



CHAPTER THIRTEEN: YOUR ALPHA AND ITS ORGANIZATION

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Chapter 13 of the newest edition of The Chi Psi Story follows.





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CHI PSI IS ONE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION COMPOSED OF A number of “sub-organizations” or collegiate groups known as Alphas – the entities known most commonly in other fraternities as chapters. The Fraternity is built around the Alphas, of course, and without Alphas there would be no members. As outlined in Chapter 11 on national structure, an Alpha holds a charter approved by the whole Fraternity voted by the delegates to the National Convention.

Charters, like your membership, are a privilege. They are not given unconditionally. Each Alpha holds its charter in trust from the National Fraternity and must always uphold the principles, traditions, and standards of Chi Psi, never tarnishing the name of the Fraternity, keeping “Purple unmingled and Gold untarnished.” Just as every member of your Alpha deserves an ideal experience as part of a good fraternity, the National Fraternity deserves to have each Alpha bring “only the best of criticism” upon Chi Psi.

In a sense, a national fraternity is comparable to a franchise business, and the local franchisees are the Alphas. In the legal language of a Convention resolution, the 1963 Convention recognized that while “the relationship between the Alpha and the Chi Psi Fraternity is necessarily dependent upon mutual respect among the Alphas and the premise that the Alpha finds value in affiliation with Chi Psi which fills a need and provides advantages to the members of the Alpha, individually and collectively,” it also recognized that “the relationship between the Chi Psi Fraternity and the Alpha is necessarily dependent upon acceptance by the Alpha of certain standards set by the Fraternity, which standards cannot be ignored if an Alpha hopes to retain affiliation.” In other words, if the Alpha wants to exist and be recognized, it must follow the national rules and policies.

It is only human to boast a little of that of which we are proud. Fraternity men are but human; they are not modest. Neither can they ever be. Nor is Chi Psi in the sense that it will refuse to speak well and proudly of itself.

We are not, then, modest in the common application of the word. The Brother said, “our modesty.”

Has he not heard of an old principle of Chi Psi, a principle born with her, and always recognized through these years?

That principle enjoins those modest customs and practices of which our Brother spoke.

Need we be more plain?

That principle is “our ancestral virtue.”

*– William Hotchkiss, Φ 1886
First alumnus editor of the P&G*



It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.

— J.R.R. Tolkien,
The Fellowship of the Ring

Is Chi Psi Fraternity a business or is it a brotherhood? It is both, really. One could say that Chi Psi is in the business of promoting brotherhood. Chi Psi was the first to found on the principles of brotherhood, and the cultivating of elevated and refined friendships remains our primary purpose. But as with almost any commercial or social entity, in order to fulfill its mission, a fraternity must deal with issues of personnel, leadership, administration, finance, recruitment, outreach, social interaction, and much more. It faces almost every difficulty that confronts a typical business.

Being a part of Chi Psi may be your first real opportunity to take an active part in a major organization. Even if you were active in other groups in high school or even college, the operation of an Alpha may seem entirely new. So it may come as a surprise to you that the Alpha needs to be run in a business-like manner to deal with the myriad challenges that come its way.



The Alpha is also a team. Whether competing in a championship intramural game, raising money for a local philanthropy, or studying for exams, the Alpha has to work hard together to reach its goals. In return, you and your Brothers will have a more enjoyable Alpha experience. You deserve the best Fraternity experience possible, but you must work hard and give of yourself to achieve that goal.

Each Alpha, whether founded in 1841 or 2022, operates under the same “franchise system” and rules. Charter provisions for Chi Psi on all of our campuses are essentially the same. All Chi Psis are bound together by the same bond of brotherhood, and so, in a sense, each of our Alphas is the same. Brothers at your Alpha have all the same rights and responsibilities as those at any other Chi Psi school.

But why do some Alphas seem more successful than others? Certainly, there are campus and Lodge differences, local conditions which may give some an apparent advantage. But is that all? What is necessary for an Alpha to be “successful?” Part of it is simply expectations. When the Alpha *expects* to be successful, more often it *is* successful.

Each Alpha is a complete self-governing organization, subject to rules and procedures of the Fraternity and of the host campus. Organization is certainly a key to the success of an Alpha, but that organization is only as good as the individuals leading it. Good leaders are essential. Individual and group leadership training is available through the programs of Chi Psi’s Program for Excellence.

Chi Psi offers the Program for Excellence (or “P4E”) to prepare all new Chi Psis for the challenges of the twenty-first century with educational and personal development experiences not offered in the college classroom. (A more complete overview of the P4E is found at the end of Chapter 3.) Individual Brothers can gain excellent insights into their own personalities and leadership styles through the Program for Self Development and the Program for Leadership Development. The Alpha can benefit greatly from programs such as the Alpha Management Retreat to create a strategic plan, set goals, develop a calendar, and determine steps to see that the plan is carried out.

ALPHA OPERATIONS

THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF MOST ALPHAS resemble that of a small business. Alpha size may range from twenty to one hundred members, and so Alpha budgets may range from \$10,000 to more than \$600,000 annually. Fraternity members must learn quickly how to keep

the business of fraternity alive and prosperous.

One of the best ways for you to be involved in your Alpha and benefit the most from your Chi Psi experience is to become an Alpha officer or committee chair. While some offices may be more crucial than others, every office from #1 to Choregus is extremely important to the success of your Alpha. The Fraternity started the Uniform Accounting System and other management tools more than sixty years ago, and those have been updated and revised regularly to assist you in your job. Most of the officer and committee chair jobs are described briefly below and more fully developed on line.

The #1 serves as the president, the chief executive officer of the Alpha, and he has the ultimate responsibility for the successful operation of the Alpha. He presides at all Alpha meetings and events, observes parliamentary rules, appoints committees, maintains order and decorum, and reports to the Alpha's alumni, the Chi Psi Central Office, and the college's administration and IFC. The #1 develops consensus for Alpha goals and strategies and coordinates with other officers to achieve them. He advises other officers, serves as the chief spokesperson for the Alpha, complies with the customs of the Fraternity, and is responsible for all Alpha property.

The #2 serves as the vice president, the go-to-guy for the #1, and should be fully capable of directing the Alpha when the #1 is sick, out of town or otherwise unable to be present. Sometimes referred to as the Internal Vice President, the #2 may oversee and assist the "internal" committees of the Alpha (such as pledge education, ritual, etc.).

The #3 is also a high-level leader. Far more than just the minute-taker at meetings, he usually is considered the External Vice President, overseeing and assisting with the "external" committees (social, community service, alumni relations, social, philanthropy, etc.). His critical oversight duties should be a collaborative force for his committee chairs. As recording and corresponding secretary of the Alpha, he keeps accurate minutes of meetings and corresponds with the community outside the Lodge.

The #4 serves as the treasurer, the Alpha's chief financial officer. The smooth and proper functioning of this position affects all areas of Alpha operations, and he must ensure that the Alpha lives within its means. The #4 collects and deposits all Alpha funds, sends out bills for funds owed, and pays bills due in a timely manner. The #4 must also communicate with each brother regarding the status of their account. He works closely with many major Alpha officers, but especially and day-to-day with the #1.



The #5 serves as the Sergeant-at-Arms, protecting formal Alpha meetings from entry by uninitiated persons and assisting in other procedural ways. In most Alphas he also has certain additional esoteric and ritual duties.

The Recruitment Chair (#33) is also known as the Rush Chair. He serves as chair of the rush committee and is responsible for coordinating the successful recruitment of new members into the Alpha. Responsibilities include analyzing membership numbers and setting recruitment goals, planning and implementing a rush program and schedule, motivating the brotherhood to rush well, following through with alumni recommendations, and much, much more.

The New Member Educator, or Pledge Educator (#34), educates pledges about the traditions and customs of the Fraternity. He is one of the most essential roles in the Alpha and should be facilitated by a Brother or team of Brothers with a high level of

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf. "And so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

—J.R.R. Tolkien,
The Fellowship of the Ring





*Though much is taken,
much abides; and though
we are not now the strength
which in old days moved
earth and heaven, that
which we are, we are.
One equal temper of
heroic hearts, made weak
by time and fate, but strong
in will to strive, to seek,
to find, and not to yield.*

*From "Ulysses"
by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

seniority. His goal is not to mold good pledges, but to make good Brothers by developing the new member's own qualities and characteristics of excellence. A proper new-member education program should also instill in each member a loyalty to Chi Psi, an understanding of the Fraternity's values, and a desire to live by the values and concepts upon which Chi Psi was founded. The Fraternity's Program for Pledge Education provides a detailed curriculum and an array of optional activities for the Pledge Educator to implement.

The Scholarship Chair (#37) – As an organization that strives to advance Brothers in "intellectual, moral and social life," it is important that intellectual stimulation is created outside the classroom. He should aim to create an academically motivated environment for the Brothers. He serves to administer the programs of the Chi Psi Educational Trust at the Alpha level, and to promote a positive attitude toward academic excellence within the Lodge. He is responsible for coordinating with the Central Office so that the Alpha is participating



every year in all the Chi Psi Education Initiatives, including the Program for Self-Development (PSD), Alpha Management Retreat (AMR), Program for Leadership Development (PLD), and Scholarship and Fellowship scholarship programs.

The Alumni Relations Chair (#35) – To understand where the Alpha is going it must understand where it has been. Through interactions with your Alpha's alumni, Brothers can gain perspective while learning what practices have and have not worked in the past. At the very least, alumni expect consistent and transparent communications; without a dialogue there can be no mutual benefit. There should be monthly email blasts to all of your alumni. Building of strong relations with alumni is a key element of a successful Alpha. He is charged with coordinating the Alpha side of alumni events, from Homecoming and Founders Day to Initiation Banquets. He works with the Alpha Editor and alumni association officers to produce a regular newsletter sent twice a year to all your alumni.

The Alpha Editor (#36) – One of the easiest ways to stimulate positive relationships with alumni and parents is the distribution of a regular newsletter. The Alpha Editor collects relevant content and works with alumni volunteers to prepare the newsletter for distribution. He may also have responsibilities related to the Alpha's website or Online Community group. He works in partnership with the alumni association officers to organize and produce all the Alpha's publications. He works closely with the #1, Alumni Relations Chair, and alumni association officers to produce an alumni newsletter.

The Lodge Manager (#38) – The building in which your Alpha lives is a key piece of the Chi Psi experience. The Lodge manager is the keeper of this building. The Lodge manager must first ensure the safety of all Brothers and guests. His duties should include: Fire safety including fire drills, Cleaning schedules, and Relationships with local fire, police, landscaping. He is generally responsible for the maintenance of the physical plant or campus space your brotherhood occupies and which represents the home of those Brothers who came before us, as well as those who will join our bonds in the future. Whether the Lodge is owned or managed by the Alumni Corporation or the University, the Lodge manager coordinates the daily maintenance and upkeep of the building. He is the person to notify when there is a problem.

The Steward (#42) – If you have a kitchen operation, the Steward is responsible for all the operations relating to the management of the

kitchen and dining room. This is not always the most glamorous job, but it requires the same patience, decision-making, and leadership skills, and responsibilities that the #1s and #4s must demonstrate. The position strongly affects the Lodge's finances and day-to-day morale.

The Community Service Chair (#40) coordinates the Alpha's service to the community through fundraising, service hours, and various philanthropic projects. All Chi Psis are encouraged to give to the community around them, and we participate both individually and as Alphas throughout the year. A particular Lodge philanthropic project is usually sponsored around mid-April for National Youth Service Day.

The Intramurals Chair (#41) coordinates all Lodge teams, specifically to ensure that everyone in the Alpha is aware of scheduled practices and competitions. He also recruits Brothers to play on teams, and he meets with other campus IM representatives to work out schedules and conflicts, etc.

The Social Chair (#43) is responsible for the planning, organization, risk management, and responsible carrying out of the social program. An unsupervised social program can be disastrous to an Alpha's finances and its campus reputation.

The Choregus (#32) is responsible for maintaining the singing traditions of the Alpha. Chi Psi has always been known as a singing fraternity, and the songs we sing include those of Fraternity and the local campus. Every Chi Psi should know "Chi Psis Ever," "Philip Spencer," "The Banquet Song," and "Maid of Chi Psi," but there are many other very singable and fun songs (to be found here in Chapter 16) that are favorites at many Alphas.

The Historian (#25) keeps the official history of the Alpha each year in the form of a scrapbook, a ledger, or other memorabilia. The history could include major events and honors achieved by the Alpha and by individual active and alumni Brothers.

The Risk Management Chair (#51) – He would normally be a senior Brother in the Alpha with enough respect to execute his difficult responsibilities. He should be a member of the Alpha's executive committee and have input into each and every aspect of the Alpha's operation. He must be familiar with every detail of the rules, policies, and expectations enforced by Chi Psi Fraternity, the host institution, and the community. He uses this familiarity to scrutinize each activity and event for violations and danger. The Risk Management Chair is used as a second set of seasoned eyes on the lookout for potential problems for the Alpha. He should liaise



with the local police and fire departments to establish communication and positive working relationships. He coordinates risk management policies and programs to keep the Alpha and all members and guests safe from harm.

ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS

TIME AND EXPERIENCE HAVE SHOWN THAT the most successful Alphas of Chi Psi are served by strong alumni organizations. Each Alpha is required to have at least one active Alumni Advisory Board or Alumni Corporation to provide support and oversight for the undergraduate Alpha. While undergraduate Alphas have revolving memberships, changing leadership styles, and fluctuating levels of prosperity over the years, the alumni of the Alpha are a more constant presence to provide stability. Formally incorporated into alumni boards, these groups serve many purposes within Chi Psi, which will vary depending on how the alumni groups are structured.

*Iron rusts from disuse;
water loses its purity
from stagnation ... even
so does inaction sap the
vigor of the mind.*

– Leonardo da Vinci

*The man who does not
read has no advantage over
the man who cannot read*

– Mark Twain





A small gathering of Alpha Nu alumni: Thomas D. Lindborg '83, James C. Roberts '82, Scott D. Sanford '84, T. Denny Sanford '58, Douglas A. Basile '82, and Dr. Daniel B. Ahlberg '67.

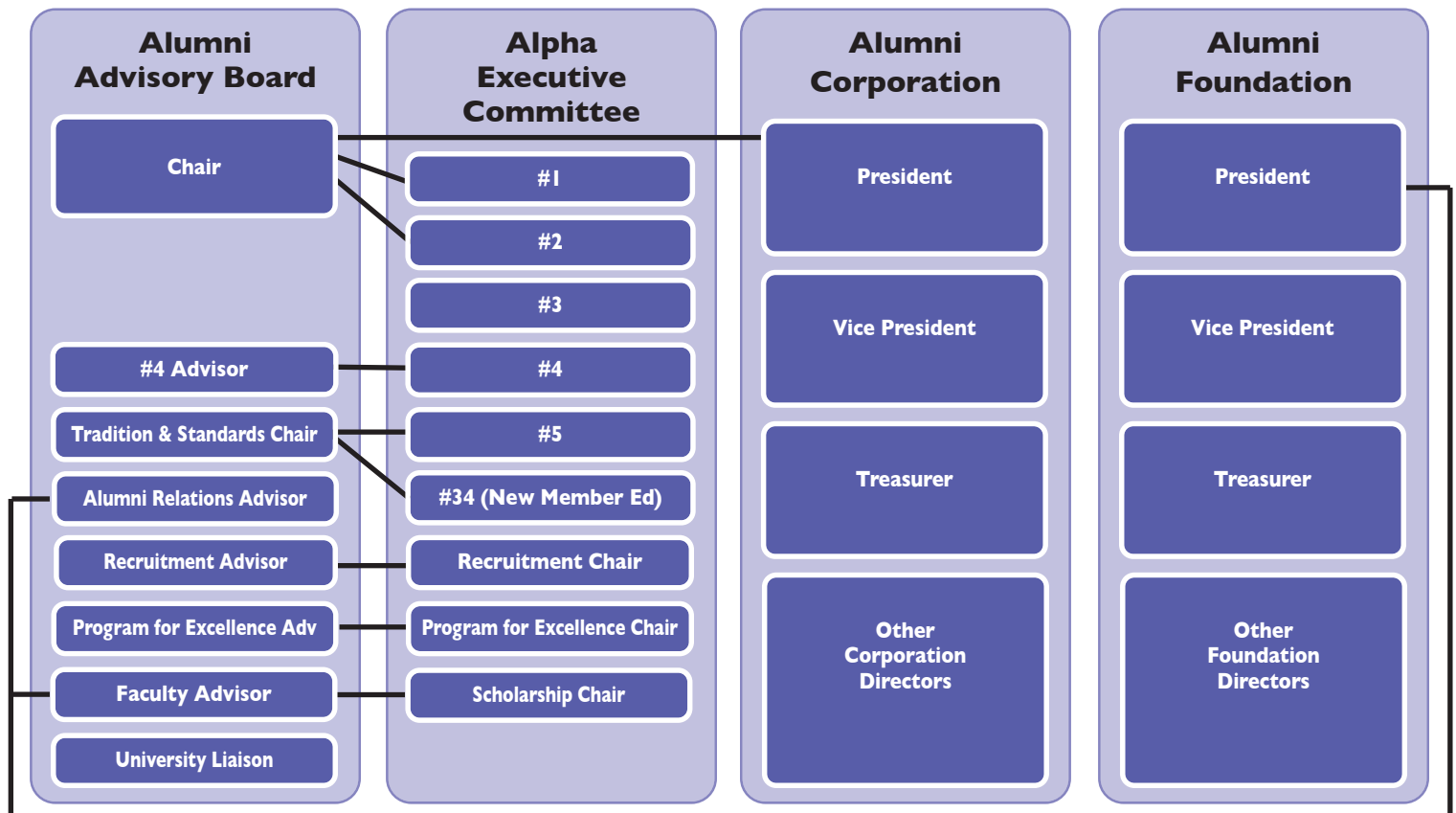
Leadership is not about being the best. It's about making everyone else better.

A key responsibility of alumni boards is to provide advice and counsel to undergraduate Brothers. Chi Psi believes that serving as an undergraduate officer should be a learning experience, so alumni boards make every effort to allow the Alpha's undergraduate leaders to govern with minimal alumni interference. When issues become too large or problems too complicated, however, the undergraduate leaders have the alumni boards to turn to for advice. For example, the board might help resolve cases involving major disciplinary problems,

damage to the Lodge, financial issues, and problem employees.

Additionally, there are times when the boards may see problems developing within the Alpha that are not noticed by the actives. Most active corporations and advisory boards send representatives to Alpha meetings, dinners, recruitment, and initiation to interact with the Brothers and stay informed about the Alpha's operations.

An active alumni board also helps to foster a positive relationship between the active Brothers and the Alpha's alumni. Working with the #1 and the undergraduate Alumni Relations Chair, the board is the conduit for maintaining a symbiotic relationship between undergraduates and alumni. Alumni boards work closely with their Alpha to produce alumni newsletters and to plan Homecomings, Founders Days, and any other alumni-related activities. Active Brothers use the corporation to identify alumni who can assist with various pursuits, such as providing career guidance and mentoring; establishing speaker programs or series for Brothers on current events or political issues; supplying academic support for Brothers who may need assistance with particular classes or projects; assisting recruitment through identifying and recommending of prospective pledges; contributing to pledge education as guest instructors, imparting an historical perspective to the



Alpha; presiding at initiations to help perpetuate our traditions; providing financial support for the building; and enhancing the Alpha's relationship with its host institution.

Alpha Lodge Corporations –

Property ownership and management are the key functions for the Lodge Corporation. If Chi Psi owns the Lodge, it would be the Lodge Corporation that holds the title. It acts as a landlord for the undergraduate Alpha. Usually, the Alpha charges Brothers for living in or using the Lodge facilities, and then pays rent to the corporation. As landlord, the Corporation assumes responsibility for major maintenance of the physical plant, while the undergraduates assume responsibility for day to day upkeep of the facility and grounds. On occasion, it may be necessary to carry out major renovations or expand the Lodge. When this occurs, most corporations conduct capital campaigns among their alumni to fund renovations or additions to the facility.

Alpha Educational Foundations

– The alumni of each Alpha should have established an Alpha Educational Foundation (as defined by the Internal Revenue Code) for the purposes of promoting individual excellence and cultural development within Chi Psi. Each foundation elects its own board of directors and establishes its own goals to support a local Alpha. For instance, a foundation may provide books and computers for the Lodge libraries, fund scholarships and grants-in-aid for undergraduates, or organize a monthly speaker series. Foundation gifts are tax-deductible.

Alumni Advisory Boards –

Many successful Alphas have an Alumni Advisory Board. This group is the one that most directly provides



advice and council to the Alpha and that promotes alumni events and communication. The Advisory Board also helps with goal setting and maintaining long-term vision of the Alpha. The presence of this board allows the Lodge Corporation and Alumni Foundation to focus more specifically on the Lodge and academic resources, respectively.

Regional Alumni Associations –

Regional Alumni Associations are so called because they do not represent any one Alpha but draw their members from a number of different Alphas. The Regional Associations serve an important purpose by providing the means for Chi Psi alumni of all colleges and universities to get together socially. A Chi Psi is never a stranger in a city where there is an association. A recognized association must have at least fifteen members, elect officers, and meet at least once annually to send a voting delegate to the National Convention.

Much of what people learn in college is learned outside of class, not in it. If those experiences are all with people who are basically clones of yourself, it isn't good.

– Illinois Chancellor Morton Weir

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

