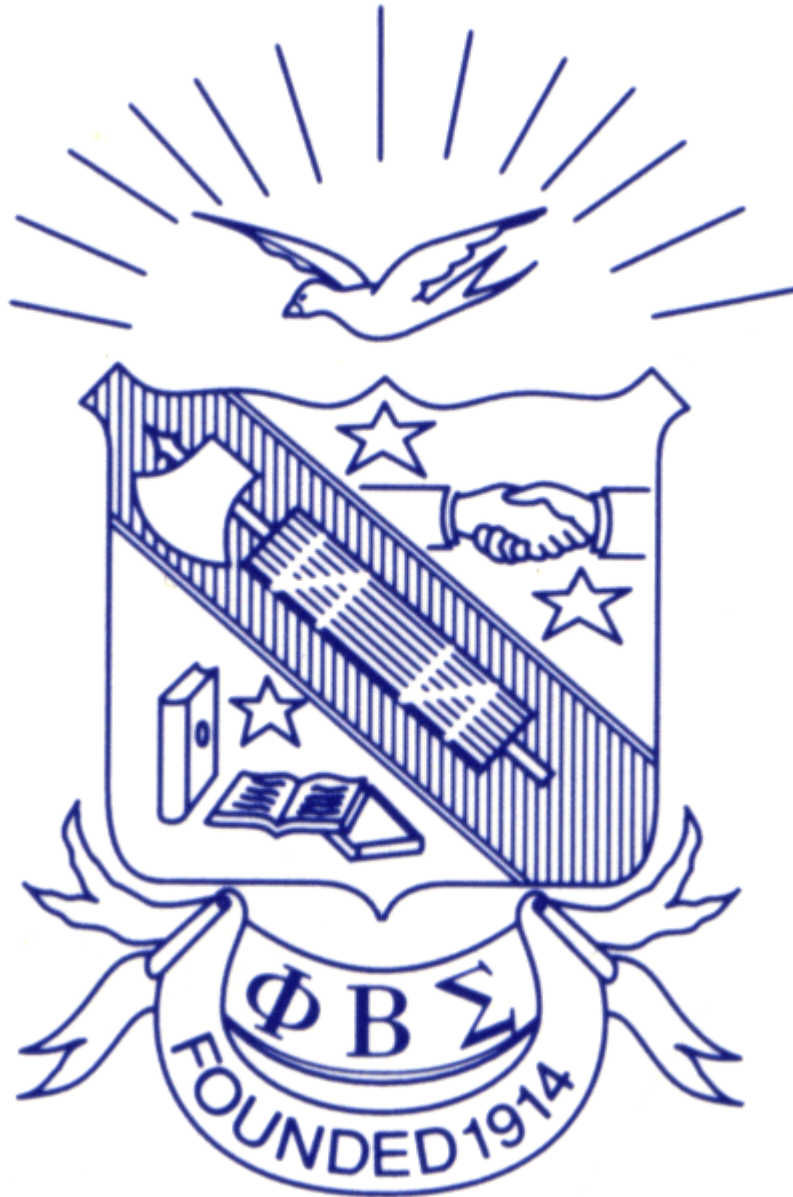


COLLEGIATE RECRUITMENT GUIDE





Mission Statement:

“To become the leading proactive community service organization focusing on issues and strategies that positively impact young males and our communities.”

Table of Contents

From the Desk of the International Second Vice President..... 2

Letter from the Author 3

INTRODUCTION 5

MAXIMIZING SIGMA PRIDE 6

RECRUITMENT 7

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU HAVE EXACTLY ONE SCHOOL YEAR TO CONVINC
EVERY FRESHMAN THAT SIGMA IS #1. 7

SEVEN STEPS TO ACHIEVING A CHAPTER IMAGE OF SUCCESS 8

COMPONENT 1 - “SHOW EM WHAT YA WORKIN WIT” 9

COMPONENT 2 - DIVERSITY IS SIGMA’S SECRET WEAPON; USE IT WISELY..... 10

 SIGMA SHOULD BE LIKE A SUPER WALMART 12

COMPONENT 3 - IF SIGMA’S NAME IS ON IT, IT’S GOTTA BE RIGHT 13

 YOU EVER HEAR SOMEBODY SAY, “MAKE SURE THAT YOU’RE WEARING
 CLEAN UNDERWEAR?” 13

 SIGMA WEBSITES REPRESENT PHI BETA SIGMA: WOULD COLON POWELL JOIN
 OUR FRATERNITY AFTER LOOKING AT YOUR WEBSITE?..... 13

 PREPARE TO THROW WATER AT ME... 14

 ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMMING 16

 REMEMBER: THOSE WITH CLASS PREFER SIGMA..... 17

 WE DON’T COMPETE WITH IGNORANCE 17

 BIGGER BETTER BUSINESS: Chapter Meetings 18

 DOWN TO BUSINESS 18

COMPONENT 4 - PUT YOUR CALENDAR WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS..... 20

 CONTINUING THE LEGACY OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
 TO SUPPORT EDUCATION 20

 SCHOLARSHIP: THE KEY TO REAL SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE KEY TO
 RECRUITMENT 22

 WHAT ABOUT THE YOUNG BROTHERS THAT ARE DOING IT RIGHT? 22

 PROMOTING EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT WITHIN SIGMA 23

 THE SIGMA COLLEGIATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE: NEVER STOP LEARNING..... 23

 AS MENTIONED EARLIER, YOUR CALENDAR IS OFTEN ONE OF YOUR MOST
 EFFETIVE RECRUITMENT TOOLS..... 24

 REMEMBER: THE FRATERNITY PUTS A STRONG EMPHASIS ON BUSINESS 25

 BOTTOM LINE: SIGMA’S PRESENCE MUST BE SEEN AND FELT ON EVERY
 CAMPUS 26

COMPONENT 5 - MOVE FROM THE ORDINARY TO THE EXTRAORDINARY 28

 BLUE THUNDER PRODUCTIONS PROUDLY PRESENTS..... 28

COMPONENT 6 - MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GREATEST MOMENTS TO SHINE..... 30

 OK LET’S TAKE IT TO THE STAGE 30

 NOW THAT YOU’VE IMPRESSED EVERYONE, IT’S TIME FOR THE INTEREST
 MEETING..... 33

COMPONENT 7 - WALK AS KINGS, BUT KEEP THE COMMON TOUCH 34

 AVOID THE PITFALLS OF LOSING THE MOMENTUM 36

IN CONCLUSION..... 37

From the Desk of the International Second Vice President



Greetings Brothers,

Welcome to the Phi Beta Sigma Collegiate Recruitment Guide! A common request that Collegiate Brothers have had across the country are tools to help them in regards to recruiting new members. We have to spend so much time educating Brothers about how to conduct a proper MIP; that as a Fraternity we do not teach our Brothers how to recruit quality members in the first place. In response to this shortage of educational recruitment tools I collaborated with Brother Jermale Jenkins out of the Southern Region to create a Collegiate Chapter recruitment guide. This handbook will serve as an informative comprehensive guide to help Collegiate Chapters improve their image as well as basic recruitment techniques. This guide covers a variety of topics including: effectively maximizing Sigma pride, how to recruit incoming freshman, improving chapter image, strategic event planning. I encourage you to share this guide with your chapter and to use it as a learning tool for your chapter retreats.

Fraternally,

Steven D. Kniffley Jr.
International Second Vice President
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

Letter from the Author

Greetings Brothers,

First, I want to congratulate you on selecting the nation's leading African American fraternal Society. So many of you are where I was so many years ago: full of energy, hope and intensity just ready to do whatever it takes to take your chapter to the number #1 slot in the country. If you are like I was, however, you probably have not completely figured out what exactly is expected of you as a member of such a prestigious organization. What should you do? How should you act? In some cases, you may have had older brothers to show you the ropes. In other cases, there was practically no one around, really, to help you in your mission. And, if you're really like me, you are not completely content with maintaining the status quo in your chapter--not that anything's wrong with the chapter, but you just know that things can be so much better. I hope to share with you in this guide what I have learned over the years about what it really takes to be a #1 chapter. My chapter worked extremely hard to achieve what success we were able to achieve. We still, however, felt that we did not completely do Sigma justice. If we had only known then what we know now, I feel we could have been even more effective as a chapter. I hope to be able to warn you about some of the pitfalls of running a chapter, and at the same time give you a renewed hope about getting ready for this next school year.

Now the question you may be asking yourself is what made me write something like this. Well, I was talking with a couple of my chapter brothers on the phone the other evening. We were going on-and-on for nearly three hours about how concerned we were with the State of Sigma as a fluid national organization. We noticed how there was, seemingly, a torch passed from one chapter to the next. This chapter WAS the bomb...now they ARE a bomb. That chapter was terrible, now they are number one. We were trying to think of a way to put an end to the constant rising and falling of our nation's Sigma chapters. We were also thinking about how the organization differed depending on what region of the country you were from. In a sense, fraternities and sororities were similar to law schools. Law schools, such as Harvard, Yale, and Duke are nationally recognized. In-other-words, when you mention their names, positive vibes and assurances come naturally. Some law schools, however, like Campbell, Emory, and Tulane are what we refer to as regional law schools. All three are top notch institutions, but do not have the name recognition of some of the others mentioned before. While you are in an area where those schools are located, you may benefit from their reputations as long as you remain local. However, if you should leave the area to one beyond the immediate vicinity of those schools, when you attempt to find employment, you may often hear "Tulane who?"

We were concerned that Sigma has for too often maintained a status as a regional fraternity. There are chapters on certain campuses here or there that are just awesome. Nevertheless, there are, unfortunately, too many areas where the only people who see Sigma as

the #1 fraternity are the Sigmas themselves and their closest friends. We were reading this forwarded joke. It listed the 10 things you would never hear a member of BLAZ AYE BLAH organization say. Well, it picked on every organization. AKA: I left my mirror at home; DST: I think the A.K.A.s should have won; SGRho: we have the largest sorority on the yard; ZphiB: I wanted to be an A.K.A., APhiA: I don't find my line brother attractive; KAPsi: I have too many pairs of kakkis; QpsiPhi: we have the highest G.P.A. on campus; Iota: I'm glad my founders gave us the colors of U.P.S. But when it got to the Sigmas, we were more irritated that we didn't even get 10. Our disses dealt with the way we dressed, on stage and off, and with the number of shows across the country where Sigma was not only mediocre, but downright horrible, yet proclaimed at the end, "We were robbed."

We thought to ourselves, it's time for somebody to speak out. It is time to put an end to chapters having to always find out the hard way about the pitfalls that often keep chapters from being and remaining successful. We felt that it was necessary to create an effort geared toward creating on every college campus a successful and comprehensive chapter of Phi Bet Sigma, one that clearly adheres to the founders' framework. I have put together some commentary and a long list of suggestions about what I think makes a #1 chapter. I must be up front with you, however. I am blunt. I speak my mind--even on touchy issues, and I don't like to sugar coat. In this guide, I plan to challenge some very sensitive fundamental and philosophical issues--perhaps even issues that you feel very strongly about. I will ask for you to consider these issues from different angles, looking closely at the language and framework of our founders, even against the common misconceptions of some or many of our members. This will truly test your commitment to brotherhood, and indeed to the principles on which Sigma was founded. As you read this guide, I hope that you find plenty of ideas, many of which you implement in your own chapter, and where you feel your chapter strays away from the intent of our founders, I ask that you at least consider making an adjustment here or there for the benefit of Sigma. I'm very much about reform. When there is the need, why not make a change for the better. As I will be pointing out, quite a few of our chapters across the country have discovered that the key to being a #1 chapter is very simply adhering to the goals and principles of our fraternity. I can guarantee you though, that even if your chapter has reached the #1 slot on your campus already, you will still find at least three things in this guide (if not 10) that if implemented will take your chapter swiftly to a new level.

Thank you for caring enough about the welfare of the great organization to take the time out to flip through this guide. I hope you get quite a bit out of what I have to share with you.

Fraternally,

Jermale Jenkins

INTRODUCTION

January 9, 1914 our founders officially set the wheels in motion for an auspicious entity, which would one day take the country by storm with the strength and effectiveness of such civil rights organizations as the N.A.A.C.P., SNCC, and the National Urban League. Brother-by-brother, year-after-year, this society would work to effectively address the issues, which plague African-American society, while simultaneously building men of excellence out of college and professional men throughout our nation.

Attracting such great Americans as James Weldon Johnson, A. Phillip Randolph, Alain Leroy Locke and George Washington Carver, Phi Beta Sigma was able to work with the pillars of African American society to effect positive social change and assist in supporting an African American people through some of the most difficult times in its history. Today, while we can credit ourselves with quite a few accomplishments, much more is required of us if we are to remain relevant to today's African American community and to claim our rightful position at the apex of fraternal organizations. There are five fraternal societies, which are currently a part of our national council: Phi Beta Sigma, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Alpha Phi Alpha and Iota Phi Theta. Let's face it, in order to survive in this world, you must be the best, the brightest and the most competitive. Sigma was founded to be much more than a social club. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc (an international fraternity) was founded to create needed social change. You are now charged with picking up that torch. It won't be easy, and it certainly won't always be convenient. Through Sigma, however, you will be given the opportunity to develop your business and professional skills, which ultimately will benefit you as you prepare to compete in this world of champions.

For this journey, there are critical skills you must possess. You will need to considerably develop your business side. If you are only used to exercising the laid back and casual side of yourself, you will now need to look deeper within yourself to discover ways to add that additional component of diversity into your everyday life. It doesn't mean that you have to change completely into someone you're not; it means that you must add to who you are so that you might become better. There is room for both. After all, when you approach the working force or even the graduate school admissions process, you will need to be top of the line. No one will take into consideration then that you were trying to be an "individual." Not too many people are concerned that you are a minority anymore. Conservatives in government are making affirmative action obsolete one day at a time. You must be the best amongst your peers to be chosen.

You now have a higher calling. You must boldly respond to that call with dedication, strong will and vision. You are now a part of a national organization with a national commitment to very high ideals, set by our three most-honorable founders. It is therefore up to you to move Sigma upward and onward. In order that we may grow and develop as a larger and more effective fraternal society, we must demonstrate to the community and to potential members that amongst the five organizations, Sigma is clearly the most effective. Our effectiveness as a national and local organization is, by far, our most crucial recruitment tool.

MAXIMIZING SIGMA PRIDE

When taking a look at our 5 fraternal organizations, It is not uncommon for me to run across an article in Black Enterprise Magazine or the local newspaper about how Alpha Phi Alpha is working to empower African Americans in the business world. It is also common for me to run across a book, like Vernon Jordan's autobiographical work, Vernon Can Read, and be bombarded with stories about how he, then leader of the National Urban League, and Jessie Jackson of operation PUSH laughed together while both were speaking and/or giving a workshops at area Omega Psi Phi conferences, while Johnny Cochran offers his wisdom at Kappa Alpha Psi's conventions. There is a certain pride that these men have in their organizations, which allows them to not only be members, but active participants in the mission and the programming of their respective organizations. I believe that it is that pride, which aids in the recruitment of new brothers. It is that pride that moves members to be extremely active throughout undergrad and following graduation to feel compelled to take that level of devotion into their local graduate chapter. It is that pride that causes celebrities to continue to acknowledge their organizations in television interviews, and even remain active within these organizations throughout their busy professional careers. Yes, it is that pride that allows the current U.S. Secretary of Education to boldly wear his Sigma paraphernalia during his interview with Ebony Magazine. Most importantly, it is that pride that instills a sense of moral obligation within its members to contribute, both physically and financially to an organization's mission via donations, and membership dues. **WE ABSOLUTELY MUST MAKE STRIDES TO MAKE THIS PRIDE ENDEMIC THROUGHOUT OUR ENTIRE FRATERNITY.**

They say that mama always thinks her baby is the prettiest. A mama always chooses her child over others. That's what mothers do. However, I'm sure you have seen a case or two where a mother's view of her baby wasn't exactly the view of the outsiders looking in. As men of Sigma, we cannot afford to wear rose-colored glasses when looking at Sigma. Any organization that feels that it has reached a point where improvement is impossible or where perfection has somehow been achieved is destined for failure.

There are quite a few suggestions, which if implemented will move any organization to #1. Now in order for me to make some suggestions, I *must* make you feel at least a little uncomfortable at times. I don't care how open-minded you are, criticism isn't pleasant. But remember: a man that can humbly accept constructive criticism is a wise man indeed, for he realizes that we are all in a constant state of learning. We cannot afford to remain hardened and closed-minded. We cannot afford to become offended and defensive.

We must be able to look at our organization and ourselves objectively and realize that we ALL have areas, which can be improved. I pray that you would consider working to implement some or all of these suggestions. Remember I have a sincere love for Sigma, and for ALL my Sigma brothers. Therefore, be confident that it is certainly never my intention to attack, insult, or offend you or this society. As in business, however, it is critical to be able to evaluate yourself in an unbiased manner. And when necessary it is helpful to measure

your organization's effectiveness by comparing it to other organizations, which are similar in mission--in our case, other chapters and indeed other fraternities.

You have achieved this level of open-mindedness when you are able to look at Sigma through the eyes of three target groups in particular:

1. Potential members who have never heard of or don't care for Sigma;
2. Laypeople in the community who have never heard of Sigma; and
3. Members of and people interested in "rival" organizations.

When you can honestly look at and evaluate Sigma in this way, you will know that you are being objective.

RECRUITMENT

Phi Beta Sigma was initiated to bring brothers of diverse backgrounds together who were interested in effecting positive change in the areas of Education, Social Action and Business. As an organization, we are not doing enough to address these issues holistically. There are some chapters, some states, and some regions, which have become quite effective, but others unfortunately are lagging behind in many or all of these areas. I hope to now share with you what I feel are some national goals in line with our founder's framework, which will give this organization more purpose and relevance to potential members, college campuses, and to the community as a whole.

I would like to begin with some commentary on recruitment at local colleges and universities. After all, we certainly cannot obtain any of our goals without a proper sized force of active and financial members. Just as everything else you take on, recruitment is a competitive process. Here are some suggestions, which will hopefully put your job into perspective.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU HAVE EXACTLY ONE SCHOOL YEAR TO CONVINCING EVERY FRESHMAN THAT SIGMA IS #1.

Every year, new freshmen arrive ready to begin their college careers. Sooner or later, they will begin to develop their impressions about the various organizations on campus. Quite often, these people have never even heard of "Greeks." Many don't know where joining a Greek fraternity or sorority fits into their college and post-college experience. For those who have heard of the organizations, it is most common that it is the stereotypical organizations, which they have heard of first. "Are those guys with the canes here? That's what I'm going to be." "Where are the Q-Dogs? I heard they're the hype ones." If they have heard of Sigma, normally, it is because they have family members, teachers or friends who are members. There may even be a small minority who may have been to a step show where the Sigmas may have performed well, and even some who were Sigma Betas in high

school. Overall, because Sigma has no stereotype, as a brand it is incumbent upon the local chapters across the nation to formally introduce what we offer to their prospective campuses.

Either way, the stage is set for those new to the university to get their first and perhaps most lasting impressions of the organizations available on campus. Strange to think about it, but you now have exactly one school year in which to convince every single guy on campus that Sigma is the only choice out of the Pan Hellenic Fraternities offered on your campus. Now how can you possibly do that? Simple. There is a 7-component comprehensive plan that I will lay out for you. And, trust me; I've seen it work a million times by so many of our chapters. Are you ready for the 411? Well...get ready because a brotha is about to get real.

SEVEN STEPS TO ACHIEVING A CHAPTER IMAGE OF SUCCESS

1. COMPONENT 1- SHOW EM WHAT YA WORKING WIT
2. COMPONENT 2- DIVERSITY IS SIGMAS SECRET WEAPON; USE IT WISELY
3. COMPONENT 3- IF SIGMA'S NAME IS ONE IT, IT'S GOT TO BE RIGHT
4. COMPONENT 4- PUT YOUR CALENDAR WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS
5. COMPONENT 5- MOVE FROM ORDINARY TO THE EXTRAORDINARY
6. COMPONENT 6- MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GREATEST MOMENTS TO SHINE
7. COMPONENT 7- WALK AS KINGS AND QUEENS, BUT NEVER LOSE THE COMMON TOUCH

The Initial Strike...

COMPONENT 1 - "SHOW EM WHAT YA WORKIN WIT"

Let's not deny it, there's a certain celebrity that naturally comes with being a member of a successful fraternity. And believe it or not there is a fan-base that is naturally built into successful chapters. So the first real chance you get to present yourself to your campus, my advise: make the girls scream. This is very important. Girls screaming for you is one of the greatest perks of being in a college fraternity. If and when you show up for a performance, girls automatically scream, potential members and casual onlookers will definitely be impressed by the celebrity of your fraternity.

As I remember it, when new freshmen come to campus, there is some event where the groups are asked to perform an impromptu step or two. Impromptu my foot! First impressions are everything. Strategically plan how to get the most props from your performance. *APPEARANCE IS IMPORTANT*. Sorry brothers, but Sigmas are not exactly known for wanting to dress up. I think that's how we keep getting plagued with that national stereotypical image of being bama and country. *PLEASE, YOU MUST RESIST THE URGE TO DRESS LIKE YOU'RE FIXING A CAR*. Go all out. You'll thank me later.

I can remember one of my finest hours as an undergrad. It was freshman orientation, and we had been asked to do a couple of steps. *BELIEVE ME, WE WENT ALL OUT!* The Alphas and Kappas had warmed the audience up for us with their few steps. They were dressed in khakis, shorts, and T-shirts, which was fine. But once they had finished, out comes the Men of Blue Thunder decked out in our finest. We all wore our nicest summer suits. When we opened the door to come out to where the stepping was to take place, you would have thought that Usher, Chris Brown and Bow-wow had shown up. Girls screamed and the audience cheered as if we had just won a Source award. We did the most hype two steps we had. We opened up with this step we called "Brothas are you ready." We threw blue and silver confetti everywhere during our step. At the end, we were the talk of the yard and the envy of the Pan Hellenic Council for at least the next three weeks. Brothers, trust me, it's worth it. Give the ladies something to look at. They can see casual any day. The key is that you must do something that makes you stand out. Shoot, if we had the money and the time we would have rented a fog machine. After all, your image affects everything you do. You only get one chance to make a first impression.

COMPONENT 2 - DIVERSITY IS SIGMA'S SECRET WEAPON; USE IT WISELY

Here's the truth about this whole "diversity" thing. We're not the pretty boys. We're not the business fraternity. We're not the hype fraternity. We're better: we're all three mixed in together in one fraternity. That is what diversity is all about. Be careful though with using the words "diverse," "unique," "individual," and "down-to-earth." For while they describe some of our strongest characteristics, when misused, these three words can help **assure our downfall**. I believe in diversity, and I celebrate the diversity of this great organization, but I am offended, however, when some brothers misinterpret what these words mean.

This is one of the areas where I think there is a MAJOR conflict between our founders' intent and some of our local brothers' intent. Somehow over the years, a few of our brothers have subscribed to the belief that street, laid back, low key, and strictly casual is how one achieves being "down-to-earth" and that anything professional like dressing up or being academic or articulate is somehow instantly associated with being arrogant or stuck up. The truth is that the two are just not related at all!

Believe me, being down to earth and being professional are behaviors that can actually co-exist. I have seen chapters from all across the country who pride themselves on being the "slumming-it chapters." Many of these chapters were actually just as arrogant and unapproachable as they come. On that same note, I've seen quite a few of what some brothers refer to as the "pretty boy" chapters who were extremely approachable, down-to-earth and easy to talk to. Let's not be misled, "Down-to-earth" simply means that you have not gotten your head so high in the clouds that you are no longer approachable. Arrogance is arrogance whether you are wearing a 3-piece suit, carrying a briefcase or wearing some jeans, a wife-beater and some Tims. Neither has anything to do with how you look. It's about how you behave.

Some brothers over the years have been taught to be prejudiced towards brothers and chapters who take on a professional image. If you listen closely, you'll hear things like, "We dress casual all the time." "We don't do all that dressing up stuff; that's for the Kappas." "When we step, we just throw on some overalls and step." "Dressing up at meetings is for the Alphas." "We don't wear paraphernalia." **I have only one question: Who came up with that?** Is it in the constitution? By-laws? NO. I'll tell you exactly what happened: one day, some brother decided that he didn't feel like dressing up, so he convinced the other brothers in the chapter that dressing up wasn't a good idea. And later, when he became what we used to call a "prophyte," he decided to make it a chapter tradition by teaching it to the "neos." How did he do that? He used negative peer pressure...whenever he saw something that resembled an image of success, he threw insults at it. Through this method, he taught it to one line. They taught it to the next line. Next thing you know, it somehow became informally embedded in chapter history.

What's worse is that so many brothers who have been taught to think this way actually feel that they are somehow better than other chapters. Meanwhile, Sigma's image suffers.

This kind of stained tradition creates division and attacks the very intent of the founders of this organization. It drags Sigma down by convincing innocent neophytes that if they want to be Sigmas, that they must somehow forgo taking on a successful image or associating with any chapters who choose to take on a professional image. Well I have news. Slavery is over. Our people have been oppressed for too many years, brain washed into thinking that they must keep their heads down and be 3rd-class citizens in order to be accepted. Even our younger counter parts are being pressured into believing that high marks in school and the approval of your teachers makes you a nerd while low marks in school and a consistent record of in-school and out-of-school suspension makes you cool.

Basically, If you choose not to be dressy or professional in your personal image, then that is your right, but if that is the case, don't ever try to put your beliefs off on others or integrate it as if it is somehow a part of Sigma's history, because it is not. Nowhere in our constitution or bylaws does it say that Sigmas should not maintain a professional image. To the contrary, it does say that we are to be men about Business, Scholarship, and Education. When taking care of business, quite honestly, we have an obligation to look the part. Diversity simply means that no two Sigmas are alike, that we are the sum of all things POSITIVE & SUCCESSFUL. It was meant to include brothers from different backgrounds with different talents to offer the organization. The way you dress on your own personal time is up to you as an individual. But what makes Sigma great is that when we come together for the benefit of our organization, we do what it takes to become one.

Likewise diversity does not nor will it ever excuse a chapter for being plagued with brothers who hardly go to class, whose G.P.A.s fall well below fraternity's standard, yet hoop and holler Sigma calls and lewd songs and chants, as if they are our fraternity's finest ambassadors. We have a reputation to uphold as a fraternity dedicated to uplifting an African American people. In our quest to be individuals, we cannot overlook our most basic principles as a fraternity: BROTHERHOOD, SCHOLARSHIP, SERVICE FOR HUMANITY, SOCIAL ACTION, EDUCATION, AND bigger better BUSINESS. We must ask, "What do these principles mean to us? To be a truly successful Sigma chapter, we cannot merely pick one or two of these to promote; we must work diligently to embody THEM ALL.

See, I told you that I didn't avoid touchy issues. As I explained in my letter, I am going to challenge you to look at certain philosophical issues from a different prospective. Therefore, if you find anything in our constitution, or bylaws which contradicts what I have said, then please ignore everything you have just read. But if not, give it a moment to marinate. Read back through it a couple of times. Think it over. Be open-minded, and I trust you will see where I'm coming from. Further, I believe you will

see that it actually makes sense. Our principles and programs were not intended to be merely words on a page. They were meant to be brought to life in all that we do as chapters.

Well anyway, while you think that over, there other things I want to suggest which will likewise help you to recruit top-notch brothers.

SIGMA SHOULD BE LIKE A SUPER WALMART

When there is a K-mart over here and a grocery store way over there, and an auto part store who knows where, Super Walmart can be a lifesaver. In fact, when word of a Super Walmart gets around, grocery stores and department stores for miles around begin to shiver. Why? Super Walmart eliminates the relevance of these smaller stores by having everything a customer needs! By definition, SIGMA demands that we become the sum of all. And not only must we be diverse, but we must outshine the competition in ALL areas. My chapter had as its local motto, “Excellence is our standard-not our goal.” By that, we meant that WE PLANNED TO OFFER EVERYTHING OUR CUSTOMERS (POTENTIAL RECRUITS) NEEDED IN A FRATERNITY.

It also captured our commitment to striving to be the best at everything. We planned to be #1 in stepping, #1 in on-campus programming, #1 in community service efforts, #1 in displaying class and style, #1 in business and professionalism, #1 in academics, #1 in on-campus entertainment, #1 in having the most hype parties, #1 ladies’ choice organization, and #1 in overall effectiveness as an organization. I mean let’s face it, if we reach the apex in all of those categories, who needs the other guys?

Our strategy was to be better than any of the other Pan Hellenic organizations in what many considered to be their strongest areas. Through this strategy, we were able to eliminate the relevance, and the need for having Alpha, Kappa, or Omega (At the time, we didn’t have Iotas) on the yard. Alphas were known for being about business and academics-well not with us around. We took on a “Bigger Better Business” Image better than any other organization. We wore business attire to all of our meetings. We were often seen on meeting day walking across the yard with our brief cases, attaches, and pads in our finest business attire. I often heard the comment on the way to a chapter meeting or to a forum, “those boys are serious.” AND WE WERE. I mean the Alphas have a great organization, but their lack of well roundedness counts against them. I’ll talk a little bit more about the business side in component #3.

We certainly weren’t ALL business. When it came to loosening our collars, we embarrassed the competition in those areas too. Our parties were the most attended on campus. At our step shows, we were the team that people couldn’t wait to see. In fact, they would often travel to our off-campus shows. On one occasion they even hung a huge banner congratulating us on an off campus step competition victory by the time we

made it back to the yard. Trust me; this did NOT come over night. It took a lot of planning, a lot of hard work, and a commitment to this next philosophy that simply says that if SIGMA'S name is on it, it's got to be right.

COMPONENT 3 - IF SIGMA'S NAME IS ON IT, IT'S GOTTA BE RIGHT

YOU EVER HEAR SOMEBODY SAY, "MAKE SURE THAT YOU'RE WEARING CLEAN UNDERWEAR?"

O.K., first I'm not about to go into a conversation about draws. But, I can remember my mom saying that whenever I would leave the house when I was young. She always made it very clear to me that whenever I was in public that I was representing her, and that I had better do it well. I couldn't go to school with my hair bright red or looking disheveled. She just wouldn't have it. I had to represent her and my entire family, not just myself, exceptionally well. REALITY CHECK: Every time anyone looks at anything with the letters Phi Beta Sigma on it, they get an impression about the organization itself. Take a minute and let that sink in. Imagine the weight of that statement. Sigma is an international company. As a company spokesperson, EVERYTHING you do especially while wearing the company's letters can potentially affect the global image of this International Corporation from your fliers, to how you look and behave while wearing your letters to your chapter's website, to your performance in a local step show, to your chanting at a party.

O.K, now here comes the REAL delicate stuff. I want to take a moment to discuss some areas where Phi Beta Sigma's Image becomes key.

SIGMA WEBSITES REPRESENT PHI BETA SIGMA: WOULD COLON POWELL JOIN OUR FRATERNITY AFTER LOOKING AT YOUR WEBSITE?

Like anything else, our chapter websites give people an impression about us. If ever you get a chance, look at the websites of various Pan-Hellenic organizations, including Phi Beta Sigma. Read through them and compare. As you study the sites, ask yourself a few questions about each site:

1. What do the fonts look like when you first open their site?
2. What pictures do you see?
3. What image is being presented?
4. What kind of tone is set by the mixture of fonts, colors and graphics?
5. How are things worded?

6. What kind of information is available on the site?
7. Who seems to be the target audience for the site?
8. Does it mostly promote business or play?
9. What is the purpose of a site?
10. Who would be drawn to the site? Who might be turned off by it?

Now I'm going to give you my personal non-technical view of websites.

PREPARE TO THROW WATER AT ME...

The purpose of a website is actually very similar to the purpose of a fraternity pamphlet: to inform and to recruit. Thinking as a sophomore student who is going into a field like Business, Biology--Pre-med., Finance or Law or something, a potential member would likely visit a website as a way to see what kind of organization will best complement their personality and their aspirations. When I open it, I am opening it as a non-Greek potential member of this organization. My first impression is usually the one I'm going to go with. Ready to hear some harsh criticism now? Well here it goes:

Appearance: Coming off as too laid back and too lackadaisical can give the impression that acceptance into your organization would not be as meaningful as acceptance in other organizations. Playful fonts suggest lack of business savvy. Fonts that are too large suggest lack of seriousness. Too many graphics and cute pictures suggest playfulness. Some Pan-Hellenic websites look like they are advertising middle school groups, (black and gold monkeys jumping back and forth, witches and warlocks, smurfs and cartoons) while others do an effective job of sending just the right message. While many chapter websites, at least in my opinion, exude an amazing and tasteful display of technical skills that I would not even dream of being able to acquire, some tend to be a little inappropriate for a mature or serious-minded target audience. I told you I would be offering constructive criticism. Remember first impressions are the most lasting. While I'm not suggesting a funeral parlor look, remember that people have got to take your organization seriously if you are to stand out from the other organizations on campus

Content: Again, our website, like anything else that bares the name of Sigma, has a responsibility to reflect the organization's diversity. To promote the idea that somehow we are only down-to-earth, partying, crazy, casual, laid-back, everyday, people is an insult to the complexity of this organization. For, while we are many of those things, we are much more than that.

The problem here is not necessarily a problem with the content itself; it is the order in which the content is presented. The purpose of the website is to promote Phi Bet Sigma and your chapter of this international fraternity. So let's take care of presenting the organization first and then we can go on from there. Remember that our national focus is BUSINESS, SOCIAL ACTION, and EDUCATION. Well, casually socializing, partying and being crazy

is not one of Sigma's main national focuses. It is something that we do in our spare time when we are just "chillin on the yard." Otherwise, our national programs would be Education, Social Action and Chillin. Or Bigger Better Business, Stepping and Social Action. Our principles would be brotherhood, acting a fool and service. I don't think our Honorable founder Brother Taylor would be happy about any of those changes. I'm not saying leave those things out. I am suggesting that you consider not making them your cover-page focus.

Your website has an obligation present Phi Beta Sigma as a prestigious entity-the Harvard, Morehouse, Yale, and Hampton of fraternities. Initially, our website should look more like a website for the Governor of a state or like the most prestigious of law offices, using graphics tastefully, but not so much playfully. Photos, for example --at the very least, the photos, which can be seen first--should if at all possible be a photo of your entire chapter dressed preferably in dark suits in some very neat, classy and business-like pose and formation-nothing too silly, wild, crazy, or casual (at least not yet.) Remember business and education. If you do choose to have a casual photo as your cover page, let it be one of your chapter performing some social action or community service effort, ie. reading with young children, campus clean up, sleep out for the homeless.

If possible, when you introduce your officers, have a picture of each officer separately in a suit or shirt and tie. This gives you an official look. Then, you can label another section as "brothers getting loose" or "chillin on the yard," "Sigmas take it to the wild side," "cook-out photos," "Sigmas take to the stage," "Sigmas unwind at their campus party," or something that indicates that we do relax, but that our first priority is being about the **business** of Sigma. Remember, the object of the game is recruitment. Let guys see that Sigma is serious business and that you must sweat us (just kidding). Be sure to show our diversity, but in its proper order: Business first, then play.

Use the shield sparingly. Remember it is a National Emblem, not a toy. Don't spin it, or flip or have people clicking on it too much. It's delicate—sacred, something to be respected. Also, preserve our founders. Use them sparingly as well. Avoid excess use of cartoons, and words like Sigmatize, Sigmadom, Sigmland, and Sigmania. They're clever, but playful and quite honestly a little played out too. As creative as I think they are, in the wrong context, it takes away from the seriousness of the organization.

Also, be sure to make the website outsider friendly; remember, the most important people who will see your site are not the brothers from your chapter or from area chapters. Your most important audience is those who are comparison shopping for a fraternity to join. Give a professional description of Sigma including significant members from the civil rights movement, as well as current pillars in society. Don't forget to mention the current U.S. Secretary of State, Rod Page, or Gospel Beacon, Bobby Jones, or organizer of the March on Washington and the Million Man March respectively, brothers A. Phillip Randolph and Ben Chavis. Then, go through the focuses of the organization. Share with them our vision, our programs, your programs, your service initiatives.

Have a section about what we look for in members. Tell them what they should do step-by-step if they are interested in gaining membership. Be sure you have a clear plan of action before you open the floodgates though. There's nothing worse than having somebody who is interested when there is no clear plan in place. Have a list of specific actions for them to take. Designate one person in the chapter to handle membership inquiries. I know we tend to think that everyone knows how to approach us, but that's just not true. I believe that most of the Pan Hel's National Websites do an excellent job at marketing the organization to potential members. Take a look at them if you find yourself on the web. Remember it's healthy from time to time to look at how you stand in comparison to your competitors. So don't just look at other Sigma/Zeta sites, check out the Alphas, Kappas, Omegas, Deltas, AKA,s and SGRho sites as well.

Your goal is to create a site that sells what Sigma has to offer. After reading the information presented on your sites, it should be clear that going with any other frat is just stupid.

Leave your audience with the impression that Sigma is a large, professional, world renowned corporation that would just shine on a resume. Phi Beta Sigma should sound as prestigious as Phi Beta Kappa.

ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMMING

The same advice goes for campus fliers, be professional, be enticing. Remember that fliers are put up all the time and people ignore them all the time. Be creative in your advertising approaches. Be diverse in your advertisement plans. Make people take notice. Like most chapters, we sponsored a week of activities every year on our campus. The difference was we didn't call ours "Sigma Week." We didn't call it "Blue and White Week." There's nothing wrong with those names. But what really sets it aside from Black and Gold week, or Blue and Gold Week or Kappa Week? We wanted something different-something that would stand out. We eventually coined our week "Blue Thunder." Just imagine walking into a Student Union and seeing this entire canvas of advertisements about BLUE THUNDER 2001. Part of our advertising strategy was to randomly place a zillion royal blue cut out thunderbolts all over campus (trees, walls, windows, trash cans) one week before Blue Thunder, which read (in a pattern that covered the bolts) BLUE THUNDER 2001 COMING SOON!!! It made people take notice. If you would have seen how many people came up to us to ask what the thunderbolts meant. T-Shirts fit in as an advertisement strategy. Imagine Sigmas walkin across the campus wearing shirts that read, Blue Thunder Coming Soon!

Always use multiple methods to get out your message. Hand bills, flyers, marquees, radio spots, email, websites, bulletin boards, etc. And remember that the quality of each of these methods matters. When creating each one, think outside box. It is THIS mentality that separates McDonalds from Kenny's Burgers and Fries.

REMEMBER: THOSE WITH CLASS PREFER SIGMA

Our formal dinners and dances were always the classiest on the yard. The Kappas and AKAs, who mind you did assist in the set up, only wished they had an event as classy as the Miss Phi Beta Sigma Coronation & Ball. Oh yea, and let's not forget the "Poetic Lover's Night Out" dinner we had on Valentine's Day, which created a 5 star restaurant right on campus with live entertainment (jazz band, soloists, poets) all complementing the astounding poetic works of Brother Dr. Marion Phillips (then Dean of UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine). Maintaining a successful image and being able to be diverse in your programming is Key.

Class was the name of the game. From our set up in the student union where we dressed to impressed at a fully set table (table cloth/accessories, etc), where we signed people up for reservations (for a fee of course), to our advertising strategy to the announcement of each couple officially at the door on the night of the event, to the soloist draped across the piano, the goal was set the STANDARD for what is class. Again, thinking outside the box is important to getting people excited about participating in your campus functions.

WE DON'T COMPETE WITH IGNORANCE

Some chapters have gotten a little carried way with competition. We can degrade women better than you can. We can curse in public and act like a bunch of idiots better than you can. We can be more thugged out than you can. We can fight over stupid stuff better than you can. Sorry, but if there is one category where we don't mind being beaten, it is the category of ignorance. Some organizations are known for just being hyper. I will just say one thing on this, if you want to compete with us in a physical battle, let's take it to the stage. Cough Cough, nudge nudge, wink wink...I thought not.

We will stomp the loudest; we will get the loudest crowd cheers; yet we can do all this while dressing/ performing with class and distinction and all while never once offending the shield or our founders. Let's certainly not forget our diversity. Don't get me wrong, we had victory chants. And no... one of them wasn't, "to da windows to walls till sweat drop off my..." I think you get the point. Brothers let's not reduce Sigma to some formal gang. I know you've seen fights break out at step shows and parties. Keep yourself and your brothers in check. Some just get too carried away.

Others honestly "just don't know no better." Either way, if your chapter or area chapters participate in any such activity, **YOUR CHAPTER BECOMES PUBLICALLY AN EMBARRASSMENT AND A DISGRACE TO SIGMA.** And honestly, I for one, would rather see your chapter stripped of its charter than to embarrass the Sigma legacy over ignorance. Last time I remember seeing a fight break out (and yes Sigma vs Omega) there were young ladies in the audience whispering, "they are so ignorant. You don't ever see the

Alphas and Kappas act like that.” Of course, I know that I had seen them two go at it a few step shows back on a different campus. The point is, however, you must remember that brotherhood extends beyond the walls of Sigma. As African Americans, we cannot forget the common struggles of our people and thus our unified mission as brothers—not just within the fraternity, but our inter-fraternal brotherhood as well. All Pan Hellenic fraternities were founded with the same mission in mind: to uplift the African American race. I don’t find fighting too uplifting. I’m sure Dr. King would agree. So, before you get suckered in by the seducing call of ignorance, remember the shield.

BIGGER BETTER BUSINESS: Chapter Meetings

Sigma demands that we commit ourselves to the professional handling of the organization’s business agenda. And yes, this does involve looking the part. Initially dressing in business attire at meetings was met with opposition from a few of our anti-shirt-and-tie brothers. However, as usual, in our chapter, eventually these brothers were able to put Sigma before their personal comfort. Students on campus often were shocked at how well we managed to have so many people with so many different backgrounds and styles come together in unity for a common purpose. You might even hear somewhere in crowd, “They got TERRELL dressing up?” But it was that diversity that made our chapter work. No brothers were selfish enough to say, “I’m not doing it.” Sigma came first. We agreed that when we were addressing the business side of Sigma, we would dress accordingly. When we were just hanging out, we went back to our unique styles. In fact, brothers who were used to dressing up were convinced to dress down for many occasions. When you care about an organization, you are willing to go the extra mile. You are even willing to compromise here or there for the greater good.

DOWN TO BUSINESS

We worked to make sure that inside our meetings was as impressive as our exterior image. There were typed and copied agendas & minutes, formal presentations with graphs and charts. Events were proposed formally, with full descriptions costs analysis, etc. We were not the everyday last-minute, thrown-together chapter, and neither should you be.

Our calendar for the year reflected our commitment to business, scholarship and social reform. We had so many forums, workshops, quiz bowl competitions symposiums, guest speakers, and dinners that the other groups had to scramble to find spaces to sponsor anything at all. We put forth an image of success--an image of professionalism and prestige. It gained us respect, and quite honestly new membership.

To give you an idea of the quality of guys we were indirectly recruiting, in one year, within our chapter we had both Vice Presidents of the Student Government Association, two Class Vice Presidents, four Resident Advisors, the Presidents of the International Relations

Club, the Student North Carolina Association of Educators, the Speech Pathology and Audiology Club, the Criminal Justice Club, the Drama Guild, the Literary Debating Society, the Modeling troupe; we had Captain of the Debate Team, the Conductor of the Pep Band, the Drum major of the Marching band, and five members of the National Collegiate Honor Society in addition to members of the basketball team, the track team, and the baseball team. Can you imagine that kind of diversity and talent all in one chapter? We enjoyed being the largest fraternity and most diverse group on the yard, and during one year the largest chapter of all Pan Hellenic organizations on our campus.

In developing the business side of your chapter, there are a few things I would suggest that you keep in mind.

Suggestion #1 - Be very careful about selecting your officers. There's nothing worse than a president who is everybody's favorite person, but has no serious vision for the organization; a secretary who is dedicated, but has no communication or organizational skills; a treasurer who doesn't feel like being too formal, so he guestimates how much money the chapter has; or a vice president who hasn't got a clue as to what his job is. If I were you, I would avoid at all cost an election of officers turning into merely a popularity contest. I would add some element of audition. You could have each Presidential candidate put together a specific vision for the organization, and have them present their plan to the chapter. You can even have each candidate present a candidate resume, highlighting his strengths as they pertain to his prospective position. Either way, have some vehicle for your potential officers to prove to you that they are indeed hard workers and qualified.

Suggestion #2 In addition to the agenda president should keep an informal check list for every meeting. You may even announce that before we end this meeting today, these things must be decided upon, and these things must be completed. If there are things which you feel require quite a bit of thought, get the information to the members of the chapter a day or two before the meeting and have them think it over and be ready to make a decision by meeting time.

Suggestion #3 Designate someone (usually the secretary) as your round up person. Have them pass out written reminders about meetings and functions. Have them contact brothers the night before or the morning of chapter meetings and functions to issue reminders. Also have them hand out minutes to the meeting between meetings. It also proved effective to type up a monthly or 2/3 week calendar of all events and meetings. Brothers can be forgetful sometimes.

Suggestion #4 Be a part of your school. Don't let Sigma be your only school activity. Speaking from experience, when you go to apply for graduate school (especially law school, business school, or medical school), they will ask you what you have done during your undergraduate years. To be competitive, you've got to have a lot more than Sigma listed on there. I also encourage you to seek student membership in such organizations as National Urban League, the N.A.A.C.P., and other important African American empowerment organizations. We must make our presence known as proponents for social change. You'll

learn a lot about life, your future and program and focus ideas for your chapter.

Suggestion #5 Be professional in the way you correspond with campus staff. When corresponding to on-campus staff and students, use chapter stationary. Don't have any...? Get some. You can have stationary made at the local Officemax. Brothers who are technologically gifted can also create some for you.

COMPONENT 4 - PUT YOUR CALENDAR WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

Who cares about how you look, step, talk, and act, if you don't do squat? Your programs and events define who you are - birds of a feather not only flock together, but look for the same kinds of trees to hang out in too. Again, you must remember that Phi Beta Sigma has as its National Focus Education, Social Action and Business. **Your calendar for the year must reflect that national focus.** There are obviously other areas, which need the attention of philanthropists, but **keep yourself well defined, and in the end, you will be more effective.** The key is to remain channeled in your programs, projects and events for the year. Ask yourself how each program/event will work to effect positive change in the areas of Social Action, Business, and Education. This requires much more time and thought than random community service projects.

One of the areas where Sigma can lag behind is that it attempts to do too many different things. You might ask why I keep mentioning our principals and national programs so often. Well, we can only be effective as a national fraternity if we align ourselves by those foundational areas of focus. Today, too many chapters are doing their own thing. Some have seemingly created new organizations through chapter generations by brothers who chose not to adhere to the founding principles and instead do what *they* think Sigma should do. This is very dangerous. Together Sigma can do amazing things; divided, we become too unfocused to make any real difference. Here are some suggestions about how you, as a chapter, can be effective in helping to effect positive change in the areas of our fraternity's focus.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TO SUPPORT EDUCATION

Our educational focus should be geared toward three areas: helping black males succeed in school through tutorial and outreach programs such as BUT NOT LIMITED TO the National Sigma Beta Club; cultivating and rewarding young black males who are succeeding in school; and helping young minority males continue their education through college and if possible through graduate study by offering scholarships and programming geared toward educating this group of young people.

As an organization, I suggest that we move to the core of the issue on bridging the

achievement gap through what I consider to be the “back door.” While nationally, Black leaders are shouting racism and the need for more federal funding, I suggest that Sigma works to address the core of this issue, which in my view has less to do with what our public schools are or are not doing, and more to do with what parents are doing to supplement their child’s education. I suggest that Sigma begins a campaign promoting what parents and people in the community can do to help OUR kids become more successful in the classroom and therefore in life. What can WE do?

- 1) Offer workshops in communities and at public schools for parents of “at risk” students, which serve to educate parents about how to help their children succeed in school and avoid the pitfalls of being an ineffective, naïve, and uninformed parent. If parents are active in students’ academic lives, major things can happen. Draft up a list of suggestion for how parents can be more effecting in raising successful young men and distribute them in the form of handbills.
- 2) Gather, and publicize information on summer enrichment camps, after-school tutorial, area mentorship programs, and other enrichment programs. These are all key ways to keep young boys off the streets. You could even offer a select number of scholarships to these camps to get kids off the street after school and during the summer. The achievement gap exists because our white counterparts have recognized that the public school offers only a portion of their child’s education. Thus, they take their kids to be checked out if there are potential learning deficiencies. They send them to pre-school academies, after-school programs, summer academic camps, private and public tutors, etc. Our kids cannot be expected to compete academically when they are merely coming to school for ALL of their educational needs. It just won’t happen.
- 3) Strengthen the numbers and funding and become more active in our National Sigma Beta Club. I currently head a group of 65 high school males in a program geared toward building within them the academic and social skills that a college bound student need. It’s like pulling teeth finding brothers willing to devote any of their time to work with these guys. Yet, other college fraternities have offered their services. How sad is that? It’s nice to have it as a social club to be near good role models, but while we have them, let’s teach them more. Some advisors/chapters are doing quite well; others are merely running the organization as a social venture teaching more about sports than anything else (our nation’s black males have already been fed the idea that if you are black your choices are limited to entertainment and sports) We must be sure that the mission of this organization extends to things such as S.A.T. prep, college prep advisement, career aspiration development etc.
- 4) Foster inter-fraternity cooperation in organizing a summit on the state of young African American males. Try to use this as a vehicle for stream-lining the efforts of area organizations, businesses, etc. to effect real change, beginning with our own community. Let’s go door to door. Let’s go into the communities and pass out information that WE compile about what’s happening to our black males and what can be done by even the poorest of families to help stomp out this fatal disease.

- 5) Find a local tutorial program. Ask if you could campaign to recruit students on campus to help with tutorials. Run a campaign on your campus to talk about the need for role models in the community. Sign people up on campus to tutor.

SCHOLARSHIP: THE KEY TO REAL SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE KEY TO RECRUITMENT

I likewise believe that we must have a greater presence in the scholarship community. In the spirit of the United Negro College Fund, we must do our part to assist young black males with attending college.

EVERY chapter in existence (grad and undergrad) should be responsible for putting out a least one annual scholarship of some kind. When school guidance counselors talk to students who are preparing for college, they ALL should be able to inform kids of the “Men of Tomorrow Scholars Program” (made up title) a scholarship targeted to outstanding black males in the graduating class to be given out by essay competition, pageant, oratorical competition, or quiz-bowl competition. We should have as many of them as possible listed in the nation’s scholarship directories. We can also research minority scholarships, then compile and publicize those to potential recipients. Annual Scholarship Banquets should be the talk of the day in our organization. People absolutely must see Sigma as a force in the academic community. That enriches our image as an organization.

WHAT ABOUT THE YOUNG BROTHERS THAT ARE DOING IT RIGHT?

We must begin to acknowledge at an early age those African American males who ARE striving in school. So often, we get so caught up with reaching down and trying to help out those brothers who are on the floor, while ignoring those outstanding African American young men who ARE excelling. Trust me, when these brothers reach college age, they will be searching for a chapter of Sigma to join. You won’t have to find them; they’ll find YOU. Perhaps this is why some chapters have such a difficult time recruiting qualified brothers (we wait too late). You know what I mean. Those guys who say, “man, I’m SERIOUSLY interested, but my GPA is like a 1.9.”

If we establish ourselves in their eyes as an organization that is committed to uplifting positive and successful young brothers, while training young leaders, these brothers (who often will have the G.P.A. when they get to sophomore year in college) will look to be a part of what we stand for. Therefore, I recommend that we move to establish banquets across the country to acknowledge the efforts of outstanding black males in area high schools and even middle school, by rewarding them with plaques, certificates, trophies or something that will let them know that someone else noticed that they are on the right track and to keep it up. We could call it the “Men of tomorrow Banquet.”

PROMOTING EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT WITHIN SIGMA

This is a suggestion for area graduate chapters, but you can facilitate this effort yourself by recruiting outside presenters and/or soliciting the assistance/sponsorship of your local graduate chapter.

THE SIGMA COLLEGIATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE: NEVER STOP LEARNING

We work hard to recruit brothers who we feel will be an effective ally in our overall mission. We hope to recruit brothers who we can one day see in the paper or on television and say, “he’s one of my fraternity brothers too.” Well, it is one thing to find such brothers ready made, but we must go step further, and begin to cultivate the brothers already within our current ranks into successful professionals in whatever their field of study may be. Clear-cut, I do recommend that the graduate chapter of the 21st Century return to the “each one-teach one” philosophy set by older generations of Sigma. I recommend that we create the Sigma Collegiate Education Institute (just a title we came up with) to help undergraduate brothers develop into the kinds of men they hope to become. Unfortunately, it is often the case that our African American collegiates tend to be first-generation college students. As smart as they are, not always are there people around to show them the ropes. Sigma can take on that role through the resources found in many of our local graduate chapters. I also recommend that we take on the following as goals:

- Work to create more localized leadership conferences of Phi Beta Sigma, sponsored by the local graduate chapters or the area chapters themselves, offering enriching seminars/workshops on some of the following topics. (which I feel should also be integrated into State, Regional and National conferences as well, hint, hint).
 - ⇒ maintaining consistent focuses/ developing nation themes
 - ⇒ how to create and conduct successful on-campus programs
 - ⇒ resume writing/ cover letter writing/ interviewing/ networking
 - ⇒ 21st Century Job Searching
 - ⇒ topics in civil rights / the current state of the black community
 - ⇒ politics in America / or local politics
 - ⇒ issues facing the community, or the nation
 - ⇒ saving and investing an introductory seminar
 - ⇒ students and credit
 - ⇒ planning an effective interest meeting (which sends the right message about Sigma)
 - ⇒ chapter officer leaderships and role training
 - ⇒ publicity and advertising in the 21st Century
 - ⇒ resolving inner-chapter conflicts
 - ⇒ setting and achieving high goals

- ⇒ the world around us (membership in Urban League, N.A.A.C.P., etc.)
- ⇒ the state of black males in America
- ⇒ college studying
- ⇒ moving up the corporate ladder
- ⇒ promoting yourself
- ⇒ personal image

✓ >>MANY OF THESE WOULD MAKE EXCELLENT CAMPUS ACTIVITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE OR GRADUATE CHAPTERS TO SPONSOR AS AN OUTREACH PROGRAM. <<

- (You may also consider doing this if possible) Establish an Initiative grant to assist local brothers who wish to continue their education, by offering local brothers interested in taking the Kaplan, the Princeton Review, or some other preparatory course. We must invest in our brothers and help them step up the ladder of success. This is how we build brothers who are successful and who we are proud to call members of Sigma.
- As undergraduate brothers, you must go out and seek leadership opportunities on campus. We should have brothers all throughout every school's student government. You should also consider attending such leadership conferences as National Urban Leagues' Executive Exchange. And of course don't forget to attend your OWN local, state, regional and national conferences (Phi Beta Sigma).

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, YOUR CALENDAR IS OFTEN ONE OF YOUR MOST EFFETIVE RECRUITMENT TOOLS.

- As you work on your calendar, remember that what you do on campus directly affects your recruitment efforts. Your calendar pulls them in; your interest meeting tells them more. Many Black males on college campuses are turned off by college fraternities: many find them to be social wastes of time. Quite often it is the more intelligent goal-driven brothers who feel this way. Their feelings are based on what they see from campus fraternities, which in too many cases isn't much. We must target this audience as potential members of Sigma. These brothers potentially will bring talent to this organization, which could only help Sigma grow even stronger. We target these brothers by publicly putting forth an image, which is more relevant to their goals.
- III. Social Action in our community and in our nation (again, you can take this on yourself)
 - 1) (Probably more of a grad chapter sort of thing) While we cannot officially as a non-profit organization endorse political candidates, we can as the 100 women in red (Delta Sigma Theta) do on occasion, and bring our agenda as a prominent African American organization to the people who have the power to implement

such an agenda. It could be called the Social Action Task Force. We have “people in high places.” I’m sure Bro. Rod Page (U.S. Secretary of Education) would be open to hearing from his fraternity brothers. He believes in this organization, and if we approach him from that stand point of an impressive organization with its act together, I’m sure he would be more than glad to help us in other ways. Who knows, he could even help us to get federal funding for some of our initiatives.

- 2) We can start up a campaign to turn up the pressure on parents in our community. I hate to say it so bluntly, but the momentum of the civil rights movement has officially ended and as a result so many of our parents have become unbelievably lazy. We have become so dependent on social federalized programs that many parents have shut down. Now mind you, I came from the projects on welfare and food stamps, but my mother and father worked hard to use those publicly funded programs as a stepping stone rather than a permanent source of income. We can become active to create initiatives to help parents make themselves more marketable, and therefore increase their income.
- 3) We can do neighborhood seminars/workshops on saving, investing, budgeting, setting financial priorities. For example, in some cases if parents would just save the \$50.00 a month on cable each month, perhaps the \$600.00 they save per year could go toward a summer enrichment camp or tutorial services which could contribute to their child becoming a first generation college student. The civil rights movement, as I know it was about sacrificing for those who come after you. It was not about the moment and accumulating material wealth for today; it was about building generational wealth. Eating out and the addiction to common name brands and fads are all indicative of misplaced priorities in many of our communities. Under a more conservative federal government, increases in self-help and decreases in federal programs will be the talk of the day. This will potentially cripple many of our people under their current mindset.

Other issues for community programs could include but are not limited to the following seminar ideas:

- Addressing parenting in the 21st Century (my have things changed)
- Understanding the public school and programs available to you
- The High School Honors program (what it is and how it can help)
- Where the local and national candidates stand on prominent issues
- Saving and investing for the future / retirement, education, etc.
- Resume/ Application process/ Interviewing -putting your best foot forward

REMEMBER: THE FRATERNITY PUTS A STRONG EMPHASIS ON BUSINESS

Consider sponsoring workshops/ seminars on any of the following topics on campus:

- Economic Empowerment
- Becoming an Entrepreneur
- Networking (who you know is as important as what you know)
- Promoting yourself to potential employees/ higher education institutions
- Discovering ways to assist the growth of small local black-run businesses
- Presentation skills
- Running effective business meetings
- Running an effective non-profit organization (there are workshops)
- writing federal and private grants
- Consider organizing a Phi Beta Sigma Economic Empowerment Summit (It just sounds prestigious), where you deal with credit, investing, spending, budgeting, saving, etc.

So basically, these are just some ideas for how you can create a calendar that speaks to the vision of our fraternity, which develops respect among your peers on campus, all while recruiting top-notch brothers. As you pull your calendar together here are few suggestions to keep in mind:

Suggestion #1 When you are preparing for a program, be mindful of requisition time restraints. Remember you usually need quite a few signatures. **MAKE A COPY OF EVERYTHING.** Take it from someone who went 3 years with another fraternity's advisor as director for student activities. He conveniently misplaced our requisition on more than a few occasions. Save yourself a lot of pain down the line. Get a copy made. Keep it in the file...just in case. Also consider putting requisitions in over a month or two in advance.

Suggestion #2 If your Dean or Vice President of Student Affairs tries to support the students at all, find one occasion during your year where you can give him or her a certificate of appreciation for all the work he/she has done...etcetera, etcetera...it doesn't hurt to have a Dean in your court-especially if he/she is Greek.

Suggestion #3 Try to always have at least 3 things active on your calendar at all times. Remember, something in business, something in education and something in social action/ community service.

BOTTOM LINE: SIGMA'S PRESENCE MUST BE SEEN AND FELT ON EVERY CAMPUS

I cannot emphasize how beneficial it is brothers to seek to move beyond the typical undergraduate existence. I often move from campus to campus as I visit different areas. On nearly every single campus I have visited to this date (and it has been at least in the mid-thirties) I have come across the same things: an Alpha flier about a forum, a study session, a seminar, a guest speaker, an oratorical competition or some business workshop; a Kappa flier

for yet another party; an Omega flier about some trip, a beauty pageant, or some graduate chapter's educational initiative, and then I will either see no Sigma flier at all, or if I do it is one advertising an interest meeting, some spades tournament, a cookout, or some flier (waste of paper) telling the campus that they will be eating lunch in the cafeteria with their sisters in some "Blue and White Day" observance. At best, I have seen some fliers announcing a sleep out for the homeless. Although I want to assume that I arrived on a day after all of the Sigma programs had passed, it made me wonder. What ARE some of our Sigma chapters doing on these campuses? Anything? Simply put, WE MUST DO MORE. Pride without works will not do.

Suggestion: Put up a bulletin board if you are allowed to. Don't design it like the heathens do though, bragging about yourself. Leave that for *them*. Put up a bulletin board addressing major social issues and encouraging people on campus to take action in some way. Voting, Mentoring, Tutoring, etc. Something related to Sigma's focus. And then at the top or bottom, you can put Phi Beta Sigma: culture for service-service for humanity. If possible try to always have something on campus with Sigma's name on it.

COMPONENT 5 - MOVE FROM THE ORDINARY TO THE EXTRAORDINARY

BLUE THUNDER PRODUCTIONS PROUDLY PRESENTS...

Aim to be the entertainment capital of the campus – be unique. Shoot to do something that no one else does and maybe no one else has even thought about. Go beyond the level of the little programs and social events of the little people on campus (lol). Most importantly, THINK BIG! THINK PRODUCTION! THINK NEW YORK!

I remember going on this campus one day and seeing this poster advertising Blue and White Week. It was drawn with blue magic marker on a white poster board and read:

Blue and White Week

Monday - Sigma Pride Day (we will wear paraphernalia that day)
Tuesday - Sigma/ Zeta Day (we will eat in the cafeteria together)
Wednesday - Interest meeting
Thursday - Ladies appreciation day/ forum on Black love
Friday - Blue and White Party in the gym
Saturday - Cookout (Sigmas and Zetas only)
Sunday – We will go to church together

Ok, as a non-Greek or as a non-Sigma/Zeta on campus, your week is WEAK!! Come on guys; go beyond socializing amongst yourselves. Sponsor things that your whole campus can actually enjoy.

After biting from the best Sigma chapters across the country (we asked first...lol), we designed “Blue Thunder 2000” There were seven events:

Monday - The Miss Phi Beta Sigma Coronation & Royal Blue Ball. Everybody has a pageant. We chose our Queen in a different way. Earlier in the year we would have what we call The Miss Phi Beta Sigma Tea. It’s sort of an interest meeting for young ladies interested in serving as Miss Phi Beta Sigma. We had the reigning Miss Phi Beta Sigma give a speech, and we had a social (Sigma/Zetas and potential candidates only). Eventually, we invited each candidate to the back room one by one to be interviewed by our panel. As part of their interview, we had candidates prepare an impromptu introduction of the chapter—perhaps an intro for a step show. Sometimes we would have them pretend to bring greetings or a welcome to an audience at a forum, or some other event. Once we selected a Queen and a runner up (whom we named Miss Blue Thunder), we arranged a formal crowning ceremony.

At the coronation, there were singers, poets, dancers, etc. Then there was a processional, which included all of the Pan Hellenic Queens, the University and Homecoming Queens, former Miss Phi Beta Sigmas, Area Miss Phi Beta Sigmas (local chapters), followed by a fanfare of live trumpeters. Then, there was the farewell address of the immediate past queen. After an African drum/ dance salute, (similar to the one on Coming to America--utilize the dance group on campus, they love performing) the out-going queen would pass the crown to the new reigning queen in a formal swearing in ceremony (Man, I still don't know what they did with my Bible to this day). Talk about envy. When we went through all of that (embarrassing the other campus fraternities) every year, I would often hear the comment from Miss Kappa Alpha Psi or Miss Black and Gold, "Dang, all they did for me is give me this raggedy dang on crown."

Tuesday - "Black History Academic Quiz Bowl Competition" (Co-Sponsored with Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society) Sponsor events with other campus groups. The more people you involve in your efforts, the more your name and reputation gets out there.

Wednesday - "Showtime at Shaw U" (Of course we followed every detail: dancers, live musicians, sand man, Ki Ki, and even live singers singing "It's show time...at S.U." to live music. The crowd had a ball, and it sliced to smithereens anyone's tired little talent show.

Thursday - "Blue Thunder Night at Plum Crazy's" (our local club)

Friday - "The Blue Thunder Ultimate Stompedown & After-party," featuring the baddest Sigma and Zeta step teams from the area and beyond (pre-screened of course--there's nothing worse than getting embarrassed by your brothers and sisters on your own campus). We let other Greeks step too, when they dared. Of course all other Greeks were embarrassed by the teams we selected.

Saturday - "Campus Appreciation Barbecue Explosion" open to the yard.

Sunday - either a quiet day at church (where we would usher) or a gospel concert worked nicely. Whew...a lotta work, but there weren't too many people left on campus still thinking about the other fraternities.

****Blue Thunder Advertising Strategy--** two weeks before: blue thunder coming soon thunderbolts; one week before: movie theater like display boards (make up a separate flier-if possible typed with picture-for each function. Have them blown up to poster size and mount them on blue poster boards. It's out of the ordinary; therefore, it catches your eye.); 3 days before: individual fliers & bulletin board; the week of: hand bills, dormitory announcements, announcements at other club meetings, promotional visits to surrounding campus, and written letters of invitation to each Pan Hellenic group on campus. We personally invited frat and sorors from every chapter we could find. Advertising is the key to the success of any program.

COMPONENT 6 - MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GREATEST MOMENTS TO SHINE

OK LET'S TAKE IT TO THE STAGE

- Brothers, time to be brutally honest. Let's not be country bunkins. Look sharp. Quite honestly, hard core clothes don't match our stepping style. It's sorta like the A.K.As doing a serious matter in Jiffy Lube suits and Tims. I'm afraid it just doesn't go together. Remember, make the ladies scream when you walk out. That sets the tone of screaming throughout your show.
- And yes, we've all heard the saying, "just because they make it in your size doesn't mean you're supposed to wear it." Well a similar saying goes for us: just because it comes in Electric Funk Blue, doesn't mean that you're suppose to wear it on stage. Please avoid looking like a giant blueberry in public, and avoid the Jiffy Lube uniforms unless you plan to strip and have real outfits on underneath. The key is to look sexy. Club-wear works best. Remember, when you walk out, you want the girls to scream even before you step. The truth is that most audiences are filled with avid step show goers. When a group comes out and is not wearing anything worth looking at, they tend to prejudge. Now, I've seen more than my share of comeback Sigma teams, but the way I see it, why come back, when you can start off with audience approval?
- Have somebody EXTREMELY objective critique your show well before the performance. I mean, you may need to change the whole show. So don't wait to find someone to critique after you have gotten the whole show learned, and don't wait until there's only a week left. Then it's usually too late. And don't go in with the attitude, "we know we're the bomb, so you are here to confirm that truth for us." Be ready for criticism. **IF YOU AREN'T PREPARED TO MAKE CHANGES, DON'T INVITE ANYONE IN TO CRITIQUE.** If the person you have selected isn't pointing out specific things, you may have found the wrong person. Some people are much too afraid to hurt your feelings. My personal opinion: please hurt my feelings behind closed doors. Don't let me get to the stage to have it done by a full audience. The critic should be someone with a track record.
- Now I'm going to be for real. I have seen quite a few brothers in my Sigma years not wear paraphernalia to certain step shows for fear of getting embarrassed. And each time, I see one of those snoozer shows, I think to myself, "didn't y'all know that you were dry before you even got here?" hmmm. Think back to the best show you have ever seen. If you're not at that level, you have an obligation to get some help. Most other Greeks get an outside step master. It can actually be helpful. Brothers are sometimes more apt to listen to someone outside of the chapter than from within. I

- **MOVE AROUND.** Clapping and tapping are ok, but find steps that bounce you around a little. Omegas and Alphas are good at this. They move around a lot. Sigmas can at times depend too much on the possibility that the audience will like their nice beats and intricacies. But, you know as well as I do that you can't always hear the beat in some venues, especially in gymnasiums when they use that antisigma ply-board (which they know will make our show sound and therefore look dry). And if you can't hear our beats...we're talkin yawn city. TIP - Jump, bounce, STOMP, and practice your steps at least on a few occasions outside on either dull concrete or grass. This will let you know what your show really will sound like. You get fooled too easily when you practice inside little small rooms with nice acoustics.
- Avoid focusing so much on complexity that you ignore entertainment value. We've all seen a chapter or two so serious about getting the beats and moves just right that they bore you because it's clear that they're not having any fun. If you have fun, your audience will likely have fun with you. Comedy can sometimes be a friend on stage, as it relaxes your audience.
- Remember your show should have a clincher, but be careful of trying to have too many clinchers. It can be too distracting. We got a cane step, a stick step, a blind fold step, a backward step, a slow-motion step, a legs tied together step, and a can step all in one show. (Too much).
- As a brother, you know whether or not you should be stepping with the team. If you are bringing your team down by fumbling through your steps, be a man and either get help or step down. Likewise, don't be ashamed to tell a brother, "man for the sake of Sigma's reputation, you should get some extra help or sit out on this one." Brotherhood does not include allowing Sigma to be embarrassed in public. And if you can't be real with your brothers, then you've missed the point of fraternity life.
- Watch a million stepshow tapes before you step. Here's the catch. Don't look at the Sigmas. Look at the other Fraternities and Sororities. Try to borrow tapes from other Greeks if possible. Remember, THEY are your competition. When Duke goes to play Carolina, they often watch Carolina tapes and sneak to see Carolina games. The key is to exceed the level of your opponent. My co-stepmaster and I would always do our show in our room and then play the tape of an awesome Omega team right

before, then again right after, to get a feel for which routine was better.

- Stick/can steps are for girls (enough said)
- Your first step has to be a hook em step. Don't save your good steps for later. Grab your audience early.
- You ever hear someone say, "The audience came to see real steppin, not dancing and prancin around?" Yea right! They came to see a performance. You've seen an audience scream before when teams didn't have real steps. You've seen teams win before who had not "real steps" Do real steps, but be a celebrity. Eat it up. People paid their money for a SHOW. Have fun on the stage. As I said before, if you are too serious, the audience will think that you are scared and they will scrutinize your every move. If you laugh relax and enjoy yourself, so will they. Be flashy. Kappa Alpha Psi at Duke University every year gets glowing reviews on their show. Everybody talks about it. The audience can't wait for them to come out. Oh...but they can't step. They were terrible. But, before they would get into their awkward beats that don't fit together, (you know what I'm talking about) they have the best special effects show in the world. I'm talking movies on the big screen with them getting out helicopters; I'm talking explosions, and indoor fireworks; I'm talking canes coming down from the sky. I'm talkin brothers sliding down on wires. I mean the brothers go all out. On top of that, they're dressed to kill. The ladies scream their heads off.... Now if you think that you are going to come out after all that and just walk on stage to some song with your jiffy lube suit on and boots grinnin and people are going to scream, because you are coming on with some "real steps," you have another thing coming. Sorry, that's a bit of a long shot. Brothers, remember that we are diverse. We can look good, put on a show, AND do real steps. If possible, meet with a technical advisor from the theater department to discuss the capabilities of the venue. Meet with a DJ to create a soundtrack for your performance AND TEST OUT YOUR TAPE IN A REAL SYSTEM BEFORE THE DAY OF THE SHOW!
- TALK - think through your lyrics in your steps and have some. Be creative in your lyrics.
- Before you get on the floor and completely strip, remember if you had to go there, usually that means that your show alone probably wasn't that good. Now I've seen chapters do both (Norfolk State), but it's rare.

***Ok, just a quick word about party stepping. I'm a fan of party stepping. And I think I did well more than my fair share. But brothers, let's work together. First, let's not spend all year coming up with the most complicated party steps in the history of greekdom. Second, work with your area chapters to create 2 or 3 party steps that are universal. And once it's established, LEAVE IT. This way, at step shows, parties and other events, you can have a long party step line. When all your party steps are local to your chapter, you limit the

amount of people who can participate. Teach area chapters these 3 local party steps, and if you see new brothers, offer to teach them too. Remember as I said before, brotherhood extends well beyond your chapter. If you become one of those chapters that sticks to itself, you hurt the overall vision of Sigma.

NOW THAT YOU'VE IMPRESSED EVERYONE, IT'S TIME FOR THE INTEREST MEETING

Interest Meeting - Professionally Done - Think Corporate America. Leave people in awe. Trust me, even at our little small university, attendance at interests meetings was usually around 30 - 50 consistently. Actually, a lot has to do with advertising. One of my most regretful moments as an undergrad was one year when three guys separately approached me who were actually hurt that I had never approached them about Sigma. They were anxious to join, but they thought that someone from the chapter had to approach them first. You would be surprised at how uncomfortable some people on campus were about Greeks and protocol. I never attended an interest meeting before. I had been approached on three occasions by the Alphas who couldn't understand that I wasn't interested, but I had never been approached by the Sigmas. Talk to guys on campus. Even guys you don't know. Just introduce yourself and say that there is this group you are a part of, by the name of Phi Bet Sigma, and you and the brothers would appreciate if he came out to hear more about it-not as a commitment to join, but just to hear what Sigma is about. Also, keep these suggestions in mind:

- 1) Choose a smaller room and underestimate your number of attendees. Small rooms with more people leave the impression of packed house. It feels good to have people walking around saying "man I heard the Sigma interest meeting was standing-room-only" --rather than being in a larger room, which is not filled.
- 2) Choose your best speakers, even if you have to go to grad chapter or area chapters to get them. All speakers should be in dark suits preferably. Find someone who can be professional and articulate in delivery-someone who will make people think, "I want to be like him when I grow up."
- 3) Make sure it is CLEAR that ALL brothers are to be in business attire. Avoid the urge to tell them to "just wear somethin that's neat," unless you absolutely have no other choice. And judging from memory, all induction ceremonies are in dark suits or at least shirt and tie, so everyone has something they can wear. Check your anti-shirt-and-tie brothers. I know that some hate putting on church clothes, but come on guys, it's for a good cause. Sooner or later you are going to want these new members to put Sigma first when you want them to do some things that they don't feel like doing. Here's your turn to lead by example. Remember, you are representing Sigma. And if Sigma is not worth doing a little something special for, then...well, I won't go there. I'll say it like this: Once you join Sigma, when you can, it is a good idea to invest in a shirt and tie and if you can

afford to buy or lay one away, a dark suit (for some of you, much like the one you probably wore for high school graduation and are secretly keeping hidden way back in your closet so nobody will ask you to wear it...but I'm just guessing).

- 4) If possible, have a videotape of something Sigma related on a table. It just adds class. It could be a step show of some of our nation's finest Sigma teams, or some other Sigma marketing video. Note to Nationals, if there is not currently a promotional tape for prospective members, it's worth the investment.
- 5) Get some professional Sigma pamphlets from Nationals.
- 6) If there are brothers who work professionally on the yard, try to put them on the program. Also, try to put prominent members from grad chapter on the program as well. Again, it adds prestige of your organization when older professionals participate.
- 7) Encourage participants to attend everyone's interest meeting. NEVER, EVER mention any other organization by name. Never be on the defensive about Sigma (example: "We're not known as much because we don't have a stereotype like the other groups. We're individuals") Speak affirmatively about Sigma. Be sincere. NEVER insult or hint negatively about another organization. Trust me; it makes you look jealous. Have people who are passionate about Education talk about our educational initiatives. Do the same with Business and Social Action. Don't spend half the meeting talking about the constitutional bond with the Zetas, the fact that we were the first with the canes, and how many famous athletes we have. Remember, you are recruiting workers as wells as brothers. Stress the **initiatives** of the organization. You may want to read up on them quite extensively so that you may speak intelligently about them. Make the visitors feel at home. Don't scare them, but make sure that they have reverence for the organization. PLAN, PLAN, PLAN! The worst interest meeting is where people just speak off the cuff without planning it out. It makes the organization look cheap and unorganized. Oh. Feed the folks! It doesn't take anything too expensive. Cookies, Chips and drinks will do.

COMPONENT 7 - WALK AS KINGS, BUT KEEP THE COMMON TOUCH

Now that you have successfully achieved a Chapter Image of Success, don't float too far into the clouds. As flashy as we liked to always be, people on the campus were always saying the same things about us: "even though y'all are like running the campus, yall are so down to earth. We feel like we can talk to you brothers about anything." "yall always speak when we see you." "Yall don't act stuck up like the other guys." Achieving a proper balance is crucial. People usually like to be a part of groups, which seem just above their level (not too far). While they hate "arrogance," they don't take "laid back" very seriously. Think of it this way: There is this phine "shawty" who has just got it "goin on." Every guy is trying to

talk to her. There is this other “shawty” that is ok... But she’s an easy catch and everybody knows it. Well honestly, getting a date with the first girl is going to seem like a heck of a lot more of an accomplishment than getting a date with the second one. Now that doesn’t mean that there is anything wrong with the second. For some reason, though, humans have this innate desire to reach just slightly higher than eye level.

Top 10 warning signs that your chapter members may be getting off focus or bigheaded

- #10 They never shut up at step shows
- # 9 They walk with a bit of a bounce on the yard
- # 8 They step everywhere and they don’t stop
- # 7 They have time to go to everybody’s party/step show, but are too busy for work in the chapter, yet love to use words like “we”
- #6 They begin to wear excessive amounts of paraphernalia
- #5 They have permanently replaced “whassup man” with “Blue Phi”
- #4 They start to down-talk the other Pan Hellenic groups to non-Greeks
- #3 They start to get excessively wild and rowdy
- #2 They start to slip in their academics from too much Sigma Time
- #1 They don’t feel that the chapter has to work too hard anymore

Once your chapter members reach this point, something terrible is about to happen. Either your chapter is about to be snatched or your campus is about to humble you. Membership will begin to decrease. And trust me; your chapter is on its way down. Here are suggestions to keep in mind.

Suggestion #1 speak to everyone - you would be surprised at how easy it is as a Greek to have people make generalizations about you and your organization: “the Sigmas think they all that.” “They so stuck up.” When you’re Greek, they pay attention to small things like stopping to speak or striking up a conversation, especially if you’re in the plot.

Suggestion #2 treat women with extra respect, especially if you’re wearing paraphernalia. Open a door for them. Offer to take up a tray. Pick something up if they drop it...Oh I know you do that already. But somehow, as a Sigma, you partially become a politician in that so many of your actions become amplified.

Suggestion #3 treat every performance, every program as if you are the worst fraternity on the yard with something to prove. You must stay humble or trust me eventually you will be humbled. People on campus like to see underdogs succeed. When you cease to have the underdog disposition, you eventually become the bad guy. The campus will then root for someone else.

Suggestion #4 Remind members regularly at meetings about maintaining a cool head and avoiding the pitfalls of arrogance. Remind member to be sincere about the goals of Sigma. It’s too easy to focus on the popularity and lose sight of the causes of the organization. The first cannot exist for long without the second.

AVOID THE PITFALLS OF LOSING THE MOMENTUM

Too many Sigma chapters function in cycles of 10 stages.

Stage 1 - Most slept on organization on campus

Stage 2 - Proving that we can compete /equaling other on-campus groups

Stage 3 - Being #1 in stepping, and campus opinion

Stage 4 - Getting a little wild and boastful

Stage 5 - Taking over new brothers while the momentum is high who don't know what it took to get the chapter where it is.

Stage 6 - Juniors and Seniors Running the show/ neos in the backdrop

Stage 7 - Juniors and Seniors graduate, leaving the neos to pick up the pieces

Stage 8 - Neo's haven't got a clue how to keep things up

Stage 9 - Neo's are so used to being #1 that they feel they that popularity is a given

Stage 10 - Neos are big headed/ chapter drops/ membership down/ Sigma is toast

****AND THEN AFTER A HECK OF A LOT OF WORK, IT'S BACK TO STAGE 1 ALL OVER AGAIN****

Consistency is key. Here are some suggestions for maintaining that consistency.

Suggestion #1 - Create a handbook for every single program and project that your chapter has. In the handbook, include the step-by-step process of putting the function together. Include past fliers, templates of letters, a time table, people to contact, the best people to ask for help, locations, physical set up diagrams, programs and program order, advertising strategy, etc. Get a three ring binder, and a 3-hole puncher, and keep it with your chapter files. Initially, it may be a bit of work, but your chapter will benefit in the long run. To keep the chapter's tradition moving from year to year, you've got to help future brothers benefit from your hard work by leaving them with a map.

Suggestion #2 - Make the Neo's the head of every function immediately following their crossing over. Resist the temptation to treat them like children. You cannot afford for them to be merely an audience. They are protégés. Trust me; establishing a healthy continuum is for the best of the organization. I had a difficult time letting go-and to a certain extent, I didn't. They really can do it. Assign a prophete to walk them through it, but let them do all the work (organizing that is - now don't just get completely lazy) using the handbook.

Suggestion #3 - Attend all conferences. Find out, in general, when conferences are usually held and how much they generally cost (hotel, transportation, registration, etc.) Begin planning in August, and likewise, begin saving. You may even want to initiate a chapter conference layaway payment plan. Breaking it up into smaller installments works better than paying all at once. You may also consider doing the same for annual membership dues. It is important for all members to be able to benefit from our conferences.

IN CONCLUSION

I think that the most important thing I have said in this guide is that IMAGE IS CRUCIAL. It affects recruitment, opportunity, and growth. One achieves a Chapter Image of Success by working hard to bring our fraternity's principles and programs to life. But remember, image is just your outer shell. Unless you are inside what you appear to be outside, image, unfortunately is useless. Therefore, you have as a responsibility to embody Sigma's mission as your own. Read as much about this great organization as you can find.

You must personally be dedicated to expanding the education of our nation's youth. You must be committed to helping to heal our people's social woes. You must be adamant about empowering our people through the expansion of black owned businesses and the accumulation and ultimate reinvestment of generational wealth amongst our people. As a national organization, we are great. With your help, we can become much, much greater. We join the ranks of some of the most prominent African Americans, and for that matter Americans in history and in the world today. If Sigma is to be #1 in the minds of EVERYONE, you must be prepared to make a personal sacrifice of time, energy, and in some cases comfort. When we chose you, we chose wisely. Now make our founders proud.

Now if you are human, I'm sure there are some things with which you agree, while there may be others with which you could not disagree more. I ask, however, you use that whatever influence you have to spread this message (even if it's just the parts with which you agree) to as many brothers on as many levels as you possibly can. For us to be effective as an organization, we must be focused as an organization. If you should have any questions or comments about anything, please feel free to email me at jermalejenkins@yahoo.com or pbsstep1914@yahoo.com. I am willing to do whatever I can to help.

Thank you for taking the time to read through all one million pages of this document. As I said, there are chapters that are doing a superior job, and I commend them on their efforts. I want to see us "spread the wealth" of these chapter all across this great nation of ours.

Until next time, GOMAB my brothers...

Jermale L. Jenkins
Fall '92
Iota Chapter

