

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional In Chemistry

Office of the
GRAND
PROFESSIONAL ALCHEMIST



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2015 Grand Professional Alchemist Annual Report

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2015 has been a busy year for the Fraternity and for the professional branch. This has been an exciting year serving as Grand Professional Alchemist and it is an honor to continue my service for Alpha Chi Sigma. Building on the monumental growth of the collegiate branch and thanks to our professional brothers, the professional branch has started to see some growth and stabilization this biennium. The fraternity has also embarked on changes to how we fundraise, and with anything new, we have had a bumpy start. I have also worked as Grand Professional Alchemist to be more engaging with the Professional Branch and after calling and visiting with each available Professional Representative, I am visiting with each available professional chapter president as well. I am also endeavoring to generate documentation and institutionalization of some practices for the office of Grand Professional Alchemist, such as the ACS-Alpha Chi Sigma luncheon to go along with the office to pass to my successor.

Briefly, for the biennium thus far, I have the following to report:

- **Professional Representatives**—Most professional representatives are doing very well. The Professional Representatives have been meeting monthly by Skype call. Over 2015, the PR's have provided perspective on the annual solicitation, the chemical safety board, and operating practices of the fraternity. In addition, several PR's are pursuing individual projects for the betterment of the order. PR's have participated in the social media portion of the annual solicitation by posting reminders on their individual Facebook profiles. Finally, several PR's have continued participating in 2014's project that aspires to get Brother's within the respective localities to interact, by hosting social events. For the class of 2017, Tim Deschaines and Kathryn Cavanaugh were re-elected and Stephanie Bates and Hannah Bowman were elected. The fraternity is grateful for the service of Michael Clager and Cassandra Watson who both retired at the expiration of their terms as professional representatives at the conclusion of 2015.
- **Professional Chapters and Groups**—This has been an exciting biennium for the professional branch! The professional branch has grown this biennium, with the addition of three professional groups and the chartering of a new professional chapter. By the end of 2014, Bluegrass Professional Group and Cincinnati Professional Group were organized and recognized. By the conclusion of 2015, Pittsburgh Professional Group was also organized and recognized. In 2015 through years of effort as Kansas City Professional Group, Kansas City Professional Chapter was re-activated. Welcome back!

During 2015, St. Louis Professional had met every condition of their terms of probation and has been restored to good standing. St. Louis Professional Chapter has been exemplary in their communications with their DC and the National Office. The chapter has been holding regular meetings, functions, and has been discussing outreach activities. GDC Rachel Palasky and the chapter officers were instrumental in bringing St. Louis Professional back to vitality. During 2015, Los Angeles Professional Chapter is returning to good standing. LA Pro was over two years delinquent in reporting and the officers of the chapter were considering reverting to

group status, after months of email dialogue and discussions, culminating at a Founder's Day event, the chapter decided to continue operating as a chapter and hold officer elections in February 2016. SWDC Derek Marin was instrumental in facilitating communications and insuring continuing operations of the chapter. A big thank you to both St. Louis Pro and L.A. Pro!

- **Solicitation**—The 2015 solicitation was a departure from previous solicitations, with several new concepts employed in an attempt to modernize the direct mailing solicitation. The following changes were made:
 - Instead of a letter, members were sent a quad-fold, color brochure with mostly pictures of members and testimonials for giving. The brochure included a return envelope. This resulted in about a \$2,000 cost savings
 - Due to little response over the past five years, the separate insert with return envelope in the Hexagon was discontinued. A cut-out for donors was kept in the Hexagon.
 - A gift of a tote-bag at the \$100 donor-level was offered to encourage donors to increase their donations.
 - A small-scale social-media campaign was rolled out by several members of the SC, PR's, and DC's on Facebook to encourage donations.

Several new items were tried on this campaign in an attempt to increase donor participation, which is between 1-2% at some institutions for direct mailings. Part of a new campaign can be bumpy as donors become accustomed and familiar with new materials and the Supreme Council and national office staff fine-tune the content. As may be seen on Figures 1 and 2, the fraternity saw a drop in donor participation across all age groups which resulted in a decrease in total dollars given. There may be several reasons for this, but only speculations until members are surveyed to find out the cause for the drop in donations. Many positive comments were received on the solicitation materials, format, and content. The only complaint related to the solicitation in 2015 was that the return card did not fit into the return envelope without trimming or folding it. It would be surprising that a small matter of convenience could have caused such a drop in participation, but if that is the cause, it can be easily rectified. It should be noted that direct mailing fundraising is more appealing to the 50 and over age group.

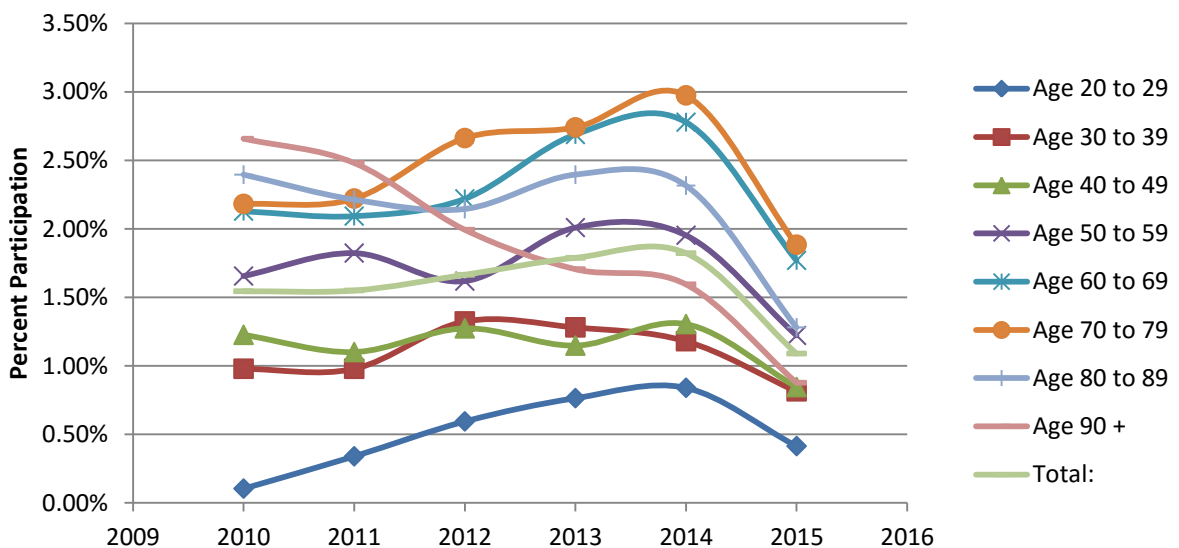


Figure 1: Percent donor participation, September 1 to December 16.

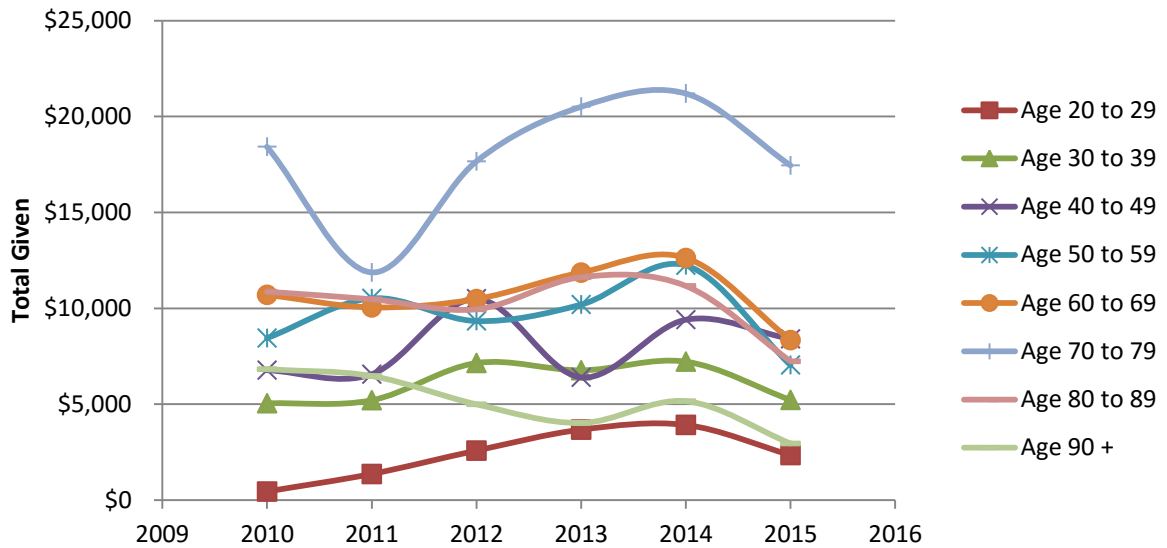


Figure 2: Total amount given by age group September 1 to December 16

Another cause of lower donations may be the change in the solicitation format. Members may be accustomed to seeing the solicitation letter and envelope. If that is the issue, it should go away with time as members become acquainted with the new format. A success of this campaign was an increase in the average gift given across most age groups, Figure 3. As a result of the increased donation per donor, the campaign is comparable to some of the previous campaigns, Figure 4. It should be noted that December was a very strong month. If donations are lagging for some reason, then this campaign year may reach parity.

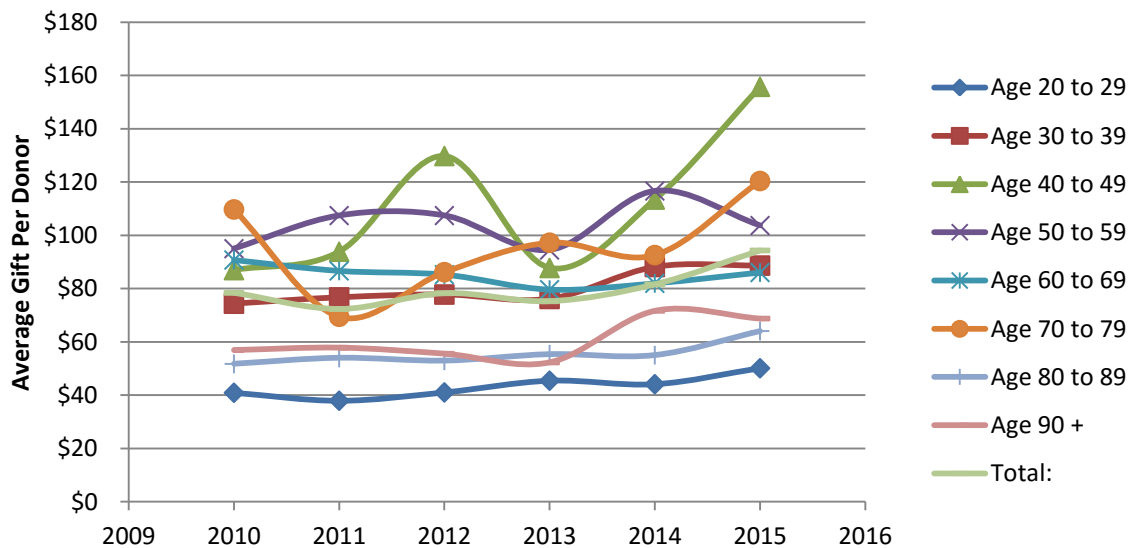


Figure 3: Average gift per donor, September 1 to December 16.

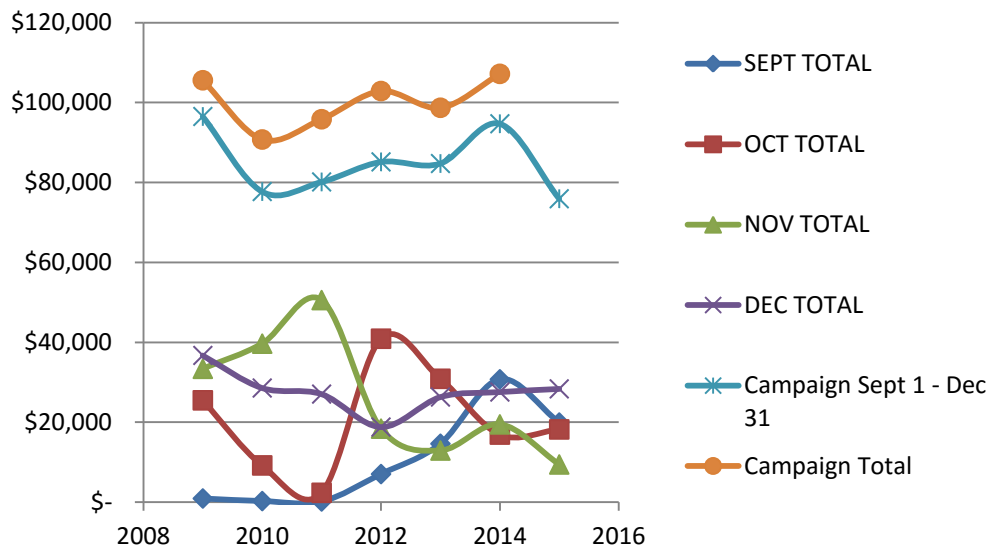


Figure 4: Average gift given by solicitation group

A couple of notes about this solicitation cycle are that we targeted individuals that bought the directory for 2015, but have never donated. This resulted in 4 new donors. After the reminder postcard was sent, 22 additional members donated. It was also noted that with this campaign, we have lost over twenty loyal and consistent donors to the Grand Chapter Eternal.

Thoughts: I will be calling 25 random donors that consistently donated, but didn't in 2015 to determine if there was a striking reason for the observed change in donation habits. It is my opinion that we should continue with the new solicitation format and new practices and let the changes settle in, however there should be substantial content changes in the campaign materials. Specifically the 2016 campaign should feature more of what donations are used for instead of why people donate to demonstrate the fraternity's good stewardship of the resources that are given. This will require additional photographs and stories from the collegiate chapters, something that can be readily gathered during the spring semester. In 2016 we should also attempt a more targeted social media campaign. The national office staff has come up with a detailed schedule for releases on Facebook. The new website will also be helpful in reaching out to donors and providing a periodic touch or reminder to members, as the Chrome and Blue once did.

It is also important for the fraternity to assess what its object is for the annual solicitation. If it is purely fundraising, instead of member database management, it is crucial that Alpha Chi Sigma changes its strategy. Kettering University could see more success in changing its practices to have an increased amount of contact with its donors through mailings, electronic and postal, phone calls, Facebook, and the website, as well as online automated monthly donations via credit card. Automated donations are something that Alpha Chi Sigma should seriously investigate since monthly donations are typically how many of our under 50 professional members give to other charitable organizations. It is also important for the Fraternity to realize that our members, by training, are not professional fundraisers, it would be a wise investment to contract the services of a professional fundraising consultant.

- **ACS-Alpha Chi Sigma Receptions**—The Alpha Chi Sigma Reception at the ACS spring meeting was held at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company in Denver, Colorado on March 24, 2015. The Alpha Chi Sigma Reception at the ACS summer meeting was held August 18, 2015 at the Atlantic Beer Garden, Boston, Massachusetts.

- **Presentation of the Alpha Chi Sigma AIChE Outstanding Researcher Award**—This was presented by GPA Wenzel at the AIChE Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, November 8, 2015 as part of his attendance for presenting at the technical sessions of the meeting.

It has been a very productive biennium and I have high expectations over the remaining few months. It has been phenomenal working with our Brothers, the office staff, my fellow members of the Supreme Council, and the Professional Representatives.

Respectfully Submitted,
Yours in the Double Bond,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Wenzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Jonathan E. Wenzel, Delta 1996
Grand Master of Ceremonies
Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity