel in academics, it is important to select a VP of Membership Enrichment to plan and implement the chapter scholarship program. This individual will lead the chapter throughout his term and provide the chapter with the means it needs to achieve its goal of academic excellence.

A VP of Membership Enrichment should possess the following characteristics:

- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to work with others
- Personal and academic ability
- Desire to see the chapter be one of the top Greek organizations on campus

The following are the major tasks to be accomplished by the VP of Membership Enrichment:

- Developing incentives
- Organizing designated study areas
- Organizing designated study times
- Managing a scholarship budget
- Keeping records of all scholarship programs
- Providing an academic report each semester to the Prudential Board, Office of Fraternity/Sorority Life, and Alpha Sigma Phi Headquarters

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE VP OF MEMBERSHIP ENRICHMENT

- Create a scholarship calendar of events, programs, etc. for each term. The VP of Membership Enrichment is responsible for organizing the chapter scholarship program and motivating the members to expand their educational achievement through the chapter. Present the calendar to the chapter's Prudential Board.

- **Give a weekly report at chapter meetings about past and future scholarship programs.** Maintaining a positive attitude during reports will encourage and motivate chapter members to excel in academics.
- **Consult chapter alumni and/or faculty advisors to assist you with your scholarship program.** They can help you reach your goals by assisting the chapter with the development of a wide variety of programs and in advising members who have academic questions.
- **Consult Academic Support Offices on your campus to assist you with your scholarship program.** There are likely offices on campus that specialize in assisting students to learn and practice better study skills, effective listening, notetaking, and test-taking. There may also be a writing center for students to bring papers for proofreading and editing. Considerable information can be gained if you invite one of these officials to a chapter dinner.
- **Consult the Financial Aid Office to assist you with your scholarship program.** The Financial Aid Office provides information on scholarships, grants, and loans for those seeking assistance to finance their education.
- **Hold at least one scholarship program for the chapter each month.** Educational enrichment and cultural programs can be held monthly involving professors, local businesspersons, or alumni who can give presentations on their professional fields.
- **Create a scholarship mentor program for the chapter.** It is especially important that every new member has a “Scholarship Mentor” to help him transition into their new life as a member of a fraternity. The best options for matching members are: (1) Big/Little Pairs and (2) Academic Major Pairs. It is important that the new members see the designated individual as a mentor, who helps with study plans, coursework, and effective study habits. All chapter members should be matched up. The scholarship mentors should change every semester or year.
- **Coordinate the annual calendar with the VP of Retention.** Avoid holding activities during mid-terms and finals to ensure members’ academic success.
- **Implementation of a good program requires energetic measures to:**
 - Enforce scholarship strategies and policies without reservation.
 - Provide leadership so that everyone will accept their responsibility to strive for academic excellence.
 - Provide conditions conducive to good study so that each member has the atmosphere in which he can apply himself to the best advantage.
 - Provide sufficient incentives to encourage members to excel academically.
- **Enforce scholarship probation.** It is the duty of the chapter to maintain a standard that encourages members to make respectable academic progress. It is no less unbrotherly to suspend a member for unpaid bills than it is to discipline him for substandard scholastics, which could cost him a college degree and tarnish the chapter’s academic record. The chapter is interested in helping every individual meet his potential. It is the VP of Membership’s duty to enforce academic policies and seek the support of the entire chapter in this endeavor.

MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS

Every chapter should enforce membership standards for its members. Establishing a minimum GPA for membership within the chapter is a must. Chapter officers should be held to a higher than average standard in terms of academics; the minimum GPA for officers should be higher than the minimum membership GPA. In addition, GPA standards should be enforced for participation in chapter events and programs, such as intramurals, social events, and the chapter’s Big/Little program. It is the responsibility of the chapter to hold members accountable for their grades and reward them with the “perks” mentioned above. There should be no exceptions made for membership GPA standards for any member, except for unique situations.

In addition, chapters should develop scholarship guidelines and add them to the chapter by-laws. This shows the chapter is committed to academic excellence and to helping members achieve a higher grade point average. It also assists the chapter scholarship board in holding members accountable for their academic marks.

MEMBER ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Member Orientation Programs of strong chapters with outstanding academics are based upon a system of management and guidance rather than rule enforcement. The VP of Membership Enrichment should discuss the following items with the new member class each semester.

Essential Scholastic Factors:

- The role of the chapter in the attainment of excellence in education
- The role of scholarship in the chapter
- Requirements for membership
- The structure of the chapter scholarship program
- Individual responsibility for scholarship
- Outcomes if they do not live up to expectations of the scholarship program
- Why study hours are used (if they are) and the details of when, where, etc.
- The university policy for dropping classes. It is important that you do not encourage them to drop classes, but rather inform them of the process if the need should arise

How to Study:

- Time management
- Developing good reading skills
- Proper balance between leisure, work, and studying
- Note-taking
- Preparing outlines
- Class participation
- Learning to recognize important points of lectures and assignments
- Stress management

These points will give new members an idea of what to expect concerning scholarship, as well as what is expected of them as a member in the chapter. The “How to Study” topics can be covered by the VP of Membership Enrichment or the chapter may elect to invite an outsider to present to the new members. Encourage brother within the chapter to invite new members to study with them in house (if you have one), the library, or other study location. This will not only build relationships, but allow members to study at the same time. In addition, new members tend to copy the behavior of actives within the chapter. If the actives show the new members a commitment to academics while still living a balanced life, new members will most likely exude similar behavior. Positive role modeling by active members is important to the development of new members.

STUDY TABLES/STUDY HOURS

Many chapters hold study tables or require members to fulfill a specified number of study hours per week. While different methods work for different chapters, the important thing is to establish a study policy that the chapter strictly adheres to and enforces. Chapters must hold their members accountable for such a policy to work effectively.

A few tips regarding study tables and study hours:

- Establish a regular study table schedule. Once members get into a study routine, they are more likely to stick to it.
- Hold study tables at least three days a week and at different times each day. This allows members who have class, work, or other commitments a variety of times and days to pick from.
- Study tables should be at least two hours and no longer than four hours in length. Remember: how much time you spend studying is not as important as how you use that time.
- Encourage members to start earlier or end later than the specified study table times. It is ok to study outside of the designated study hours!
- Require members to sign in and out of study tables.
- If using study hours, ask members to keep an “honor log” of their study hours. Provide them with a template to do so. Ask members to submit hours on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Take into account each member’s year in school and major. For example, a senior music major may not be able to do homework in the library. Allow for flexibility to meet every members’ needs, but continue to hold them accountable.

- Assign members' study hours based on grades from the previous semester. Use a combination of proctored (monitored) study hours at study tables and honor study hours.

For example:

- 3.75 – 4.0 = 0 proctored hours; 6 honor hours
 - 3.50 – 3.74 = 1 proctored hour; 8 honor hours
 - 3.25 – 3.49 = 2 proctored hours; 10 honor hours
 - 3.00 – 3.24 = 3 proctored hours; 12 honor hours
 - 2.75 – 2.99 = 5 proctored hours; 14 honor hours
 - 2.74 and below = 6 proctored hours; 15 honor hours
- Choose a specified area in the chapter house or university library that is designated as the chapter study area. Try to establish the area as a 24-hour quiet area.

GOAL SETTING

The key to academic achievement for any chapter and its members is attitude. Once a positive atmosphere is established, setting academic goals will be much easier. Goal setting is important for the individual, as well as for the chapter. Chapters can decide what academic goals they would like to establish on a semesterly or annual basis.

Examples of goals include:

- Improve overall GPA by .10 (or more).
- Achieve a 3.00 (or higher).
- Become one of the top three chapters in your IFC/in the entire Greek community.
- To be above the all-men's average.
- To be above the all-undergraduate average.
- To be above the all-Greek average.
- Chapters should set a GPA goal every term. There are two ways that chapters can establish this standard:
 - The entire chapter establishes what they believe is a realistic goal. It should be voted on by all members to reach a consensus.
 - The VP of Membership Enrichment collects the individual GPA goals each member sets and averages them all together to come up with the chapter average GPA goal.

One of the most important parts of goal setting is following up on the goals you set.

Once a goal is set, chart the chapter's progress. If you do not attain the goal, ask yourself why. Did you set the goal too high? Did members agree upon the goal as a group? Did members forget about the goal? It is important to examine the reasons why the goal was not achieved and learn from this process. Re-examine the goal with your new knowledge and adapt it. If you achieve a goal, reward it. Hold a special scholarship dinner (and invite faculty, university administrators, chapter advisors, etc), buy something for the chapter house, or hold a chapter brotherhood for achieving the goal. Also, be sure to let Alpha Sigma Phi Headquarters know of your success in achieving your goals by submitting grades to them.

MOTIVATION

As mentioned earlier, it is important to develop a positive attitude regarding scholarship. A step toward developing a positive attitude would be the identification of various motivating factors which might affect an individual's outlook toward scholastic attainment. These might include:

- Personal pride in achievement
- Hope for future employment and advancement
- Group recognition and approval
- Parental recognition and approval
- Sense of duty or obligation
- Expectation of reward
- Fear of punishment or penalty
- Desire for respect and approval

Once the motivating factor(s) are identified, the VP of Membership Enrichment and Prudential Board may take appropriate steps to plan and implement effective scholarship programs. A sound scholarship program will use this information in developing and maintaining the proper attitude.

INCENTIVES

It is vital to provide members with a variety of incentives because what motivates one member might not motivate another. Incentives should be both monetary and non-monetary. Set aside a specific percentage (such as 10%) of the budget for academic incentives.

Review the academic incentives your chapter provides every term/year to account for changing chapter goals in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. All chapter members should be involved when determining incentives so that they “buy in” to the incentives program.

Also, the VP of Membership Enrichment should monitor the incentives program the chapter utilizes to ensure that its value for improving academics does not become subordinate to the purely competitive aspect (if competitive incentives are used).

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS NIGHT

Chapters should hold a “Scholarship Awards” dinner or dessert reception each semester. This program should be planned by the VP of Membership Enrichment and approved by the Prudential Board. All members should be invited along with key school officials such as:

- Council officers
- Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor
- Dean of Students
- Alumni
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Faculty members

Awards given at the scholarship event can include:

- 4.0 GPA for the semester
- Dean’s List Member
- Highest GPA in the chapter
- Most Improved GPA in the chapter
- Highest Big Brother/Little Brother GPA
- Highest New Member GPA
- Class with the highest GPA
- Faculty Member of the Term/Year Award
- Chapter Scholarship Recipients
- Outstanding Mentor
- All members who achieved their scholarship goal

Other scholarship items worth mentioning include:

- Other campus academic awards the chapter has won over the past year
- National academic awards won over the past year
- Names of members accepted into professional schools
- Names of members accepted into campus honor societies
- Overall chapter GPA progress
- Programming initiatives, and workshops

STUDY HOURS

Academic success can be enhanced by providing members with a positive study atmosphere. By creating a this atmosphere, chapter members have the potential to create a positive attitude and realize their potential. The following are suggestions for creating a positive study atmosphere:

- **Establish a designated study area.** Instead of using the chapter library, which is usually a collection of old books and outdated tests, find a space where quiet and effective studying can take place. Within this area, keep an organized collection of up-to-date study resources. There should be a variety of furniture in the area as well, allowing members to study comfortably. Some members prefer to lay on a couch and read, while others like to work sitting at a table. Providing a variety of study options will encourage all members to use the space. Try to choose an area without a television to avoid distractions. Also choose an area where little traffic passes by so members who are studying are not distracted by those who are not.
- **Establish courtesy hours.** If the chapter has a house, establish nightly courtesy hours. It is important that the chapter enforce quiet hour policies to ensure that all members are able to study and sleep in a peaceful atmosphere.
- **Establish special quiet hours during finals.** During finals week, the best solution is to establish 24-hour study hours. If the chapter does have a designated study area, keep it clean and provide refreshments and snacks for members who utilize the space.

INSTRUCTOR FILES

Instructor files (also called a syllabus file) should be kept in the library or resource room. It should be organized in alphabetical order by subject. Each subject should be in one large file folder and divided into sub-files by the course level number. For example, all accounting classes should be in the same large file folder and separated as Acct 200, Acct 201, Acct 330, Acct 490, and so on. Each syllabus should be no more than two years old and should be updated at the end of every term. The VP of Membership Enrichment should ask each member of the chapter to turn in all their syllabi to him, as well as a personalized evaluation of the course. The personal evaluation should answer the following questions:

- What was the course like?
- Tests based on lectures? Books? Notes?
- Average amount of reading assigned?
- Assignments and how often they are due?
- Interesting class meetings?
- A likeable and/or intelligent instructor?
- Grade received? (optional)

An example evaluation is as follows:

“Class is mainly lectures off of PowerPoint slides that are posted on Blackboard. Tests are multiple choice and questions are a combination of information from the book and the lecture notes. Professor allows you to turn in the final paper early for proofreading and comments. It just has to be turned in 2 weeks before it’s due. I did that and I think that really helped me get an A in the class. I really like the course and I’d recommend the professor.”

It is important that you do not allow members to take the files out of the designated room where they are kept. This will ensure that everyone has access to the instructor files. Having up-to-date instructor files will assist members when it is time to register for classes the following semester.

Remember: instructor files are NOT test files. They are only to provide members information about different instructors and courses.

COMMUNICATION

Communication about both academic struggles and successes should be a primary concern of the chapter. Individuals must be urged to talk with their professors and academic advisors about scholastic problems. There should be an open line of communication between chapter members and the VP of Membership Enrichment about academic progress.

Indeed, chapters should also communicate their academic accomplishments in various ways. Include information in chapter newsletters to alumni/alumnae, parent’s newsletters, and on the chapter website.

FACULTY ADVISOR

The faculty advisor works closely with chapters on their scholarship program. This vital individual should provide guidance and support to the chapter. The expectations of the faculty advisor include the following:

- Assist the chapter in developing an overall scholarship program.
- Meet with the new members each semester to review their academic progress.
- Assist the chapter in developing an Academic Incentives program.
- Attend any scholarship receptions the chapter hosts.
- Be available to meet with individual members who are in need of academic assistance.
- Attend two chapter meetings/dinners each semester to get to know the members.

A common problem with many chapters in their relationship with their faculty advisor has been due to a simple failure of communication. The Faculty Advisor should not be merely a name on paper. Make certain that he/she understands what you want of him/her, and always follow through to see that he/her is treated with respect, invited to the house periodically, and kept fully informed. Do not contact your Faculty Advisor strictly because you have a form that needs signed (even worse, it has to be signed and sent in by tomorrow); this will certainly frustrate the Faculty Advisor. Your Faculty Advisor should receive copies of all reports and correspondence that relate to the scholarship program.

An active Faculty Advisor can be a great asset to the chapter in its efforts to achieve academic success. Do not abuse this role or take the volunteer for granted. Remember, the Fraternity Advisor is a volunteer and deserves chapter members' appreciation, cooperation, and recognition for his contributions.

DEVELOPING SCHOLARSHIPS

The central purpose of education is learning, and the apex of learning is scholarship. Each chapter should recognize that learning in a holistic experience – one not limited to just book, exams, and grades – and develop a standard for determining scholarship awards which take into account the most noteworthy learning achievements within all of the following areas of college life: academic accomplishment, campus and chapter leadership, and community involvement. What students learn in the classroom is enhanced, extended, and exemplified by active experience.

The selection committee should be made up of university administrators and professors and/or alumni from the chapter. This will ensure that recipients are chosen by an impartial selection committee. Applicants should be informed of when their application was received by the selection committee, as well as when they will receive information regarding the status of their application.

Each chapter should strive to offer at least one scholarship to chapter members, though many offer more. Scholarships can be restricted to number of years in the chapter, number of years in college, chapter leadership positions, or personal contribution to the chapter.

FINANCIAL AID

It is important for every chapter to recognize that scholarship is not just about academic achievement. It is also about rewarding members for their commitment to excellence in academics. That said, the VP of Membership Enrichment should also be responsible for informing chapter members of financial aid assistance throughout the year. This includes announcements of local and national scholarships, university financial aid packages, and outside funding. The Scholarship Director should make available all applications regarding scholarships and financial aid.