**Personal Information and Involvement** – b. Reedsburg, WI 1981. m. John Donald Cole (Iota 1997), 2007. B.S., chemistry, University of Wisconsin – Platteville, 2003. B.S., general science, University of Wisconsin – Platteville, 2003. M.S., chemistry, University of Iowa, 2005. Teaching License (Grades 6-12 chemistry, general science, Earth/space science), University of Wisconsin – Whitewater, 2007. Ph.D., STEM Education, University of Kentucky, 2017. High School Science Teacher, West Vigo High School, 2007-2008. High School Chemistry Teacher, Henry Clay High School, 2008-2009. Part-Time Chemistry Instructor, Eastern Kentucky University, 2010-2012. Assistant Professor of Science Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2017-present.

Member: American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2012-present), National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) (2012-present), School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA) (2013-present), National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) (2006 – present), American Chemical Society (ACS) (2004-present).

**Bio:**

Initiated December 2003 Alpha Theta chapter; House Treasurer, Alpha Theta chapter, 2004-2005; Professional Chair, Alpha Theta chapter, 2004-2005; Great Lakes District Counselor, 2012-2014; Bluegrass District Counselor, 2014-2016; District Counselor Chair 2014-2016; Great Lakes District Committee member, 2009-2012; Bluegrass Professional Group founder and member, 2014-2017; Las Vegas Professional Group founder and member, 2018-present; attendee of the 2004, 2006-2022 Biennial Conclaves; co-organizer of the Biennial Conclave Science and Engineering Poster Session, 2008-2020; Grand Collegiate Alchemist, 2019-2022; Grand Health and Safety Officer, 2022-2024.

**Statement:**

I first learned about Alpha Chi Sigma in 2003 on a recruiting trip for graduate school. Once I joined the chemistry program at the University of Iowa, joining the Alpha Theta Chapter was the next step. There I found a home, both literally, living in the house, and figuratively, with all the brothers I met across the country. Since that time, my personal life, professional life, and fraternal life have been intertwined. Personally, I have found it very rewarding to be active in Alpha Chi Sigma alongside my husband. Professionally, my experiences in the Fraternity benefit my professional life and vice versa. I have volunteered to be active as a professional member in a variety of roles, including Grand Collegiate Alchemist, District Counselor, DC Chair, special projects, expansion, and starting professional groups. Most recently, I was appointed to serve as the first Grand Health and Safety Office, both providing an opportunity to continue serving as a Grand Chapter Officer and also to help shape and define the first Grand Chapter officer position the Fraternity has added in many years. I have found each of these opportunities rewarding in their own ways.

When I think about my 20 years in the Fraternity, the only consistency over those year has been change. We’ve transitioned from a Risk Management Policy to a Health and Safety Policy. We’ve seen changes in programs. We’ve moved offices. We’ve seen many new faces in Grand Chapter offices. We’ve added a new Grand Chapter office for the first time in many years. We developed a variety of new committees, who have made great contributions to the Fraternity. We saw a period of rapid growth in the collegiate branch, and then later during the pandemic lost a number of chapters as well. Our most recent challenge has been the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to rapidly adapt to many changes, including developing and approving the first ever virtual ritual implementations. While we are still moving back to in-person meetings and events, it is also a reminder that change is necessary, but should also be taken with caution.

In many ways, we are returning to normal. But what does that really mean? The Fraternity has changed significantly during my time as a brother, but it has also changed dramatically from when we were founded in 1902. There are things we should maintain and return to the pre-pandemic normal, but there are also many opportunities to grow and change to meet the needs of our current brothers. The world is a very different place than when the Fraternity was founded. The Fraternity also looks very different from what it did in the early years. The Supreme Council’s job is to make decisions to maintain the ability for the Fraternity to not only function in the immediate sense but also to flourish in the future and sustain itself for many years to come. There are many decisions and actions that need to be undertaken that most of the Fraternity never sees or hears about, but they are important and undertaken with much consideration regardless.

If we want to flourish, we need to know what our members want from the Fraternity now as well as what they see us as in the future. We need to know what value our members find in the Fraternity now as well as new ways we can continue to provide value and connection. I am honored to be nominated to run for Grand Master Alchemist, and if elected, I want to ensure that we are listening to the input of all members as the Supreme Council makes their decisions. I promise to both provide opportunities for members to provide feedback for Grand Chapter Officers as well as to communicate about events, actions, and news of the Fraternity.

Whether it is Health and Safety, outreach, fraternal knowledge, or the next idea to come along, none of these are things I can do alone. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the rest of the Supreme Council as well as brothers across the country on these projects to strengthen and invest in our Fraternity.

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Merryn Cole