

ALPHA CHI SIGMA Fraternal Canon



ACADEMIC YEAR {2023-2024} EDITION

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6296 Rucker Road, Suite B | Indianapolis, IN 46220 | (800) ALCHEMY | national@alphachisigma.org | www.alphachisigma.org

A full-color, electronic version of the Sourcebook is available at <https://www.alphachisigma.org/collegiate/sourcebook>

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Introduction

This booklet provides assistance to pledge educators as they educate their chapters' pledges. This booklet is designed to guide pledge educators both on the information to teach their chapters' pledges and on how to set up the pledging process. This canon identifies fundamental information that forms the basis of membership in Alpha Chi Sigma as well as additional information that builds pride and confidence in fraternal life. This booklet defines the sum of knowledge that pledges are required to learn during their pledgship.

There is more to education than learning facts. How were you taught when you were a pledge, and what information were you required to learn? Do you remember that information today? The combination of information, the rationality of its value, the enthusiasm with which it is taught and the experience of working with one's pledge Brothers empower pledges to participate positively as Brothers.

The rich history of Alpha Chi Sigma, the colorful lore of alchemy, the multitude of people who make up the Fraternity, local chapter traditions and where we are today are too much for any pledge to learn in just a few weeks. Maximum benefit is achieved by a structured education program, through which pledges develop a sense of what is truly important over a period of six or more weeks. Our Three Objects serve as touchstones against which some information will achieve clarity and other information will blur and fade from memory.

Information presented and tested in pledge education must be useful, relevant, significant, purposeful and meaningful. A balance must be struck among rote memorization of crucial information, learning for understanding essential information, familiarization for appreciation of various aspects of the Fraternity and the fact that membership is lifelong – as is the fraternal learning experience. Only the essentials must be committed to memory – essentials that a future member will need to know to become a positive participant in the Fraternity.

Pledges must be taught where to find fraternal information that will be useful later when they are active members. Pledges should also be taught facts that are significant and that express the purpose and meaning of our Fraternity. Obvious examples are the Three Objects and the Five Obligations of a Member. Other information should include facts that help pledges get acquainted with the Fraternity, how it works, its history and its members.

The histories of the local chapter and of the national Fraternity provide a background that may be useful for developing a sense of being part of the century-long traditions of Alpha Chi Sigma. Also, exposure to the histories of chemistry and alchemy may provide a sense of professional purpose and meaning in pledges' education. Keep in mind, however, that it is the present in which we work, and it is the future toward which we work – don't go overboard with too much historical information.

The amount of time spent on each facet of the Fraternity along with how this information should be taught and remembered is very important. There are four levels of information for pledge instruction:

1. Information of greatest importance to life as a member. This information should be learned by rote memorization, word-for-word.
2. Information and facts that are important for a member to know but not necessarily word-for-word.
3. Topics that are important for members to be familiar with but are not expected to recite.
4. Resources and information that are not crucial to pledge education but are available for pledges to review at their interest and as needs arise when they are members.

Lastly, there must be good reason to require a pledge to know and remember much more information than an active member. To require otherwise is hypocrisy that trivializes pledging and more importantly demeans membership in Alpha Chi Sigma.

Feedback and suggestions on the content and format of this teacher's manual as well as the Sourcebook are always appreciated. Share your comments with the Grand Master of Ceremonies at gmc@alphachisigma.org.

Sections II, III and IV comprise what the Grand Chapter believes is important for all pledges to learn during the pledging process. Sections I, V and VI provide further advice and guidance on pledge education. The location of the material in the Sourcebook is provided for easy reference. Page numbers may change between Sourcebook editions – page numbers are current with the 2023-2024 edition of the Sourcebook.

{Canon Section I}

What to Do and What Not to Do

Throughout this document, the term “pledge educator” is used in place of Vice Master Alchemist. This was done purposefully. The Vice Master Alchemist is responsible for guiding the pledge recruitment and pledge education processes. VMAs must ensure that pledge education takes place, but the ultimate responsibility for pledge education falls upon the chapter. After all, pledges ultimately will be Brothers of your chapter and the Fraternity as a whole. It is in your chapter’s best interest that your pledges receive a thorough pledge education and that as many Brothers as possible participate in the process. These actions help ensure that pledges see your chapter’s dedication not only to the required material but also to their pledge process.

As pledge educators, it is your job to help pledges understand the value of this Fraternity and our brotherhood and to give them the tools necessary to become productive, contributing members of our Fraternity. The Sourcebook is a reference manual to this material. This canon will help make the Sourcebook more useful and will help your chapter select the most important information for pledges (and Brothers) to know.

While the Sourcebook is an excellent guide, there are many aspects of guiding your pledges that cannot fit neatly into the manual. This section of the canon will show you what to do and what not to do during your pledge education process. Hopefully, this section will answer some of the common conundrums that every pledge educator faces.

- Keep the primary goal of pledge education at the forefront of your mind. Beyond anything else, the purpose of pledge education is to take these people your chapter has chosen to join them and prepare them to be your Brothers. Everything you do should contribute to achieving this goal.
- The Pledge Induction Ceremony helps to set the tone for the process. Make it a serious affair, have pledges and Brothers dress nicely, and follow the ritual exactly. This should NOT be called “pinning” as that has other meanings in other Greek organizations. Clearly communicate your expectations and requirements to your pledges. It is hard for anyone to meet your expectations unless they have been spelled out and clearly understood. Whenever possible, give constructive criticism and provide opportunities for pledges to improve.
- Ask your Brothers for help, whether this means clarifying a topic, answering questions or providing an alternate viewpoint. The goal is to use your network of Brothers, both locally and nationally. In particular, Chapter Advisors, District Counselors, Professional Representatives and Supreme Council members are excellent resources. Don’t hesitate to send an e-mail or call these Brothers, even if you haven’t met them before. You can find their contact information on the back cover of *The HEXAGON*, on the national website or by contacting the National Office.
- Just as we encourage you to ask questions and seek guidance from your Brothers, encourage your pledges to ask questions of the Brothers in your chapter. Help your pledges learn what each officer is responsible for. Provide contact information for all of your chapter’s members and pledges so everyone knows how to contact each other. Your members’ accessibility can go a long way to promoting the sense of brotherhood among your pledges.
- When planning your pledge education process, remember that once initiated these individuals should know how to participate, contribute and remain active in your chapter. Your pledges should not spend several semesters “learning” how to be Brothers once they are initiated. During the pledging process, pledges should have the basic knowledge needed to get their feet wet. By ensuring they have this knowledge, you can help your pledges feel that they are actively contributing to the success of their chapter after they are initiated.
- Design useful and fun review exercises, games and activities that reinforce important concepts in different ways. There are more ways to learn material than by simply reading or hearing it.
- Your job is to equip pledges with the essential knowledge to be productive members of the Fraternity upon their initiation (this includes understanding what is appropriate behavior). It is possible to guide them without spelling out each and every detail during lessons and by encouraging them (perhaps with helpful pointers) to find the important information themselves. It is probably safe to assume that all of your pledges can read the Sourcebook themselves and don’t need every point regurgitated for them.
- Encourage interaction and bonding between pledges and Brothers, such as Big Brothers/Families, combined activities and events, pledge plaques and the presence of Brothers at pledge meetings.
- Whatever evaluation system you employ to assess your pledges’ knowledge of required materials, make sure your pledges not only know the expectations but how they are evaluated. If possible, emphasize the most important material rather than equally weighing every piece of information.
- Provide constructive comments and evaluations throughout the pledging process. Encourage your pledges by making clear to them that this process has been designed to help them have a better experience as a brother.
- While evaluation is an essential part of the process and is necessary to ensure growth and learning, the pledge process is NOT to be used to ‘weed out’ or eliminate anyone. The selection process happens before induction, the goal is now to help everyone you’ve chosen to become the best Brother they can be.

- Whenever possible, have the same expectations for both Brothers and pledges regarding fraternal knowledge and behavior. If your chapter is trying to improve or raise its standards, be honest about it and why you are making this effort. By owning up the change in standards, you can help mitigate feelings about double standards.
- If you require attendance at meetings or events, distribute calendars during rush and induction. Provide a clear policy on how to deal with scheduling conflicts.
- Whenever possible, try to understand your pledges' concerns and help them find solutions or work around them when appropriate.
- Remember to be cognizant of the Health & Safety Policy when planning all Fraternity events. The event planning guide can be found on our website to assist you in this task. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of an event, discuss it with your Chapter Advisor, District Counselor or a Supreme Council member.
- Here are some guidelines for which information can be divulged prior to initiation:
 - The Fraternity colors and flower can be revealed to pledges.
 - Pledges should learn the name Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim.
 - Do not divulge the meanings behind the symbols on the badge and coat of arms until after initiation.
- While pledges should not be told specific details about the initiation ritual, the Canon is designed to provide a foundation for pledges that makes the ritual meaningful..
- Other chapters and alumni may have ideas that could prove useful to you. When considering ideas from pledge educators at other chapters and advice from older educators from your own chapter, be sure to evaluate how appropriate these ideas and solutions might be to your current chapter circumstances.

{Canon Section II}

Crucial Knowledge

Information in this section is deemed of utmost importance to the Fraternity. There are few things that all Brothers and pledges alike must know verbatim. The following items are those that the Grand Chapter considers so important that all pledges should be able to recite them word for word prior to initiation.

The Three Objects (Sourcebook page 8, "The Purposes of Alpha Chi Sigma")

The purposes of Alpha Chi Sigma are reflected in the Fraternity's Three Objects, which express the true ideals of all its members. The three Objects of Alpha Chi Sigma are:

1. To bind its members with a tie of true and lasting friendship.
2. To strive for the advancement of chemistry both as a science and as a profession.
3. To aid its members by every honorable means in the attainment of their ambitions as chemists throughout their mortal lives.

Local Chapter Information

Your Chapter's Greek letter designation
Your Chapter's founding date

The Five Obligations of a Member (Sourcebook page 8, "The Obligations of a Member")

To become positive participants in the Fraternity, all pledges must understand what is expected of them as Brothers. The Obligations of a Member describe these expectations:

1. That a member will remember the Objects of the Fraternity and endeavor always to further them.
2. That a member will pay promptly all financial obligations.
3. That a member will so act so as never to be a reproach to Alpha Chi Sigma.
4. That a member will cheerfully fulfill any assigned fraternal tasks.
5. That a member will maintain as satisfactory a scholastic record as possible.

Founding of the Fraternity (Sourcebook page 19, "The Development of Alpha Chi Sigma")

The Fraternity was founded on Dec. 11, 1902, at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisc. The founders of the Fraternity were:

Joseph Howard Mathews	Harold Everett Eggers
Bart Eldred McCormick	Frank Joseph Petura
Joseph Gerard Holty	Edward Gustav Mattke
Raymond Tracy Conger	James Chisholm Silverthorn
Alfred Emil Kundert	

{*Canon Section III*}

Essential Knowledge

Information in this section is essential for pledges to know, but it isn't necessary for pledges to know the information word-for-word. It is sufficient for pledges to be able to describe or explain the information, but knowing the exact wording is not essential.

The Grand Chapter

(Sourcebook pages 34 to 42, "The Governance of Alpha Chi Sigma")

- What the Grand Chapter Conclave is.
- The composition of the Grand Chapter during Conclave.
- The composition of the Grand Chapter outside of Conclave.
- The composition and roles of the collegiate and professional branches.
- The description of the duties of the Grand Chapter officers.
- The composition of the Supreme Council.
- The names of the current Supreme Council officers.
- The responsibilities of the District Counselors.
- The names of your chapter's district and District Counselor.

The Local Chapter

(Sourcebook pages 54 to 61, "The Collegiate Branch")

- The descriptions of the duties of the collegiate chapter officers.
- The names of the people who hold your chapter's offices.
- The description of the duties of the Chapter Advisor.
- The name of your chapter's advisor.

Insignia

(Sourcebook page 48 - 49, "Insignia")

- What the badge and the coat of arms look like.
- What the Fraternity flags look like (Grand Chapter and your chapter's).
- The Fraternity flower.
- The Fraternity colors.

The Professional Branch

(Sourcebook page 39, "The Professional Branch")

- Responsibilities of the Professional Representatives.
- The names of any Professional Representatives that reside in your district.
- The locations of any professional groups or chapters in your district.
- The role of professional groups and professional chapters.

Alchemy

(Sourcebook pages 89 to 124, "Alchemy")

- The symbol for the Elixir of Life and what the Elixir of Life is. The Elixir of Life (also called Elixir Vitae, Grand Elixir or just The Elixir) was conceived by alchemists as a material to impart immortality to the taker, to cure him of disease or to bring him youth.
- What the Philosopher's Stone is. The Philosopher's Stone was believed to be able to remove the impurities from the less pure metals and thus produce gold. It also was believed that the Philosopher's Stone could bring man the purity of youth.
- What the Emerald Tablet is.
- Symbols of the seven planetary metals.
- Modern names of the seven planetary metals.
- The planets associated with the seven planetary metals.

{Canon Section IV}

Appreciation

Pledges should be familiar with the knowledge in this section but not necessarily be able to recite all of it. This information will help them understand and appreciate what is happening during pledging, initiation and early activities as Brothers. Much of this information can be referenced later when necessary, but pledges need to be aware of it and understand where to find the information.

The National Office

(Sourcebook pages 51, 49 and inside front cover)

- The location of the National Office. 6296 Rucker Road, Suite B in Indianapolis.
- The phone number of the National Office. (800) ALCHEMY
- The website address of the Fraternity. www.alphachisigma.org

Membership Awards and Recognition

(Sourcebook 65 to 89, "Individual Awards and Recognition Programs")

- The Fraternity's membership awards and programs.
- The meaning of the Order of Altotus

Alchemy

(Sourcebook pages 89 to 124, "Alchemy")

Basic details about the alchemists, particularly those related to the ritual.

- *Hermes Trismegistus – Hermes the Thrice Great*
(Prince, Poet and Philosopher)
 - Egyptian alchemist circa 2000 B.C.
 - Authored the Emerald Tablet
- *Geber – Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan*
 - Arabian alchemist circa A.D. 700
 - Most outstanding attribute is his insistence on thoroughness
 - His writings show that he fully understood the necessity of experimenting
- *Paracelsus – Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim*
 - Physician born around A.D. 1490
 - Believed that the aim of alchemy should be preparing medicines
- *Count Cagliostro – Giuseppe Balsamo*
 - Charlatan who lived from A.D. 1743 to 1795
 - Combined occult with freemasonry to take advantage of others
 - Learned alchemy from Altotus, his traveling companion

The Greek Alphabet

(Sourcebook inside back cover)

- Pledges should be familiar with the names and symbols of the letters in the Greek alphabet, especially the capital letters. Pledges especially should understand the difference between the letter Sigma and the letter Epsilon – we are Alpha Chi SIGMA.

Collegiate Chapters

(Sourcebook pages 58 to 60, "Collegiate Chapter Roster")

- Location and chapter letter for each collegiate and professional chapter

{*Canon Section V*}

Lifelong Learning

In the Sourcebook, you will notice that much information has not been included in this canon. This information falls into the “lifelong learning” category of knowledge. Pledges and Brothers alike will learn it when they are interested or when it becomes necessary for them to know it.

Think carefully before requiring pledges to memorize any of this information. Pledges are given the Sourcebook to help them learn about the Fraternity and to have it as a useful reference in the

years ahead.

In some circumstances, it may be deemed necessary to have pledges learn some of this information or at least become familiar with the ideas. Before requiring your pledges to learn this knowledge, consider carefully whether it will contribute to their success both as a pledge and as a Brother.

{*Canon Section VI*}

Local Chapter Activity and History

Many collegiate chapters include their chapter history in the information they ask their pledges to learn. This is appropriate but think carefully about what is essential and what would be more appropriate for lifelong learning.

The following list is general information that the Grand Chapter deems appropriate for chapters to ask their pledges to learn about their local collegiate chapters. Pledges do not necessarily need to learn all of these things. Consider carefully which items are most

relevant to your chapter and situation.

- A short history of your chapter.
- The date of your chapter’s founding (and reactivation date, if appropriate).
- The names of the Brothers listed on your chapter’s charter.
- Your chapter’s recurring professional activities.
- Awards given by your chapter.
- Future goals or plans of your chapter.
- Famous Brothers initiated at your chapter.
- Location and chapter letters of all collegiate chapters in your district.
- National awards earned by your chapter and its alumni
- Conclaves held at your chapter or nearby

