

SIGMA PHI EPSILON

Accreditation Report

2016-2017

Leadership & Member Development

- Sigma Phi Epsilon reached the chapter's goal of increasing the number of brotherhood events. The chapter gathered film suggestions during weekly meetings and then organized biweekly movie nights. Additionally, the chapter organized a weekend trip to Lake Towhee which provided brothers the opportunity to fish, swim, and get to know each other better.
- The committee fears that Sigma Phi Epsilon operates under a top-heavy model. Members outside of chapter officers do not appear to participate as much in chapter responsibility or practice leadership within the chapter.
- The chapter revamped the summer retreat. Chapter leadership met with the chapter advisor to develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals, administer the Myers-Briggs leadership style inventory, and participate in a conversation with President Simon about the climate of the fraternity and sorority community. The committee considers this a best practice.
- The chapter practices leadership in a wide variety of clubs and organizations on campus including Greek Emerging Leaders (GEM) program, club baseball, Student Senate, and Orientation Leaders. One member that participated in GEM learned the impact exclusive language can have and carries that learning moment into everyday conversations.
- The committee commends the chapter for engagement in Sigma Phi Epsilon Headquarters' initiatives and leadership development opportunities. The chapter had six members attend the Carlson Leadership Academy. One attendee attended a workshop that expressed the importance of a standards board for both accountability and rewarding exceptional behavior.
- The chapter increased the frequency of rituals to accommodate schedules and allow more members to participate. Each of the Sigma, Phi, and Epsilon Rites of Passage were completed in the fall and spring semesters. The brotherhood also continued their Hoop of Steel ritual to recognize seniors and allow members to share reflections.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon initiates new members on the first day of new member education per Headquarters' policy. During new member education, the chapter hosted the Pride Center, the Office of Gender Violence Education and Support, and Lehigh University Police Department to facilitate conversations with the brotherhood. Sigma Phi Epsilon framed these discussions around bLUeprint foundations. The committee considers this a best practice.
- The committee recommends that the chapter engage members in leadership development opportunities outside of those provided by Headquarters (i.e. Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute, LeaderShape, Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values annual conference).

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can Sigma Phi Epsilon encourage members not in formal leadership roles to accept more responsibility within the chapter?**

In the area of **Leadership & Member Development**, the Committee rated Sigma Phi Epsilon to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Organizational Operations

- Sigma Phi Epsilon added a specific bylaw that prohibits chapter members from using exclusive language or hate speech including homophobic slurs and derogatory terms. Any speech that goes against the chapter's principles of inclusivity results in a standards board review. Sigma Phi Epsilon utilized the standards board to remove a member whose actions repeatedly went against the chapter's cardinal principles.
- The chapter focused on risk management organization and efficiency after the conduct issue that placed the chapter on Disciplinary Probation. Emphasis was placed on keeping a list of all event attendees and registering all events. The risk manager also covered risk management practices in detail during new member education. The committee recommends that the entire chapter membership participate in re-education of risk management regularly.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon submitted a check to the Interfraternity Council to pay for membership dues that bounced and accrued a returned item fee.
- The chapter continued the tradition of rewarding members for behavior that aligns with the chapter's cardinal principles of virtue, diligence, and brotherly love through the Brother of the Month award. All Brother of the Month award recipients were treated to a dinner at Fegley's Brew Works at the end of the semester.
- The chapter implemented a new policy that limited the number of brothers that could vote on bidding new members based on each member's respective involvement in recruitment. Brothers were required to attend half of the recruitment events in order to vote. 81% of brothers met this requirement.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon revamped the Balanced Man Scholarship program. The application was updated to include intentional questions regarding the chapter's cardinal principles. The chapter nearly doubled the amount of interviews conducted from 14 to 27. The committee considers this a best practice.
- The chapter successfully recruited and initiated 20 men between the fall and spring semesters. The chapter was pleased to see that four of the men were discovered as a result of the Balanced Man Scholarship program.
- The chapter sustained the use of a fine deposit system as a best practice. Members put money down at the beginning of the year to cover fines that may be accrued if a brother fails to perform brotherhood responsibilities such as dish rotation, pots and pans rotation, and Sunday house chore duties.
- The committee believes that an area of opportunity for the chapter is continuing to develop chapter-wide accountability and engaging members that may typically be viewed as apathetic (i.e. the 19% that didn't attend half of the recruitment events).

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can Sigma Phi Epsilon share development of inclusive organizational operations with the greater community?**

In the area of **Organizational Operations**, the Committee rated Sigma Phi Epsilon to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Community Service & Engagement

- Sigma Phi Epsilon was placed on Disciplinary Probation through May 31, 2017 after being found responsible for Respect for Self—unauthorized consumption, distribution, or possession; and Respect for Community—irresponsible distribution of alcohol. The chapter hosted an unregistered party in which there was evidence of drinking games.

- The chapter hosted the second annual Give Back to Bethlehem Color Run. Members worked with Lehigh administration, Lehigh University Police Department, and local businesses to coordinate funding and logistics for the two mile run. The event involved over 200 runners and volunteers and raised money for the Trinity Soup Kitchen in Bethlehem.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon hosted a parent and family weekend for new members. The weekend consisted of a football tailgate and casual dinner at the house. Additionally, the chapter executive board gave a presentation about the operations of the chapter and concluded with a Q&A for families to address any concerns regarding membership. Over 75 guests were in attendance. The committee considers this a best practice.
- The chapter hosted social events to test-run proposed edits to the current social policy. While the chapter faced a few initial challenges (i.e. checking IDs and students pre-gaming in Sayre), Sigma Phi Epsilon played an active role in determining best practices. As part of a sanction, the chapter developed a social pilot best practices presentation with Sigma Chi that was highly regarded by administration and the IFC community.
- The chapter participated in multiple philanthropic efforts including Adopt a Family, Dance Marathon, Relay for Life, Kappa Alpha Theta's Candyland for Casa, and Kappa Alpha Theta's Kicks for Casa. However, the chapter does not appear to participate in regular community service outside of collecting roadside trash on Earth Day. The committee considers this an area that needs significant improvement.
- The committee commends the chapter on the newsletter, *Generally Speaking*, that is shared with alumni. The document contains upcoming events, gratitude towards alumni, and chapter accomplishments. The chapter is also working to further develop an alumni database to keep alumni connected to the chapter.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon began working with a new philanthropy, Puppies Behind Bars. Puppies Behind Bars utilizes prison inmates to train service dogs for wounded war veterans and explosive detection canines for law enforcement. The chapter organized a whiffle ball tournament with Alpha Gamma Delta during the spring semester to raise money and is in the process of establishing an event in the fall as well.
- The chapter prides itself on being a part of the Lehigh community. Sigma Phi Epsilon frequently has high attendance at Lehigh athletic events. For example, 32 brothers showed up to cheer on the Mountain Hawks basketball team against Boston University during the Patriot League Tournament.
- The committee recommends that the chapter discover ways to collaborate with groups outside of Panhellenic organizations (i.e. Cultural Greek Council and other student clubs) in order to continue promoting overall Lehigh unity.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can the chapter build sustainable community service efforts with Southside constituents?**

In the area of **Community Service & Engagement**, the Committee rated Sigma Phi Epsilon to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Academic & Intellectual Advancement

- Sigma Phi Epsilon was ranked ninth out of 17 Interfraternity Council chapters in the fall 2016 semester with a GPA of 3.08404, a decrease of .06625 from the spring 2016 semester. The 3.08404 GPA placed the chapter below the All Fraternity and All Greek average.

- Sigma Phi Epsilon was ranked sixth out of 17 Interfraternity Council chapters in the spring 2017 semester with a GPA of 3.09, an increase of .00596 from the fall 2016 semester. The 3.09 GPA placed the chapter above the All Fraternity average.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon's fall 2016 new member class GPA was 2.696 ranking eighth out of 11 Interfraternity Council chapters. The new member class GPA was 3.24 for spring 2017 ranking second out of 17 Interfraternity Council chapters.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon had 19.3% of the chapter on the Dean's List in the fall 2016 semester and 26.8% on the Dean's List in the spring 2017 semester.
- The committee recommends the chapter expound the bylaw adjustments in regards to exclusive speech to incorporate intellectually stimulating chapter discussion. The chapter is on the right track with policy. However, the committee feels there is an opportunity to participate in proactive education and learning moments.
- The chapter implemented a Dean's List dinner to celebrate scholastic accomplishments. Brothers who made the Dean's List were invited to attend a formal dinner at The Rodizio Brazilian Steakhouse. The chapter also provides monetary rewards to the members with the highest and most improved GPAs.
- The chapter hosted one SigEp Speaks session in collaboration with LU AMSA, Lehigh's largest pre-med student group, inviting a chapter members' parents that have experience as faculty in a medical school. The committee continues to believe that SigEp Speaks has significant potential to grow into a fraternity staple if made a priority.
- The chapter utilizes Matthew Kitchie, Senior Assistant Dean and Director of Student Activities, as a faculty advisor. Sigma Phi Epsilon worked closely with Matthew on the planning and coordination of the Give Back to Bethlehem Color Run.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon revamped the chapter's scholarship approach to mandate that any member below a 2.6 GPA be put on an academic plan. These brothers are required to meet with the Academic Chair to discuss goals and challenges. Mentors were also provided to brothers on academic plans based on course history.
- The committee recommends that the chapter incorporate campus resources (i.e. Center for Academic Success, Writing and Math Center) into academic plans. Additionally mentors should be formally trained rather than assigned due to major choice or course history.
- The chapter's Phi challenge placed major emphasis on all aspects of professional development. Sigma Phi Epsilon hosted an alumnus who works as a technology consultant at IBM to facilitate a workshop on resume building, cover letter writing, and interview tips.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can Sigma Phi Epsilon foster an intellectually engaging environment enhanced by the use of university resources?**

In the area of **Academic & Intellectual Advancement**, the Committee rated Sigma Phi Epsilon to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Facilities Management

- Sigma Phi Epsilon had no common damages for 2016-2017.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon managed openings and closings with no issues.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon passed life safety inspections and fire drills with zero violations.

- The chapter successfully met occupancy for the both the fall and spring semesters.
- The committee recommends the chapter research and integrates green initiatives/sustainability efforts into facilities management.
- Sigma Phi Epsilon participated in an opportunity afforded by a collaboration between the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, the Pride Center, and Residential Services to convert all of the chapter's single-stall restrooms within their facility into gender-inclusive restrooms.
- The chapter made multiple improvements to the chapter facility including purchasing 65 new chairs for the dining area, a new basketball hoop, and a house dog to increase brotherhood morale.
- The committee recognizes the chapter's fine deposit system as an organizational operation and also considers it an admirable means for facility upkeep. Members put money down at the beginning of the year to cover fines that may be accrued if a brother fails to perform house chore responsibilities or damages the facility. This practice has led to a decrease in chapter expenses for broken furniture and food waste.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can the chapter further develop efforts towards incorporating green initiatives and sustainability?**

In the area of **Facilities Management**, the Committee rated Sigma Phi Epsilon to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Overall Rating

Overall, Sigma Phi Epsilon has been rated an Accredited chapter by the 2016-2017 Accreditation Committee.

Sigma Phi Epsilon had a successful year. The chapter remained innovative in multiple functional areas including recruitment, judicial, and facility upkeep. The committee challenges Sigma Phi Epsilon to share best practices, focus on the details that diminish chapter credibility (conduct issues, noise complaints, bounced checks, etc.), and close the loop on potential best practices (SigEp Speaks and community service efforts). The chapter should be proud of their work while also thinking through the shifting of priorities necessary to reach the Accredited with Excellence level that the committee believes is within reach.

The Accreditation committee assigns Sigma Phi Epsilon an overall rating of Accredited, which meets expectations set forth by Lehigh University. The chapter is fully successful in all metrics and is an active contributor to the Greek and Lehigh communities.

Chapter Development Questions

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- How can Sigma Phi Epsilon share development of inclusive organizational operations with the greater community?
- How can the chapter build sustainable community service efforts with Southside constituents?

- How can Sigma Phi Epsilon foster an intellectually engaging environment enhanced by the use of university resources?
- How can the chapter further develop efforts towards incorporating green initiatives and sustainability?

Best Practices

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