

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional In the Chemical Sciences

Office of the
GRAND
PROFESSIONAL ALCHEMIST



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2016 Grand Professional Alchemist Biennial Report

Overview

The 53rd biennium has been an outstanding biennium for Alpha Chi Sigma and I am greatly humbled and honored to have served the fraternity as the Grand Professional Alchemist over the past two years. The fraternity has seen growth in both the professional and collegiate branches, the addition of a new website, and revisions and updates for many of the resources made available to its members. The Grand Professional Alchemist is responsible for the professional branch, alumni relations, and the annual solicitation, in addition to other tasks of the Supreme Council. This biennium I have strived to increase the communication between the professional branch and the Supreme Council which included participation in online chats, Skype sessions, and personal phone calls to professional representatives and chapter presidents. I have organized fraternity luncheons for the National American Chemical Society meetings and presented the Alpha Chi Sigma Educational Foundation's award at National Meetings of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, my attendance at these events coincided with my scholarly presentations at these meetings. I have also worked with the National Office staff on revising the annual solicitation, switching for a traditional fundraising letter to a less expensive full color pamphlet. Finally I have participated in the installations of two chapters and have performed probation and investigation visits of two collegiate chapters. At the end of this biennium, I am beginning a task I have been looking forward to for years: there are now collegiate interest groups for both A and B section at Kettering University, where I am a professor. On a personal note, this biennium has been transformative, I got married on October 3, 2015 to a wonderful woman at a ceremony attended by several brothers, with Brothers Jason Ellis and Kip Nalley as groomsmen and Brother David Lloyd, as best man. I am grateful for the love, patience, and support of my wife, Jenn, in my efforts in life and for my work for Alpha Chi Sigma. In addition to these transitions, the 53rd biennial conclave will be a relaxing one, my promotion and tenure package will be submitted.

Professional Representatives

Over the past decade, the Professional Representative role has been in transition, as well as how the PR's relate to the GPA and Supreme Council. In the past there may not have been as much communication between the Supreme Council and the Professional Representatives, or as much direction as the PR's have desired. This biennium, I have worked to facilitate timely communication between the Supreme Council and the Professional Representatives as well as provide clearer direction. Unlike District Counselors who are appointed to serve in a defined role and purpose, Professional Representatives are elected and each individual has their own unique set of skills and abilities to contribute to the Fraternity in an open-ended and creative way. Frequently it is up to the individual Professional Representative to define their role and task within the fraternity which can be daunting. My objective was not necessarily to change the nature of the office, but to better enable the professional representatives, as well as provide the PR's projects working with the professional branch.

To do this, in the first half of the 53rd biennium, I personally called each professional representative, to hear their ideas, concerns, and plans for the future. Coming out of these phone calls, each PR and I set a short term and a long term individual project. In addition, I requested the PR's as whole to work

on activities that create additional interactions with professional members. The goal for these projects was to enable each PR to work on something beneficial that they have ownership, with a clear deliverable, which could be completed in time for their annual report. In addition, based on input from the PR's and an assessment of potential areas of growth and improvement the following tasks were initiated:

- A draft mission statement guiding the professional representatives in their work
- A program where freshman professional representatives are mentored by senior PR's supervised by the PR chair
- A program in which PR's are expected to email all professional members in their locality and if there is a high enough population density, attempt to organize a gathering during the fall coinciding with the annual solicitation
- A revision of the PR expectation document
- A revision of the Transitions to the Professional Branch presentation
- Encouragement and travel allocation for PR's to present the presentation at district conclaves
- Encouragement of the District Counselors to engage PR's in district work
- Use of the PR's as a sounding board on the annual solicitation
- Participation in social media during the 2015 annual solicitation
- Several other tasks of importance to the fraternity

These projects enabled the professional representatives to interact with their constituents and provided much needed contact and visibility in the professional branch. I am thankful for the assistance and efforts the professional representatives provided this biennium. We have had two PR's retire since the conclusion of the 52nd biennium. 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. Brother Laura Walkup is retiring at the conclusion of 2016. In addition, I appreciate the hard work, organization, and efforts of Tim Deschaines as PR chair throughout the 53rd biennium.

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!

Like the professional representatives, I have also had calls with several of the professional chapters including Delaware Valley, Washington Professional, and Research Triangle. I have also worked with St. Louis Professional Chapter and Los Angeles Professional Chapter as these chapters have run into challenges this biennium. At the beginning of the biennium, the St. Louis Professional Chapter's charter was suspended due to a variety of issues stemming from inactivity, lack of communication with the fraternity, and a potential uninsured liability. By the end of 2015, St. Louis Professional had met every condition of their terms of probation and was restored to good standing as a vibrant and productive chapter. St. Louis Professional Chapter has been exemplary in their communications with area professionals, the District Counselor, and the National Office. The chapter has held 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! However not all news has been good news, at the conclusion of this biennium, New Jersey professional chapter had challenges with several members leaving the area or going through personal transitions. It is anticipated that prior to Conclave, New Jersey professional chapter will be declared inactive and become New Jersey Professional Group.

Annual Solicitation

Alpha Chi Sigma generates most of its operating income from lifetime membership fees, pledge fees, and an annual direct mailing campaign to professional members. Following several conversations with professional fundraisers, the solicitation was revised in 2015 in an attempt to modernize the appearance of the annual solicitation, reduce costs, and improve donor participation. Prior to 2015, the campaign consisted of a form letter, donor card, and return envelope. The annual solicitation is typically delivered by early September. The campaign also included an insert in the Hexagon with return envelope, reminder post card sent by November to donors, and in recent years a reminder email. The 2015 solicitation was a departure from previous solicitations to modernize the direct mailing solicitation with the following changes:

- Instead of a letter, members were sent a quad-fold, color brochure nicely prepared by the National Office staff 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 marginal 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.
- An additional emailing was sent out to donors prior to the conclusion of the 2015 calendar year.

Donor participation is typically between 1-2% at many institutions for direct mailings and the results of the 2015 campaign was mixed. For the 2015 campaign, donor participation decreased in all age groups, Figure 1. It should be noted that direct mailing fundraising is more appealing to the 50 and over age group. The feedback for the campaign was mostly positive, recipients enjoyed the change, in particular the photos and graphics. However there was donor frustration that the attached return card for the brochure was larger than the envelope. 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 also be noted that the 2015 campaign occurred following the update of the fraternity directory by Harris Connect. Several members found the directory company's customer service very aggressive, which was off-putting and perhaps damaged participation in our annual solicitation.

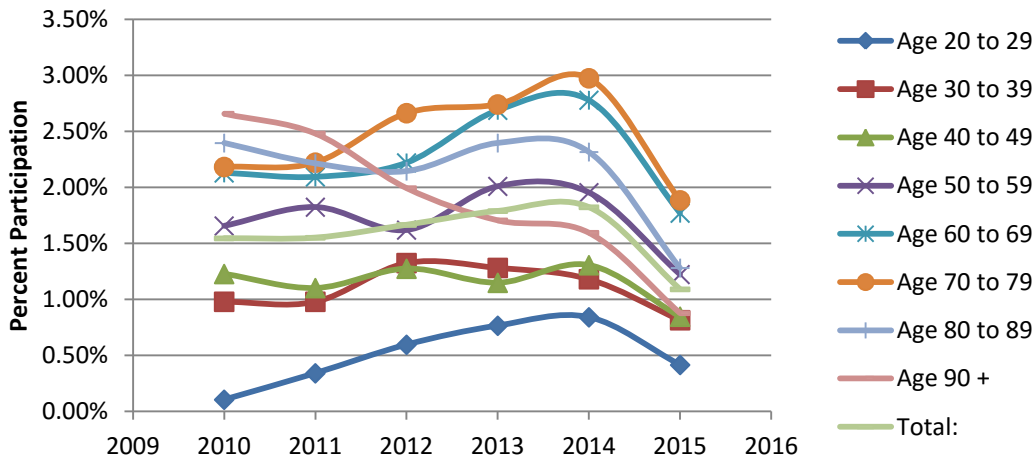


Figure 1: Percent donor participation by year for the September 1 to December 16 time period

While there was a drop in donor participation, the 2015 campaign was successful in increasing the average donation in most age groups, Figure 2. While the donors were incentivized with the gift of an Alpha Chi Sigma tote-bag at the \$100 donor-level, several donors opted out of receiving the tote bag. Based on this feedback, it is likely not cost effective to provide a gift-incentive for a donation.

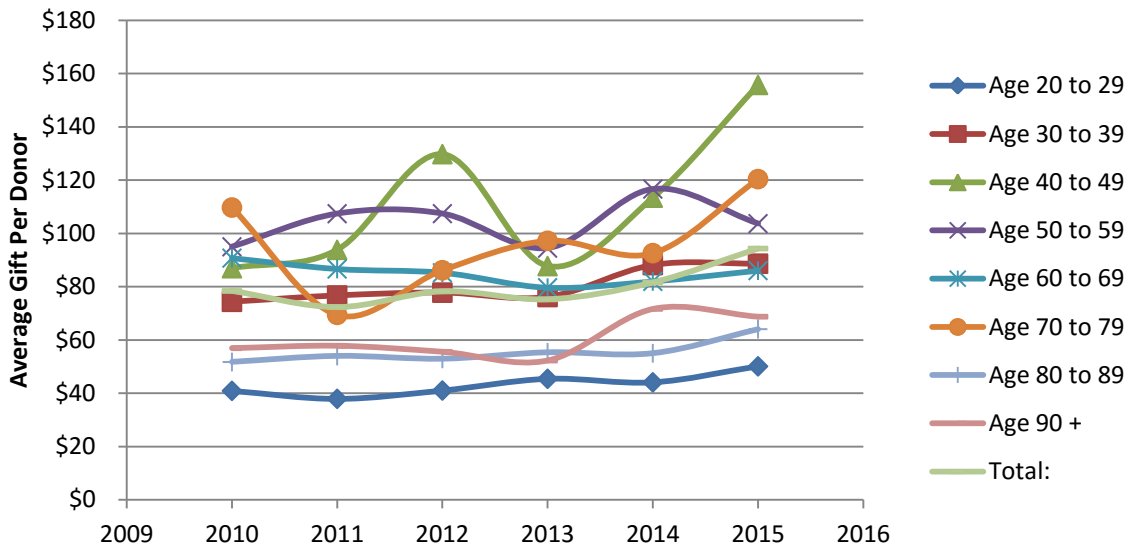


Figure 2: Average gift per donor by year for the September 1 to December 16 time period

There are several factors that may have contributed to the results of the 2015 annual solicitation campaign. Since the campaign was a mixed success and several variables are beyond our control, it is worthwhile to attempt a campaign using a quad-fold color brochure during 2016 since the fraternity directory is not being updated by a third party this year. However several changes will be made:

- The mailer will continue to be color, but on the outside it will be made very clear that it is Alpha Chi Sigma’s annual fundraiser, so as not to be mistaken as junk mail
- The return card will be fashioned in such a manner to fit in the return envelope, without having to fold it.
- The campaign will move from donor testimonials to the stewardship of the funds donated, in particular the 5% contribution to the alumni chapter, capital investments over the biennium, and the enabling of activities involving the objects
- Photos and news from conclave will be included. Conclave is the single largest non-personnel expense for the fraternity and it is subsidized in part by donor contributions.
- Social media will be used more extensively during the campaign, in particular features on the new website, Facebook, twitter, and LinkedIn.

There are other activities that Alpha Chi Sigma can use in the future to enable fundraising. In particular, additional interactions between members in the professional branch to strengthen the relationship between professional members and the fraternity, additional interactions between collegiate chapters and their alumni, and additional communications between the fraternity and its members. The addition of the ability to donate monthly by automated payment may also hold appeal to younger members.

ACS-Alpha Chi Sigma Receptions

On the Tuesday of each ACS national meeting, Alpha Chi Sigma hosts a luncheon where members from throughout the country get an opportunity to mingle and catch-up. Collegiate members are encouraged to come and are provided a free meal. The Alpha Chi Sigma luncheons for this biennium were

- 249th Annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, Denver, Colorado on March 24, 2015 from 11 to 1 at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company.
- 250th Annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, Boston, Massachusetts on August 18, 2015 from 11:30 to 1 at the Atlantic Beer Garden
- 251st Annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, San Diego, California on March 15, 2016 from 11:30 to 1:30 at the San Diego Pier Café.

The next ACS luncheon will be at the 252nd Annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, Philadelphia on August 23, 2016 from 11:30 to 1:30 at Maggiano's Little Italy, 1201 Filbert St, Philadelphia. The luncheon will be a la cart for professional members and collegiate meals will be subsidized. It is important for all members to show up on time or the reservation may be cancelled.

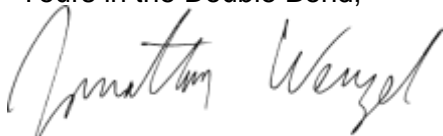
Presentation of the Alpha Chi Sigma Award for Chemical Engineering Research

As part of my scholarly work as a professor, I attend and present research at the American Institute of Chemical Engineer's National Meeting. At these meetings I have presented on behalf of the Alpha Chi Sigma Educational Foundation the Alpha Chi Sigma Award for Chemical Engineering Research, one of the institute's oldest sponsored awards. The 2014 award was presented to Dr. Paula Hammond of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at the AIChE meeting in Atlanta. The 2015 award was presented to Dr. James Dumesic of the University of Wisconsin-Madison at the AIChE meeting in Salt Lake City.

Concluding Remarks

Outside of a few incidences, this has been a very rewarding biennium. It has been wonderful working with our professional brothers throughout the United States, the professional representatives, the other members of the Supreme Council, and the National Office Staff. Without a dedicated and highly motivated office staff, Alpha Chi Sigma would not function as well as it does. Thank you to the Grand Chapter for providing me the opportunity to serve as Grand Professional Alchemist. This experience has been very touching and rewarding. My one regret is that this biennium has come to an end. I hope to be able to continue to dutifully and energetically serve our fraternity in the next biennium as Grand Master of Alchemist.

Yours in the Double Bond,



Dr. Jonathan E. Wenzel, Delta 1996
Grand Professional Alchemist
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