



Pledge Educator's Manual

Purpose & Overview

This edition of the pledge educator's manual was created with the following goals:

1. Streamline the document to a useable size & reformat the document so it is easier to navigate
2. Speak to the issues that deserve more than a quick thought, including:
 - a. Hazing & replacing bad practices
 - b. How to be an effective educator, leader and role model
 - c. In hopes of member and chapter buy-in, explain the philosophies behind the program
 - d. How to incorporate the hot topics without alienating your pledges
3. Provide a model that is flexible and easily adapted to meet specific chapter's needs
4. Provide alternative programming to meet a chapter's needs

The manual has been separated into two sections. The first speaks to the role of the program in your chapter and your role as the pledge educator. The second part introduces tangible activities and objectives that you can adapt and include in your own program.

You will notice several essays sprinkled throughout the document. These thoughts are taken from Moseley's Maxims, a collection of writings speaking to creating the ideal fraternity experience. There are over thirty maxims which are available on www.thetgi.net.

There are several other important supplementary documents available on thetgi.net:

- Pledge Education TGI Institute Presentation
- Pledge Retreat
- The Phoenix
- Ten Activities to build brotherhood
- Pledge Handbook
- Thoughts on Phi Alpha Week
- Pledge Education Reflection
- Tips & suggestions from other chapters
- Position statements and other thoughts on hazing
- Case Studies
- Sample Timelines

Finally, there are unofficial fraternity rituals used by many chapters throughout the realm during the pledge program. To obtain a copy of these rituals for your chapter's use, please e-mail Dave Sandell, Coordinator of Educational Programs at dsandell@sae.net or (800)233-1856, ext. 234. The rituals available include:

- The Four Pillars Ceremony – a pledge ritual commonly used during Phi Alpha week
- Neophyte Ceremony – for chapters who do not initiate at the end of Phi Alpha week, this is a great ceremony to use to bring closure to the pledge experience
- Big Brother ceremony – a great ceremony to use to instill the importance of the big brother program in your pledges.

The document begins by looking at the philosophies, models and theories behind the model program.

Philosophies, Models & Theories

“It’s a weak life if you don’t greaten.”

Fraternity Maxim 23 by John O. Moseley

“This is one of those maxims which says and means the same any way you read it. It is axiomatic that for every living thing there can be no standstill. It must move on or deteriorate.

“This is why fraternity leaders continually establish new goals and higher standards for their chapters. Once the striving has ceased, decay sets in.

“A national fraternity is judged not by its wealth, its name, its age, nor even by the number of its celebrities, but by its chapters. A weak fraternity has a lot of weak chapters. A strong fraternity has a lot of strong chapters. A great fraternity has a lot of great chapters “on the Glory Road” to a greatness which, though never attained because of ever higher ideals, nevertheless is incentive enough for a chapter climbing upward.

“Browning said it as follows: ‘Ah! But a chapter’s reach should exceed its grasp, Or what’s a fraternity for!’

“How does a chapter “Greaten”? By consciously sloughing off each year some worn out tradition, bad habit or solid ideal and putting in their place fraternity practices valid for the present day. Substituting Greek Week for Hell Week is only a beginning. Even weak chapters are doing that now because it is fashionable. Chapters truly striving for greatness are, line upon line and precept upon precept, establishing a code of conduct of the right sort and an esprit de corps so strong and so vital that to go against them for a normal individual would be unthinkable. Every fraternity chapter is endowed with the awesome responsibility of a tremendous power of coercive group pressure. The direction of that pressure unerringly indicates if the chapter is to “weaken” or “greaten”.

“Show me a chapter where certain things are done because they are right and certain other things are not done because they are not done and for no other reason than that they just simply “are not done,” and I will show you a chapter ‘on the Glory Road.’”

Your challenge is to end bad practices and replace them with ideal programs like this. The model program in this document is based on four main sources:

The Ritual: The Ritual of Sigma Alpha Epsilon works at the core of the program. The program is to prepare men to make the ultimate commitment to their fraternity at the time of initiation. Therefore, it is necessary to teach the values and expectations of our Ritual so that at the time of initiation they may make a wise and informed choice.

College Student Development Theory: Chickering’s Theory of Identity Development serves as the foundation for both the model program and model Phi Alpha week. The theory travels through the steps traditionally-aged college students take on their way towards identity resolution. In short, a first-year student should develop competence, learn to manage his emotions and move towards independence. Using this theory as a model is intended to facilitate the maturation process into a True Gentleman.

Previous programs: Several of the activities and timelines were based on previous programs, with three chapters deserving special recognition; California Alpha-Alpha (Sonoma State), Kansas Delta (Fort

Hayes State University) and Iowa Chi (University of Northern Iowa). Additionally, an ad-hoc committee on Member Education from the mid-90's created an exhaustive document that is still valid today, and many of their ideas were used here.

The True Gentleman Initiative: Many documents have been compiled in the last few years speaking to the benefits of a pledge education program that takes a members-based approach and focuses on chapter unity and the values of the Ritual and The True Gentleman. The TGI Institute Presentation on Pledge Education provides a great overview of these philosophies.

Briefly, it is important to revisit the differences between this modern view on pledge education and the traditional pledge education models of years past.

Take the time to consider the following questions:

- Does your chapter have an apathy problem?
- Are new initiates your laziest members?
- Does your brotherhood suffer from petty bickering over chapter issues?
- Do 10% of your chapter brothers do 90% of the work?

Many of these bad practices are direct or indirect results of the lessons members learn as pledges. By changing the foundation of your future brothers' experience, you can dramatically change your chapter's ultimate destination. However, many Pledge Educators have realized this and have still failed to initiate the proper adjustments. Why? For one reason and one reason only—just as you cannot have the ideal chapter without the ideal pledge education program, *you cannot have the ideal program without the ideal chapter*. If your program teaches the precepts of Sigma Alpha Epsilon yet the individual members of the chapter teach irresponsibility and ungentlemanly conduct, the majority of your pledge class will choose the path of least resistance.

Therefore, we must not solely focus our attention on a pledge program. We must also evaluate our current conditions within the chapter. Unfortunately, some of our brothers have the deluded notion that ΣAE is a one-time investment. An individual works constantly for one semester so that he may live the rest of his undergraduate career in a country club setting. As a member, he shouldn't have to do any work because he "paid his dues" as a pledge. He has already "earned" his right to be a brother. John O. Moseley prophesied such individuals and gave them a name so that we may possess greater means to call them to account. That name is Brother Zero.

Truly, what is the difference between a member and a pledge? Is it an invisible line that one crosses at the time of initiation? Is it a rite of passage that one must first earn? Membership in our noble order is both an accomplishment and a privilege, but it is, first and foremost, a commitment. At the time of initiation we commit ourselves to brotherhood, gentlemanly conduct, and honorable ideals. A brother earns the right to be an ΣAE by honoring his commitment – every day he is a member. You don't earn the right to be a husband solely during courtship, you don't earn the right to work for a company solely during the interview process, and you simply can't earn the right to be an ΣAE solely during pledgship!

Few people argue against the fact that "pledgship" is a time for personal growth, but why must that growth end at the time of initiation? Out of respect for this process, we have changed our philosophy from "pledge education" to "member education".

If your chapter has an apathy problem, then it probably stems from one or more of these three causes:

1. The way that your chapter educates members.
2. Lack of organization.
3. An absence of clear objectives.

By adopting an effective continuous member education program, you attack all three of these problems. Your chapter brothers' commitment to Σ AE will increase, the brotherhood within your chapter will improve, and you will see an overall increase in your entire chapter's attitude toward work. As a pledge educator, you can single-handedly determine the path your chapter will take in the coming years. Teach these men who have pledged their commitment to Sigma Alpha Epsilon what it means to be a member and your chapter will be able to flourish for years to come.

This chart established by Dave Westol, Executive Director of Theta Chi International Fraternity

Membership Education vs. Traditional Pledge Education

Individual	Group
Chapter Unity	Pledge Class Unity
Chapter Activities	Pledge Activities
Active Chapter	Pledge Educator
Understanding	Memorization
Pride-Acceptance	Fear-Intimidation
Continual Process	Ends
Ritual	Hell Week

The Role of the Pledge Educator

“Better a mediocre plan with a brilliant leader, than a brilliant plan with a mediocre leader.”

Fraternity Maxim 11 by John O. Moseley

“The leadership maxim adapted from military science is peculiarly applicable to fraternity administration. How often have we seen the best laid plans for a successful rushing season go awry because somebody failed somewhere along the line! How often does feeble leadership convert into total flops glowing prospects for triumphant Greek Week programs, mothers' weekend house parties or founders' day banquets! How often does the chapter pledge training program produce another batch of pin wearers instead of men with the fraternity stamped upon their hearts and lives?

“We are becoming a nation of planners. Bales of literature arrive monthly at chapter houses giving detailed directions for every fraternity operation. This is all to the good, for the better the plan, the better the chance for success. But in glorifying the plan, too often we forget the man. No one will deny that the techniques of keeping accounts, preparing reports, organizing a rush party and preparing for initiation should be analyzed clearly in written form; but those who believe that these pretty brochures will run a fraternity are fooling only themselves.

“Initiative, vision, imagination and emotion are a part of the toolkit of the successful leader. How does he get them in there? Ah – that is the rub! If you want a man to have initiative, rely on his

initiative; if you want him to have imagination appeal to his imagination; if you want him to have vision, make him see by extraordinary means those glories of corporate living and learning denied to those who see only with their eyes. Emotion which means moving away from the self is the foster parent of brilliant leadership.”

The aims and ideals of the fraternity reflect well on the aims and ideals of an ideal pledge program. The formal pledging ceremony identifies several of these ideals. A pledge should learn what it means to be a gentleman, what it means to be a friend and how those two ideals go hand in hand. A pledge should commit to attaining the highest academic achievements he is capable of. He should begin to become a mature man of character. Finally, as a display of zeal and fidelity, he should develop an understanding and knowledge of the aims, ideals and history of his fraternity.

Those aims and ideals include a sense of commitment to higher duties and laws other than personal enjoyment; remaining loyal to his brothers and his fraternity; acting in a manor that is most conducive to achieving and maintaining friendships; understanding the balance between wisdom and values and knowing when he needs to be aggressive in standing up for what he holds true to his heart (in short, propriety); learning to make decisions that best ensure the perpetuation of the fraternity; both intellectual and moral cultivation; being zealous in the pursuit of knowledge; and learning willpower and finding the ground between strength and virtue.

The role of the pledge educator is to facilitate all of these goals. For the sake of simplicity, all of these goals can be boiled down to three main objectives that should drive your program:

1. To assimilate new members into college and Greek life.
2. To accelerate their personal growth and development.
3. To instill the ideals of our fraternity.

Assimilation: New members should be sufficiently prepared for the daily obligations that will be required of them as students of your university/college, as members of the Greek community on your campus, and as brothers of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Accordingly, the program should provide an understanding of the following:

- Chapter operations.
- Chapter constitution and by-laws.
- The Fraternity Laws of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.
- Campus services
- The American Fraternity Movement (Greek alphabet, the history of your University/college and its Greek community, chapter history, etc).

Personal Growth: The program should foster individual development in the following areas:

- Scholastic achievement
- Time management
- Leadership skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Willingness to serve the community

Ideals: By the time of initiation, the new member should have:

- An understanding of our precepts as written explicitly in “The True Gentleman.”
- A favorable attitude toward the ideals expressed in the Ritual.
- A willingness to behave in accordance with both “The True Gentleman” and the Ritual.
- A basic familiarity with the history of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.
- A strong establishment of friendship with the members of the chapter.

The strength of your program will only dictate part of your success in achieving these goals. *Your* attitude, energy and dedication to the program and the new members of your chapter will reflect on the direction your chapter takes after you are gone. It is crucial that you understand the ritual and other aims of the fraternity, and that you can serve as a role model for these young men. The pledges will respect you because of your role in the fraternity – unlike other active brothers who will have to earn their respect. Being pledge educator comes with great responsibility, then. However, unlike most roles in the fraternity, it also comes with lasting rewards and thanks.

An effective pledge educator should be able to both challenge and support the pledges. You are to continually raise the bar and inspire these men to reach for it, but also you must be there to walk with them on their journey. You will be a friend, a role model, a brother, a teacher and at times a father figure. Take a moment to reflect on your commitment. Decide how best you can achieve all of these ideals using your own personality and strengths.

Assistant Educator & Committees

There are many duties involved in a successful pledge education program. For this reason, the pledge educator should enlist the entire chapter to assist.

Assistant Pledge Educator: You should select one assistant to serve with you. Base your decision upon the candidate’s moral character, work ethic, respect of the chapter, and ability to cooperate with you. Remember that he too will be a spotlight role model to the new member class. Secure your chapter’s future by choosing someone who has the potential to later serve as New Member Educator himself. The two of you should decide which duties each will be responsible for. It is recommended that the assistant oversee the Big Brother program, since it may become very time consuming and distract you from the main focus of your work.

Active Chapter: Only as part of a group may you succeed. Enlist the help of others and delegate authority. The entire membership should involve itself with the new member program. Each member must understand and uphold all program policies, and must keep himself informed about new developments. Have faith in your brothers and enable them to make their positive contributions. The sooner you organize your program, the more the brothers will be able to help. Through organization you empower those around you to choose where they will assist.

Organizing does not help, however, if no one agrees with the program’s objectives—there must be consensus within the chapter. Involve the chapter in formulating and approving a program that includes goals, policies, and rules. Listen to everyone’s suggestions. Debate with them if necessary. Encourage creativity and open lines of communication. Just remember that people work hardest to bring to fruition the projects in which they have a personal stake. Involve as many people as possible.

Committees: Committees should be used at the chapter’s discretion. Often chapter officers will assume the responsibility of working with the pledges in their respective functions. The recommended

committees that should work with specific programs include the pledge scholarship program, Phi Alpha week and the Big Brother program.

Program Organization

“Maturity is the goal of Education”

Fraternity Maxim 14 by John O. Moseley

“One meaning of the Latin word “educō” from which the English word education is derived is “to bring to maturity”. A complaint against present day education is that colleges and universities are slowing down rather than hastening the maturing process. A casual survey of the reading habits, study habits, work habits, speech habits and play habits of college students leads one to the conclusion that the schools somewhere along the line are not getting the job done. Into the electorate the world’s greatest democracy are thronging a horde of immature adolescents incapable not only of sound leadership, but even of an intelligent followship. The politicians recognize this for some of their antics surpass in foolishness fraternity exhibitionism at its worst.

“As a people we seem not only to have forgotten how to bring our young to maturity, but we even fail to recognize it in others. How does a bird know when to push the little ones out of the nest or a dog to send her puppies to shift for themselves? The answer is that they themselves were forced to maturity by a parent who had been forced to maturity who had been forced to maturity. History affirms that a paternalistic society tends to produce perpetual adolescents. The one and only unflinching test of maturity is self-reliance.

“Is your fraternity indeed an adjunct of education or an extension of the long, sheltering arm of a foolish and indulgent parent? In other words, are the men of your chapter being led in the paths of self-reliance or are they being protected from the realities of life? Comic strips, soap operas, survey courses, science classes with the fewest laboratory hours, the group requirement with repetitious courses, laxness in money matters, subservience to mass thinking, vicarious athletics, the ready made companionships, the easy entertainment of the fraternity home and the avoidance of every form of physical, mental and social effort are not materials designed to produce leadership for a country which is now the hope of the world. The root meaning of maturity is to ripen. Maturity is not a state of being but a process. If your fraternity exists not to destroy but to serve civilization, impel your devotees toward self reliance; the mark of maturity; the goal of education.”

By now the impact that a solid pledge program can have on its members should be very clear and it is time to build that solid program. The program should have one clear goal: to take a first-year student and build a True Gentleman in the rough. In hopes that your program will not be the summation of several random (albeit good) ideas, much research has been done and all paths have lead to one timeless theory in college student development. For the next couple pages, that theory will be explored and applied to a pledge program.

The theory of identity development (Chickering 1993) walks through seven areas where a college student will mature during their undergraduate experience. The first three vectors are what we are most interested in. The author believes that a student should progress through each of these vectors by the end of their first year. The student will simultaneously be experiencing the other vectors, but for the sake of a pledge program, the focus will be on the first three.

In short, the theory states that a student should develop intellectual, physical and interpersonal skills; be able to understand and manage his emotions; and develop a healthy sense of independence. If he achieves these three goals of education, he is on his way to becoming a mature man. In our terms, he is on his way to becoming a reliable man worthy of the term “brother”; a True Gentleman. If the fraternity can be a part of this process, the rewards will be reflected in the type of men we are able to recruit and grant alumni status to each semester.

Achieving Competence

According to Chickering, developing competence is best viewed as a pitchfork. The three prongs are intellectual, physical, and social competence. But the handle is the most important part – here you find the *sense* of competence – the confidence in your ability to cope with challenges and achieve your goals. This sense of empowerment is one of the cornerstones of an effective program. Empowerment comes from the chapter, the pledge educator, the big brother, the responsibility inherit in a fraternity, a sense of ownership in the group and individual’s success and a growing sense of the rewards that come to those who give all they can to their college affairs.

Developing competence is a result of the programming you should offer. ΣAE should be an active participant in a student’s learning. We should be concerned with his scholastic achievement, his opportunities to apply what he is learning in the classroom to life outside the classroom and his ability to manage his time.

ΣAE should give students opportunities to develop their physical and manual skills, which are almost never addressed in the classroom. Students should know how to upkeep their homes and keep themselves in shape. Participation in intramurals and wellness programs (work out schedules, etc) can be fostered through their ΣAE experience. Plus when members take ownership in the Fraternity house by helping maintain and enhance the physical structure, they will be more respectful of it throughout their years in the fraternity. Teach a man how to swing a hammer through service events like Habitat for Humanities or fundraisers like Spring Cleanups for faculty and staff. Even artistic skills like painting, music and others can be experienced through the fraternity as well if the chapter becomes a clearinghouse for information on extracurricular events being organized by your school.

Finally, ΣAE should create an environment conducive to making and keeping friends. Interactions with your brothers as well as sororities and other fraternities on campus are prime social outlets for our newest members. Members can learn good social graces, leadership skills and the ability to competently address the powers that be (our relationship with our EA’s, faculty and administration can be strikingly similar to our future relationship with our employers).

Managing Emotions

College isn’t easy. Everyone goes through their own emotional ups and downs and ΣAE should help the student learn to trust his emotions. A person who can direct his emotions towards positive outlets will be less likely to damage property, manage conflict better, avoid exploitative sexual encounters, not abuse alcohol and drugs and avoid excessive academic anxiety.

We can develop this ability to handle emotions better than almost every other student organization and classroom experience would allow. Fraternity lends itself to intimate, safe and thought-provoking sessions of conversation, both formal and informal. Formally, the chapter should host a “Gavel Pass” or “In the Bonds” type of activity. Other activities that help are reflection periods and the Topoi assignment.

The other component of this vector is recognizing and accepting the consequences of your actions. Personal accountability is one of the many symptoms of good leadership. The pledge program should revolve around the True Gentleman and the Ritual of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Helping these men become men of character should be your number one goal during the pledge program. The truth is, no amount of programming can replace the good or the harm the rest of the chapter can cause. The best programs in the nation are not necessarily ground-breaking. Instead, they are led by men who have learned from their own mistakes and are anxious to pass that knowledge along to the youngest members in hopes that they will not repeat these mistakes. What happens outside the pledge meetings and pledge events speaks far louder and makes a much more permanent impact on these men. This is a time where you need to be honest with yourself and start making the morally correct choices. Are you willing to be a role model for the future of your chapter? Do what you say you will do and watch your chapter flourish in the years to come.

But it is not enough for only you to be a man of character. Do the other members of the chapter make decisions you recognize as strictly moral and upright in their interactions with other members, fellow students and in all their relationships and choices in their life? The point here is not to scold but rather to call to your attention that all but the most empowered new member will model his fraternity experience after the men in the chapter he best connects with. Even with documents as powerful as the True Gentleman and the Ritual on the tip of our tongues, fraternity history, especially in the last twenty years, is littered with poor choices and regrettable acts whose consequences touched many people besides the individual responsible. Shaping a new student's life and knowing that he will affect your chapter for years to come is a great responsibility and deserves reflection, both on your own actions and the actions of the chapter collegiate.

Becoming Independent

During your first year of college, a new sense of freedom can be both liberating and terrifying. The goal of the fraternity during the pledge program should be to bring a sense of security and stability into said freedom. There are two stages of independence that should be addressed – emotional independence and instrumental or operational independence. If we can develop healthy coping behaviors for each of these, a first-year student will be well on his way to understanding the benefits of interdependence and the responsibilities that go with them.

Emotional independence begins with the disengagement from your parents. The need for support will be drawn from friends, but soon a student should discover a decreased need for approval from peers. Eventually, he should display an increased willingness to risk losing friends and gaining approval and status in order to pursue a strong interest or stand up for a strong belief. This too is a symptom of a leader and a True Gentleman.

Operational independence is the ability to carry on activities without constantly seeking help, and the ability to cope with problems on your own. You should be able to improvise in relation to your needs and desires, be self-sufficient and self-motivated. Finally, you should have the ability to leave one place and get to another if you wish.

Often colleges focus solely on academic work; right and wrong answers exist, strategies for meeting problems are spelled out, and assistance is available if you run into difficulties. All of these can hamper the development of emotional and operational independence. Fraternities can play a major role then. To structure your program around the idea of becoming independent, the expectations of the pledges should be laid out but there should be no one way of achieving it. If a pledge stumbles and

falls, be there to support him but allow him to help himself first. Teach history instead of making them regurgitate it. For more ideas on this topic, please review the section on “How to Teach History.”

The final stage of becoming independent is a return to interdependence. If someone understands himself and his emotions, he will be more capable of contributing to the group. As Chickering says:

“Recognition and acceptance of interdependence is the capstone of autonomy. One realizes that parents cannot be dispensed with except at the price of continuing pain for all; that he cannot be supported indefinitely without working for it; that he cannot receive the benefits of a social structure without contributing to it; that loving and being loved are necessarily complementary.”

Goals and Activities

Developing competence, managing emotions and becoming independent; with these ideas in mind, you can build a timeline and list of activities for the program. The next section is a review of many activities and philosophies you can work into your own program.

Teaching History

Learning history is a key component in the pledge education program. However, too often pledge educators take the easy road and only ask their members to memorize answers rather than taking time to chew on the information and understand it. If you want to impress upon your members the importance of the history of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, remember that concepts are more important than names, dates and places. The purpose of founding Σ AE is more important than where and when it was founded.

Miami of Ohio offers a self-test strategy that you can consider using:

“By providing your members with the necessary resources and then providing a self-test, the associate member will learn the material and gain a better understanding of the information than if he was studying for a test of his memory. Many chapters are beginning to find that associate members who are interested and want to be an active member of your chapter need little motivation to learn about your organization. Self-tests are provided to your new members in an effort to assist them in determining their own progress. Associate members who want to excel will learn the material and use the test to assist the learning process. Associate members who are along for the ride will look up the information and “fill-in-the-blanks”. Several semesters from now, the associate member who is motivated and wants to excel will still be a contributing member of your organization because he took the time to understand what your organization stands for. The associate member who is along for the ride probably has found a taxicab to another place.”

Reflection

Reflection is the internalization of lessons learned in an activity or event and how to connect these lessons to personal choices and behavior. In a fraternity, the choices and behavior of the individual often affect the Brotherhood. Thus, reflection teaches members the value of their individual choices and the impact that choice has on both themselves and their brothers.

Reflection should not happen immediately following a pledge activity. Before reflecting, twenty to thirty minutes should pass to allow the pledges and brothers to digest the activity. When reflection begins, there are numerous reflections models you can use. A simple model and one that is easy to

facilitate is “*The What, So What, Now What?*” model. This can be found in the pledge education core area on thetgi.net.

Big Brothers

A Big Brother program is one of the most important parts of the pledge program for a number of reasons. It creates a relationship between a first-year student and a man who has been through the trials and tribulations of freshman year. The Big Brother can be a mentor and a friend. A strong Big Brother will take the charge cultivating this relationship and will understand the weight of the difference he can make on his Little Brother. Therefore, it is important that each Big Brother and Little Brother pairing is chosen with thought and scrutiny behind it.

Some important criteria for matching members for this pairing (adapted from the NIC model for a Big Brother / Little Brother program):

- Students of the same major can help each other academically. The Big Brother knows what classes are most worthwhile, what the student needs to do to get his major on track and how to succeed in harder classes. As Big Brothers should have a positive academic influence on his Little Brother, you should consider holding Big Brother candidates to a minimum grade point average.
- Big Brothers should be dependable. They should do what they say they will do and should be willing to make themselves available to their Little Brother whenever possible.
- The Big Brother should possess a positive attitude about all things fraternity – from chapter meetings to intramurals, service events to running for office. There is a very good chance the Big Brother’s attitude will rub off on his Little Brother.
- Big Brothers and Little Brothers should have complementary personalities – sense of humor, communication styles, interests and hobbies are all tell-tale signs of whether the experience will be mutually beneficial.
- Members who are from the same hometown or have previously-established relationships should not be matched. The Big Brother program is designed to create new friendships.

A Big Brother should have specific responsibilities. A copy of these responsibilities should be given to them prior to the program, and they should be held accountable to them in order to ensure the best possible experience for a pledge.

(Adapted from the Phi Gamma Delta Handbook for Pledge Education p. 33-34)

A Big Brother should:

1. Be in good standing with the chapter (have a zero account balance)
2. Be at or above the all men’s average
3. Serve as a positive role model for his Little Brother
4. Monitor academic performance
5. Assist in the Little Brother’s social adjustment
6. Act as a sounding board when needed
7. Introduce and explain chapter customs to the Little Brother
8. Spend time with his Little Brother at least once a week (this is the absolute minimum)
9. Help and hold his Little Brother accountable for completing the requirements of the pledge program

A Little Brother should:

1. Meet with his Big Brother at least once a week
2. Not select a best friend, but an ideal person to emulate
3. Demand continual involvement from his Big Brother
4. Discuss any difficulties and problems with his Big Brother
5. Use his Big Brother as a link for fraternal, academic and social issues

Pairings should be chosen by the Pledge Educator with the consent of the Assistant, the executive council or any other entity that can offer other opinions. Little Brothers should be given input as well. One strategy is to have the pairings picked during the second week of the program. Then the pledges can offer one to three names of men they want to be their Big Brother and members can do the same.

A final note: It is always important to reiterate that the success of the pledge program does not lie in the hands of one or two people. The pledge educator and a great Big Brother can only do so much if the entire chapter isn't behind them. Every member should have an interest in every pledge.

Group Discussion & Lectures

On most days the first-year student will spend three-four hours in a classroom listening to someone talk. This is not a criticism; it's simply the only efficient way of getting information to a group of 300 or more men and women.

Pledge meetings should be livelier than this. Chapter members should lead discussions on topics with which they are familiar. Members should be invited to speak on chapter operations, finances, recruitment, on an aspect of history in which they are particular interested, or inspiring topics such as: Why fraternity? What is the role of fraternity in a college community? In order to have lively discussions ground rules should be established and open-ended questions presented. Help your newest members discover the answers for themselves. Help them be vested in the role of a fraternity by letting them take an active role in their own learning.

Outside Speakers

The use of outside speakers is encouraged as a means of exposing new members to the many publics with which the fraternity relates. Suggested speakers may include: University President, Greek Advisor, prominent alumni, Province Archon or International Fraternity Staff Members, IFC President, Student Body President, etc. For a more complete list, please visit the Continuing Education and University Relations core areas on thetgi.net.

The Phoenix

Reading The Phoenix will help new members learn about our history, values, structure, government and policies, finances, and insignia. After reading assignments, hold group discussions to process the material. A word of caution: The Phoenix should never serve as a primary focus of a good pledge program.

Case Studies

Case studies exhibit some of the problems and solutions that a fraternity encounters. Aside from illustrating situations for pledges, case studies may reveal a practical solution to a current problem. Case

studies are meant to illustrate that a fraternity is a human institution made up of people which varying values, strengths, and weaknesses. A collection of case studies is available on thetgi.net

The Ropes of Σ AE

The final recommended area of study encompasses all of the basic ideas and expectations your members need to know to assimilate into the culture of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Its history, its songs, its symbols and much more are all part of this great tradition that members should perpetuate each year. Here is a brief list of the ropes of Σ AE

- Rules and regulations – chapter, national organization, IFC and school policies
- Chapter insignia – the letters, colors, flower, flag and every other symbol of pride
- The Greek Community – other chapters on campus, how to properly interact with each other
- Founding of Sigma Alpha Epsilon – a basic understanding of the larger organization
- Local chapter history – a basic understanding of how your chapter has progressed
- Structure of Σ AE – Supreme Council, the Fraternity Service Center, the TGI and convention
- Opportunities with Σ AE – Province and National Leadership School, UIFI, Futures Quest, scholarships

By now you should have a good blend of weekly activities and bigger-picture strategies. Your final step before the semester begins should be to develop this into a 4-12 week program. There are sample timelines available in the pledge education core area for you to adapt to your needs. Pick the topics that are most important to your chapter and don't forget to have fun!

If your chapter is running quality programs that you want to share with the rest of the realm, please send a summary of your event to Dave Sandell, Coordinator of Educational Programs at dsandell@sae.net.

A word on hazing...

If you are ready to end hazing in your chapter, we want to provide as many resources to you as possible to support your mission. It is best not to fight this sacred cow alone, so round up your supporters and begin developing a plan to replace hazing in your chapter. It is not enough to eliminate it – you must fill the void left by ending this bad practice with quality practices that make it more likely hazing will never return.

The NIC has a document available on ending hazing that comes highly recommended – “Breaking Down Hazing and Building Up Brotherhood” – please visit www.nicindy.org for ordering information. The following list is recreated from that document. If your chapter is still hazing, please consider what is being said here.

Hazing can become so embedded in a fraternity's culture, that the members don't even know why they are doing it. In these cases, convincing members that hazing is wrong may not be an insurmountable task.

Most of the time, however, it won't be that easy.

Some members develop a tremendous amount of pride in their chapter's hazing practices and they will argue passionately against change. They refuse to think of other ideas or alternatives.

The following excuses are often expressed when conversations about hazing are started. Below each excuse are responses that can be used to help show others that hazing must stop if fraternities are going to continue to exist.

“It builds respect”

Think about people in your life who you respect, and ask yourself why you respect them. Do you respect your parents, teachers, mentors or advisors? Did they have to haze you to earn your respect? Think about people who humiliated you, or made you feel unaccepted or different. Do you respect them?

“It creates pledge class unity”

Do new members join a pledge class, or do they join a fraternity? Pledge class unity creates divisions within a fraternity. Chapter unity should be the goal.

“They have to earn their letters”

So, all you have to do is earn your letters for a certain amount of time and then you can coast? Fraternity members should be earning their letters every day.

“It’s tradition”

Some may be surprised to learn that hazing hasn’t been around forever. Did our founders haze each other? The ultimate traditions of a fraternity are the values, principles and rituals. These have been passed down since the beginning of Greek life. Hazing entered the picture much later.

“Pledging shouldn’t be easy”

Fraternity membership in general isn’t easy – it requires a commitment of both time and responsibility. Is the new member education program creating dedicated brothers, or simply creating dedicated pledges that will lose motivation immediately upon initiation?

“The new members will feel like they accomplished something”

This attitude will lead to poor chapter motivation. Hazing causes initiation to be seen as an end, and not a beginning. The new members will feel like their work is done after new member education is over.

“What about the military or sports teams? Don’t they haze?”

Maybe they do, but that is not an excuse for fraternities to haze. Each of these groups is unique and each tries to accomplish particular goals. Hazing does not help fraternities accomplish their goals of lifelong brotherhood. Sports teams and the military typically have policies against hazing as well.

“I was hazed, so they should be”

This is probably the most common excuse. It is dangerous because it is placing the bonds of fraternity into the hands of hazers. True bonds are developed through experiencing things together, and working with each other towards shared goals. The ritual binds us together, not hazing.

(Adapted from materials written by David Westol, Theta Chi Fraternity)

Stop the excuses!

There is no good excuse for hazing or any evidence that it does anything positive for an organization or individual.