

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences



January 1, 2018

Overview:

2017 was a challenging year for the Fraternity. Staffing issues at the National Office as well as impropriety by Fraternity employees are discussed in the report by the Grand Master Alchemist and the Grand Recorder. Therefore, I don't feel it necessary to repeat describing the issues in detail, but the problems have negatively affected the operations of the collegiate branch throughout the year. However, even with the struggles we have had, the collegiate chapters have continued to work to advance the objects of the fraternity and increase our membership. As Grand Collegiate Alchemist I have worked with the District Counselors throughout the year to help the office meet our obligations to the collegiate chapters. In addition, there are several projects we worked on this year that I will cover in detail below.

District Counselors:

When talking about the District Counselors I need to start by saying how much I appreciate everything they have done during the year and through my time as GCA. The participation in the monthly chats, attendance at Supreme Council meetings and installations, and overseeing the chapters' activities have demonstrated their commitment to the Fraternity and the willingness to work with the GCA to improve the Fraternity. The DCs have been a lifeline between the chapters and the National Office during our transitional periods and for that I am extremely grateful.

Larger districts and district committee involvement.

One of my main goals of the biennium was to increase the involvement of district committees in the governance of the Fraternity. With the growth in the collegiate branch the options are to either increase the number of District Counselors and the number of districts or to keep the numbers nearly the same and increase the number of district committee volunteers we have working with the chapters and groups. To this end the number of districts was decreased after the 2016 conclave and districts were changed to accommodate fewer DCs. To properly evaluate the usage of the district committees I gave the District Counselors the task to get their committees expanded to have at least one member assigned to each chapter and get those volunteers involved with the workings of the Fraternity. An added benefit is that an increase in the number of volunteers will help the Fraternity in the future with a greater pool of manpower for Fraternity tasks.

Although the full evaluation will be done for the biennial report, 2017 has given me a good opportunity to evaluate the process. I would say that the involvement of the committees has been mixed. Most of the DCs increased the number of committee members and tried to involve them in various tasks but it seems to be a challenging endeavor. I think this might be as much a need for direction and structure but that is something that needs further analysis.

Communication plans.

This fall I also asked each District Counselor to contact each of their chapters and develop a communication plan to effectively communicate with each chapter in their district. I believe this was a useful exercise to determine how collegiate chapters want to communicate with the District Counselor and the National Office. I received reports from the majority of the DCs and looked at common themes throughout. Although chapters are quite different, most prefer email as the major mode of communication. In addition, some helpful communication themes were emphasized such as keeping emails concise with only one topic, asking for a specific reply, and giving deadlines if appropriate. At the end of the exercise

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we discussed the results in a monthly chat and I hope that it has helped the DCs and their committee members better communicate with their chapters. Since chapter leadership turns over very quickly, I believe this would be a good activity at the start of each school year to set expectations and plans for the most effective communication possible.

National Office Information Technology:

One of the major projects I have been working on this year is to modernize our National Office IT policies and procedures. Along those lines I have worked with GR Stipp and AGR Busch to accomplish several items. First was to evaluate an independent IT service provider. Several providers were identified, evaluated, and price quotes were obtained. Consulting with the GR, AGR and office staff, a provider was hired to manage our office IT. Over the next several months I have worked with the Office Staff and the GR to make sure we are receiving the service we expect from this provider. We have come a long way through this year to get our IT processes, software, and equipment to a level to make sure we can continue to provide services to our membership. We will continue to evaluate our office operations as well as the IT services we receive to keep our office operations as efficient as possible.

One of the IT policies that was recommended by our legal team was to internalize our Email system so Fraternity email is controlled by the Fraternity and not simply forward emails to personal accounts when dealing with Fraternity business. After much deliberation we are in the process of migrating all Fraternity email to Google GSuite for business. GSuite will allow us to not only bring our email under the control of the Fraternity but will also offer a lot of tools to help us communicate. Over the course of the next months and years we will continue to explore the opportunities a business communication system provides the Fraternity.

Summary and Plans:

In conclusion, it has been a very eventful year. Although it was challenging I believe the Fraternity will become a stronger organization as we recover from our hardships. Therefore, I have no specific plans for the rest of my term as GCA. The Supreme Council, GR, AGR, and office staff are continuing to improve our processes, evaluate new technologies, and support our members as best we can. I will continue to play my part in these activities, help the DCs strengthen their committees and communicate more effectively with the collegiate chapters. I hope we can move the Fraternity forward and start the next biennium as a stronger organization.

Yours in the Double Bond,



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