

DELTA SIGMA PI – AWARENESS TIPS

The Pledge Education Program

Pledge education is a time for us, the brothers of the Fraternity, to educate the pledges about our history and operations and to orient them to our organization and its culture. It is **not** a time for the pledges to prove that they are worthy of being in our organization, since that should be considered in-depth during recruitment. Every pledge activity should be professional and educational in nature.

- Make sure the VPPE has read the Standard Pledge Education Program in its entirety and reviews it with the entire chapter each term.
- The pledge education program is standardized, but pledge education has changed over the years due to changes in laws, technology, diversity, societal needs, educational styles, etc. The experience a pledge has with your chapter should be the same experience that every other pledge is having across the nation. The only place the activities vary is with the local options (up to 3 may be chosen according to Fraternity policy).
- All pledges must receive two official publications: (1) the Manual for Pledge Education and (2) a printed copy of the chapter's pledge education program as approved in the chapter's online document well at www.dspnet.org. The Manual becomes the personal property of the pledge and is not refundable if not initiated and is not collected by the chapter if the pledge is not initiated. Manuals and programs should both be ready for distribution immediately following the Pledging Ceremony.
- Provide each pledge with a copy of Chapter Bylaws, a chapter calendar, a roster of chapter members and faculty members, etc. This is not for quizzing or specific study, but it allows the pledge to see on their own what the chapter has planned and the governing structure.
- Focus on building brotherhood and Fraternity loyalty through chapter and Fraternity events. Brotherhood is not taught. Brotherhood is heartwarming emotion felt through participation in Ritual, committee groups, leadership roles, professional and service events, group gatherings with other brothers, LEAD events, and so on. Pledges will see it in the brothers if the brothers are active participants, courteous, and cooperative. They will feel it at the right time for them as they participate in chapter programs that are high-quality, enjoyable, and inclusive.
- Pledge education should be a professional approach, educational and informative in nature, simple, straightforward, well-organized, impressive, and encouraging. It is not the time or place to be creative (or continue unacceptable traditions) with the use of games or pranks, competitions, misleading information, time-consuming tasks, or varied instruction from many different brothers.
- Although a pledge is not yet a brother in the Fraternity, he/she should be treated graciously and as an equal. The brothers must reach out to pledges to welcome them, acquaint them with procedures and opportunities, encourage their involvement, etc. The pledge has an obligation to follow the written pledge education program and should show reasonable initiative and interest, however, they still have the uncertainty of membership and the unknown factors of initiation, thus the brothers bear the responsibility to comfort and encourage the pledge in a professional and brotherly way. By being invited to pledge, the individual should have already "proven themselves" worthy.

National Requirements

- Pledge pins are chapter property; thus not paid for by pledges. The chapter should have enough pledge pins available for presentation at the Pledging Ceremony. The chapter only needs to order new pledge pins to replace lost ones or when the pledge class is larger than the inventory of pins on hand. Pledges only pay the chapter for a pledge pin when they lose one.
- Big Brothers must be assigned to each pledge within the first 10 days after the Pledging Ceremony. The best time for this to occur is directly following the Pledging Ceremony or at the first pledge meeting. There is no ceremony to assign big brothers. It is not appropriate to create any chapter traditions for this purpose; instead focus on creating meaningful and helpful relationships through your big brother program. There should be absolutely no scavenger hunts (clues, unknown facts, etc.).
- Use Big Brothers effectively. They can help the VPPE provide information from the pledge manual to the pledges so learning about history and operations is accomplished quickly and effectively. The Big Brother is a mentor for a few weeks like a trainer or buddy on a new job. But....this relationship will have a direct impact on the pledges future involvement and dedication to the chapter and the Fraternity. Be sure your Big Brothers are very dedicated, responsible, and qualified to be the kind of mentor that everyone will admire and respect.

- The pledges must each submit a draft of a resume. The chapter may wish to provide constructive comments to help the pledges improve. However, the pledges do not need to visit the Career Services office or make corrections to their resumes and turn them in a second time.
- Pledges may be invited to participate in a regional or joint initiation but it is not be required of them. The chapter must provide the option to be initiated on campus if a pledge cannot or chooses not to travel, or cannot afford the additional travel expenses.
- All pledge fees must be paid prior to initiation. The maximum allowed pledge fee is \$136.00. Pledges may be invited to chapter banquets, LEAD conferences, or purchase shirts or similar, but they cannot be automatically charged for any of these optional events or products. Be sure these options are not construed as pledge requirements or that any money for these options is communicated as a pledge fee or part of pledge fees.

Quizzes

- Weekly quizzes should cover each of the questions from the *Manual for Pledge Education* one time. It is not appropriate to put the purpose (question 3) on more than one quiz. Oral quizzes are not permitted but you may consider having the pledges recite the purpose together to begin the pledge meetings to help them learn it. Providing additional information, chapter history, member rosters, etc. does not imply or authorize permission to ask questions about that information.
- Never ask a pledge to sing. An exam question asks pledges to write the words to the chorus of a Fraternity song; not sing it. Pledge performances in song, skit, or similar are not permitted.
- The comprehensive final exam should be given at a regular pledge meeting. It does not call for an extra meeting but should be administered like a quiz. There should not be a specific time limit given. It should cover every question from the back of the *Manual for Pledge Education* once. The best way to administer it is to copy the exam exactly from the manual or open the book to the exam and have pledges use their own paper to record their answers.

Local Options – see Fraternity Policy for the complete list

- If you do not choose the social activity or memento (scrapbook) options, there will be no need to have the pledge class elect a social chair or historian. Having those positions will indicate to the pledges that they are expected to do the things in that officer's description.
- The memento is not designed to be a gift for the chapter or big brothers. It is essentially something for the pledges to remember the pledging process.
- Attire for all pledge activities is casual, as they would normally dress for class/work/etc. The only acceptable time to require professional dress is for chapter events where the brothers will also be dressed professionally or on one specific weekday if that mirror's the chapter's practice (and the local option is chosen).
- If planning a social event is chosen, it should be at the pledge class' discretion. This event is not for the pledges to organize for the chapter; however the pledge class should invite the chapter to it.
- The Family Tree option is simply for the pledges to make a family tree. It does not call for the pledges to do research or contact people in the family (unless the contacting alumni option is chosen). This is a good project for the big brothers to get involved and help.
- You need to contact your RVP in advance for pledge retreat approval consideration. That approval needs to be sent in to the Central Office before the Pledge Education Program submission deadline. Be sure an hour-by-hour agenda is prepared in detail before seeking approval.

Miscellaneous

- Keep pledge education meetings well organized with the VPPE having control over the agenda and discussion. Avoid too many big brothers or other chapter members engaging in conversation and taking away from the purpose of the pledge meeting. Avoid alumni attending pledge meetings as they do not have jurisdiction over any pledge or pledge activity. Never have a chapter meeting and pledge meeting at the same time.
- There is no such thing as an "optional" pledge event or task. If you tell the pledges that something is optional, it becomes an implied expectation and it must be completed in order to live up to the past pledge class or because the brothers still expect them to do it. In some cases those "optional" events *are* expected by the brothers. Remember that pledges get input about expectations from all brothers, not just the VPPE, which is why it is so important for every member to understand the pledge education program policy.

- If there is a problem with a pledge, it should be brought to the VPPE's attention immediately. It should be discussed at the next chapter meeting and the chapter may wish to vote on whether to remove the pledge. There should be no specific meeting where all pledges are discussed, nor a vote to approve anyone for initiation (See Bylaws for pledge selection and removal; there is no additional vote to initiate).
- If there is a problem with a certain pledge, a discussion between that the pledge and the VPPE, Big Brother, and/or President should occur. Fraternity policy does not provide for a mid- or end-of-program review "ceremonies." Pledges should not be present during any VPPE report to the chapter where pledges may be discussed.
- If an issue arises, talk with the pledge about it immediately before making a motion to remove him/her from the program. He/she might have a reasonable explanation to address the concern or the pledge may wish to try to correct the problem.
- Never ask a pledge to close their eyes. The intimidation may be considered hazing and is also a risk for safety. Closed eyes, blindfolds, or other imposed restriction is never allowed for any meeting, event, or ceremony.
- Never communicate the expectation that a pledge give a brother a gift. This specifically applies to Big Brothers or the Vice President-Pledge Education. Brothers may welcome pledges/new members with congratulatory gifts, but no gifts are expected in return. Any chapter traditions that imply that pledges should give gifts to brothers, make gifts, spend extra money outside of approved fees, etc. should be eliminated.

Pledge Program Reviewing Process

- One meeting per week will allow sufficient time to conduct all business. Keep in mind that the pledges will also be going to events and talking with each other outside of the pledge meetings.
- The standard pledge education program and accompanying manual can be considered extensive to many but can successfully be accomplished in the minimum 30 day period, though a period of 36-42 days is most common and provides additional flexibility and planning. Programs reaching the full maximum policy limit of 70 days create suspicion of additional secret pledge tasks or treatment; too much emphasis on pledging rather than on chapter programs, and often interfere with academics.
- Remember to put your name and your chapter name in all correspondence with Central Office during the program review process. There are many programs being reviewed in a short period of time and the process will go more quickly if all pertinent information is included in the correspondence.
- There should be a detailed agenda for all parts of the pledge meeting. The agendas should not just say "Pledge Business Meeting."
- There needs to be a question breakdown for the quizzes in each weekly agenda (example: Quiz 1 over questions 1-8).

**REMEMBER – THE BROTHERS SET THE EXAMPLE FOR
APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND ATTITUDE**