



**SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON**  
**BE TRUE.**

## **The 2010 Strategic Plan: Vision for the Decade**

prepared for the Supreme Council  
July 20, 2010

## **OUR MISSION**

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The mission of Sigma Alpha Epsilon is to promote the highest standards of friendship, scholarship, and service for our members based on the ideals set forth by our Founders and as specifically enunciated in “The True Gentleman”.

## **THE PRINCIPLES OF SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON**

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1. To develop in our members the skills which will facilitate their making deep and meaningful friendships throughout their lives.
2. To provide our undergraduate members with a physical and organizational environment conducive to their pursuit of academic excellence.
3. To help our members better understand and experience diversity and change to enhance their respect for individuality and personal integrity.
4. To foster personal development of our members including leadership, scholarship, citizenship, and social and moral responsibility.
5. To develop in our members a sense of duty for individual and group involvement in social interactions, service and community outreach.
6. To provide our members with guidance, support and standards based upon the ideals embodied in our Ritual.
7. To develop, maintain, and enforce standards and expectations for the conduct of our members within and outside the Fraternity.
8. To provide our members with the life-long fraternal experiences that is productive, rewarding, and enjoyable.

## **OUR CREED**

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The creed of Sigma Alpha Epsilon is embodied in “The True Gentleman” by John Walter Wayland.

## **THE 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION FOR THE DECADE**

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Sigma Alpha Epsilon is the world's largest social fraternity with more than 190,000 living members, 12,000 of whom are classified as undergraduate students. With the vast changes taking place in higher education, partly in response to the different needs of the current generation of students, it is necessary for Sigma Alpha Epsilon to assess the practices and use of resources of the Fraternity to meet the needs and expectations of all constituent groups.

In order to obtain the data needed for this assessment to hold validity, the members of the Strategic Vision Committee (SVC) developed with the staff of the Fraternity Service Center a simple streamlined and open ended survey to gain valuable constituent feedback on the operations and use of the resources of the Fraternity. The SVC wanted to ensure that the voices of all of the shareholders in the Fraternity had the opportunity to be heard. As the Fraternity wants to make sure it is providing the necessary services to the brotherhood, it was important that the survey was inclusive in order to gain as much constructive feedback as possible. The idea was to solicit voluntary input from members at all levels of the organization to determine the most relevant issues impacting the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity.

The survey, consisting of one classification question and three open-ended questions, was presented early in February 2010. The survey asked the respondents to identify their level of involvement with Sigma Alpha Epsilon without listing their names. Additionally, they were asked to share their ideas of the top five challenges/opportunities facing the Fraternity over the next ten years. The last two questions asked on what services and programs the Fraternity should focus if there were limited resources or if there were unlimited resources available. This survey generated some 2,700 responses. The data were then analyzed to help the members of the SVC determine what direction we should take when developing a five-to-ten year strategic vision for the Fraternity.

The SVC thanks the good brothers who responded to the survey and thereby gave us an insight into what they felt were the major challenges and opportunities facing the Fraternity and leading us to formulate the goals detailed in this report.

We believe that the goals reflected in this report, while in some instances providing a definite reach for the leaders of the Fraternity, are reasonable and attainable and, when achieved, will contribute to the Fraternity's future successes, stability and growth.

While there is always room for improvement, the SVC feels that the Fraternity is doing a significant number of things right today and we felt it was pertinent to the process to cite these current strengths as lead-ins to the stated goals that we feel will continue and further strengthen our current strong points.

The SVC also wishes to thank the Strategic Vision Fellows, Brothers Scott Konkol (Michigan Delta-Omega) and Jeremy Zilmer (Wyoming Alpha) for the outstanding

support that they provided to the SVC in recapping and analyzing the data received in response to our survey and assisting in the drafting of this Executive Summary.

The Strategic Vision Committee:

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## THE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

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1. Encourage higher GPA minimums for our chapters realmwide and cultivate an environment of stronger academic accountability and achievement.
2. Decrease alcohol-related risk-management claims through the elimination of hard alcohol from Fraternity functions, unless provided by a third-party vendor.
3. Get a higher percentage of brothers to get re-involved to help solidify and support the alumni association aspect and what it entails for the Fraternity.
4. Continue to improve substantially the financial health of the Fraternity at both the national and chapter levels and fully restore reserves for their intended purposes.
5. Increase the availability and efficiency of collecting housing-related information.
6. Add new leadership development programs to our Fraternity and enhance what we have already established.
7. Utilize and improve technology to enhance recruitment opportunities and improve membership retention.
8. Increase recruitment and membership training opportunities at the province level.
9. Seek collaboration with other national fraternities to better promote the benefits of fraternity membership.
10. Eliminate the presence of hazing within the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity.

## ACADEMICS

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### **Strengths:**

As our original Constitution and Ritual state, members are chosen on the basis of high intellect and are expected to foster moral and intellectual cultivation in college and throughout life. Without firm statistics, it's generally believed chapters with self-imposed high-GPA requirements tend to be our stronger chapters in other core areas. It's also common to find chapters holding brothers accountable to the fraternity laws or local GPA requirements to have substantially lower instances of risk-management issues. Overall, Sigma Alpha Epsilon carries a strong message of academic excellence and provides many resources and scholarships to further focus its members.

### **Goal:**

Encourage improved scholarship for our chapters Realmwide and cultivate an environment of stronger academic accountability and achievement.

### **Strategies:**

1. Recognizing that chapter GPAs are not well tracked currently, develop a system to collect academic-performance information from chapters where it is available and use that information to help develop chapter-specific goals and scholarship programs that promote improved academic performance.
2. Encourage higher academic accountability through communication between alumni volunteers (Province Archons/Regional Directors) and chapter academic advisers. Academic advisers are already required, but their role may need some refining or direction to maximize this resource for chapters. A more involved local academic adviser will sustain visibility over the course of the academic year.
3. Create an initiative (financial or recognition) to reward chapters that achieve a high overall chapter GPA (3.0 or above).

## ALCOHOL

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### Strengths:

Issues surrounding the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs among college students have been acknowledged and addressed in higher education, both at the fraternal and institutional level. As more risk-management claims result from overconsumption and environmental and societal factors continue to promote this behavior, prevention and education must be the forefront of our actions. On both the national and local levels, alcohol-education workshops have been implemented to mitigate risky behaviors. Additionally, emphasis has been placed on the further education of risk-management policies through Regional Director visits and revisions to *Minerva's Shield*. Further tactics need to be implemented to continue this work and further reduce the dangers associated with the abuse of alcohol experienced by our chapters.

### Goal:

Decrease alcohol-related risk-management claims through the elimination of hard alcohol from Fraternity functions, unless provided by a third-party vendor.

### Strategies:

1. Ban hard liquor from Fraternity functions, unless provided by a third-party vendor and include the policy in the new version of *Minerva's Shield*.
2. Implement fines for the use of hard liquor at Fraternity functions. This fine would be similar to that already used for kegs.
3. Expand the Alcohol Skills Training Program, or ASTP, to provide alcohol education to all chapters within the Realm. In order to mitigate the costs of face-to-face training of program facilitators, institute a virtual training model, via online PowerPoint® or webinar, so that alumni volunteers can be certified to facilitate the program within their local areas. Also consider reintroducing the ASTP program through a pilot year, selecting provinces that would serve as test areas for the program.
4. Provide comprehensive alcohol education, highlighting the harms of hard alcohol, to alumni volunteers through the use of various media tools, such as PowerPoints®, webinars and training videos as well as the inclusion of workshops at province and national Leadership Schools.
5. Distribute information on the harms of hard alcohol to parents groups through newsletters, flyers, e-mail, etc.

## ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

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### **Strengths:**

We have addressed this topic with redirected annual funds and used communication via The Record and other vehicles. Quarterly highlights of alumni associations are beneficial, including the recent re-emphasis on what is/was important to alumni during their undergraduate tenure. We now have the ability to reach alumni like never before with mass media. The Leadership School not only helps prepare our undergraduates for their transition to the next stage of brotherhood but also helps bring alumni back into the fold.

### **Goal:**

Get a higher percentage of brothers to get re-involved to help solidify and support the alumni association aspect and what it entails for the Fraternity.

### **Strategies:**

1. Make more of our materials and resources known to the alumni in order to show where help can be utilized.
2. Coordinate the alumni on the Fraternity side and on the Foundation side through Chris Speelman and Blaine Ayers at the Fraternity Service Center.
3. Continue to offer programs like Alumni Leadership Schools at the local levels, not just national level.
4. Utilize multiple ways to communicate with alumni in order to reach them. We need to break down the isolation of the alumni groups, just as we do with the chapters.
5. Use the Associate Executive Director of Chapter and Alumni Development to help grow, educate and foster cooperative learning for alumni and alumni associations.
6. Make a website entirely devoted to our alumni connected to [www.sae.net](http://www.sae.net). While [www.thetgi.net](http://www.thetgi.net) is a useful website, we wonder how much it gets used by those who have already graduated. Most of the website has undergraduates as its target audience and probably loses alumni. The new website could have all sorts of tools – locations of alumni associations, recruitment pages for alumni volunteers and educational resources.

## FINANCE

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### Strengths:

Since the Blueprint Agreement between the Fraternity and F&H was adopted three years ago, the Fraternity has embarked on a remarkable financial transformation. Previously, the Fraternity functioned at an unsustainable operating loss every year, incurred mounting total debt and received the threat of a “concern” letter from its auditors signaling insolvency. Over the past three years, the Fraternity has improved dramatically its economic viability by achieving positive, annual cash flows and by making tremendous progress toward restoring its accumulated reserves. During FY08, 09 and 10, the Fraternity has increased its total net assets (net worth) from zero to more than \$2 million, chapters and colonies have increased from 224 to 238 and collegiate members have increased from 10,739 to 12,083. These are exceptional accomplishments, particularly when viewed in the context of the Great Recession. At the chapter level, significant improvements have been achieved over the past few years in the relationship between the undergraduates and the Fraternity Service Center staff by using improved communication and online technology for national billing and collections.

### Goal:

Continue to improve substantially the financial health of the Fraternity at both the national and chapter levels and fully restore reserves for their intended purposes.

### Strategies:

1. Increase the Self-Insured Retention (SIR) reserves by establishing a requirement that by each fiscal year end, the fund equals five (5) times the Fraternity’s annual aggregate stop loss (deductible) for our liability insurance – essentially covering our potential outstanding exposure. At five times the current \$250,000 deductible, the SIR reserves would now be targeted at \$1.25 million. As of June 30, 2010, the SIR was \$1.0 million whereas three years ago, it was less than \$0.5 million).
2. Amend Fraternity Law 73F2 (Self-Insured Retention Account) to stipulate this annually variable requirement while maintaining the current fixed \$1.0 million amount as an absolute minimum.
3. Increase the Fraternity Reserve Account (FRA) by establishing a requirement that by each fiscal year end, it equals 35% of the Fraternity’s prior four-year audited annual average total operating expenses reduced by the net administrative fees it received from the Foundation and F&H. The 35% is composed of 20% to cover short-term cash-flow deficits resulting from normal Fraternity operations during the course of any given fiscal year plus 15% to cover sudden and unexpected deficits caused by an emergency. Based on FY2006 through FY2009, the FRA would now be targeted at \$1.45 million. As of June 30, 2010, the FRA was \$1.0 million whereas three years ago, it did not even exist. (Although many years ago, it existed as the Fraternity Endowment Fund or FEF.)
4. Amend Fraternity Law 73F1 (Fraternity Reserve Account) to stipulate this annually variable requirement while maintaining the current fixed \$1.0 million amount as an absolute minimum.
5. Fully fund the increases in the SIR and FRA reserves by June 30, 2013.

6. Improve the TGI website to address comprehensively all chapter financial-management issues instead of limiting that core area to national billing and collection matters.
7. Incorporate better programs at Leadership School for chapter financial management instead of limiting it to just one seminar.
8. Develop programs/tools to support financially challenged chapters.
9. Increase expansion and recruitment efforts for continued growth.
10. Maintain affordability for undergraduates.

## HOUSING

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### Strengths:

The Fraternity desires to have safe and competitive housing across the Realm where chapters would like to have a house. Our long history of chapter housing on campuses across the country has resulted in many houses being located in prime locations, which promotes better recruitment and retention of members. In addition, Sigma Alpha Epsilon is one of a few national fraternities with a separate entity devoted solely to chapter housing; namely, SAE Financial & Housing Corporation. The Fraternity is paying for property surveys to be done every three years.

### Goal:

Increase the availability and efficiency of collecting housing-related information.

### Strategies:

1. Improve technology systems and distribution of information:
  - a. Improve internal processes to assemble and maintain accurate information on all of our chapter houses and house corporation officers. Information would include officers, ownership, insurance information, physical addresses and mailing addresses, mortgage information, condition of property and any other information that could help assist in understanding our housing portfolio.
  - b. Utilize existing technology to send automated e-mails that are sent annually asking for housing information updates.
  - c. Use technology, such as automated surveys, to house corporation officers and undergraduate members to better identify needs with each chapter property.
  - d. Publish annually a list of chapters with housing, addresses and house corporation officer information in *The Record*. Publishing this information allows alumni more easily to review and update the information with the Fraternity.
  - e. Work to improve the collection and dissemination of property-inspection reports compiled by insurance companies and other bodies, such as fire marshal reports, etc.
  - f. Create an online forum for housing issues and solicit professionals in various industries to monitor boards and respond to questions in their respective area of expertise.
2. Create a separate section in the Fraternity Laws devoted solely to housing issues:
  - a. Amend the Fraternity Laws to consolidate all requirements of house corporations into one section so that house corporation officers can better understand these requirements.
  - b. Amend the Fraternity Laws to require house corporation officers to submit annual reports showing insurance, state and local compliance with safety and fire codes, etc., and identify specific needs for each property so that we can maintain a current and accurate database of our housing portfolio.

- c. Amend the Fraternity Laws to require minimum life-safety standards in each house. Undergraduate chapter members may only reside in a property that meets these minimum life safety standards.
- 3. National Housing Convention:
  - a. Establish a National Housing Convention that would take place once every five years.
  - b. The goal of the National Housing Convention is to bring all housing related parties together to exchange best practices, discuss current housing needs, to promote new housing volunteers and so forth.
  - c. Explore the possibility of assessing an annual fee on chapters with housing that over five years would pay for or subsidize the National Housing Convention.
- 4. Create a house corporation manual:
  - a. Create and disseminate electronically a manual that has “best practices” and “how to” sections for setting up and running house corporations. In addition, the manual would have material related to building, renovating and fundraising for chapter houses.
  - b. Examples of similar manuals would be the one created for chapter advisers or Province Archons.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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### Strengths:

The most important aspect of a Fraternity is the leadership that it adopts and the image that is displayed for external constituents. The Fraternity has done an excellent job in recognizing this and has developed programs to train the future leaders of the Fraternity, such as the Leadership School, Inner Circle, The True Gentleman Initiative and support for Province Leadership Schools. Most recently, Sigma Alpha Epsilon established an Undergraduate Advisory Council, which is not only suppose to serve as the undergraduate voice on the council but also as a leadership program for Council members on how to both communicate with and manage their constituents. In addition, Sigma Alpha Epsilon is fortunate to have the largest alumni base and to be one of the strongest and most influential Greek-letter organizations. Through our members and their affiliations, the resources we have are extraordinary.

Another strength is that we have a stable base, which allows us to devote most of our resources on programs and services rather than dealing with internal problems. These resources include great volunteers, strong leadership and a dedicated staff that supports the Fraternity's mission and allows us to continue to develop new programs. In addition, we have the financial resources that enable us to have flexibility in the programs and events we are able to offer our members. Because of our strong alumni base, we have the potential to increase our financial resources and, most importantly, we have the potential to enhance the fraternal experience of each one of our members.

### Goal:

Add new leadership development programs to our Fraternity and enhance what we have already established.

### Strategies:

1. Eminent Archon Institute:  
Eminent Archons would be invited to attend an annual training program that would enhance their ability to lead their chapter and to carry back knowledge of the traditions, policies and programs of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. They would learn leadership skills and go through their own team-building process. Ideally, something either at the LMT or out in the wilderness would be an appropriate venue. The goal is to jumpstart the executive training of chapter officers so that the EAs learn these skills and go back and train their fellow chapter leaders.
2. Regional Leadership Schools:  
Regional leadership schools would prove to be extremely beneficial to the realm. While many provinces hold their own Province Leadership Schools, there are provinces that are being not being served. There are currently several good regional schools being held by provinces acting together. These regional meetings could be as models for the development of regional schools where no province or regional schools exist.

3. **Alumni Training:**  
Before the money dried up, the fraternity conducted training for alumni in conjunction with the national Leadership School and at regional schools. It would be good to bring these programs back and find new ways such as online training. The audiences should include training for board members, province archons, house corporation officers, alumni association officers, advisors and ritualists.
4. **Online Training:**  
Utilize today's technology for webinars, training calls, virtual visits, etc. since undergrads are embracing technology more than ever. Sigma Alpha Epsilon should move in that direction, based on investing in such technology and defining when and where it should be used. An easy example is a risk-management seminar where participants can watch the presenter(s), see the notes and points and participate actively in Q&A.

Another way the online technology can be utilized is in our Undergraduate Advisory Council. It would be beneficial if this council created an online blog that invited all of the EAs across the Realm without the involvement of the national staff and board. This would allow the fellow EAs to voice their opinion honestly and not worry about what they say.

5. **Chapter Leadership Retreat:**  
Develop a program that chapters can utilize in planning and conducting their chapter retreat. This would include curriculum and supporting materials (e.g. CDs, exercises and so on). This retreat would get the undergraduates out of their element and help them look at the bigger picture. Focusing on the fraternal experience will help the chapters in all aspects of leadership development. Instead of focusing on the 12 core areas, we can focus on how to equip the undergraduates with better decision-making, leadership, confrontation and communication skills.

## RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP 1

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### Strengths:

From a technology perspective, there is already information existing on the TGI website, and we already have a database of all our alumni that can be sorted by criteria. We still have the largest living alumni base and largest number of initiated men and, through these brothers, we have many opportunities. We are adept at expanding the use of technology in other areas of the Fraternity, which is evident within our communications department. We have a growing undergraduate membership with a growing number of chapters and colonies.

### Goal:

Utilize and improve technology to enhance recruitment opportunities and improve membership retention.

### Strategies:

1. Create a technology committee comprised of undergraduates and alumni with demonstrated knowledge of both recruitment and technology resources.
  - a. The goal of the committee is to examine existing and potential technology resources and advise on emerging software resources to improve recruitment and membership retention.
  - b. The committee should be reconvened on a periodic basis to re-examine our technology and make recommendations for continued improvement.
2. Explore available technology resources to track prospective members and candidates through a referral tool (e.g. CRM or Customer Relationship Management software) and keep track of national and local interaction with each candidate.
  - a. For example, purchase names of students from a company like SAT, ACT or a similar company tracking college-bound students and target these men in a recruiting campaign for local chapters.
  - b. Enhance functionality of access to the alumni membership database for recruitment purposes, such as tracking of alumni children, nephews and grandchildren from date of birth. We have the ability to track the names of children or legacies through Blackbaud's Raisers Edge, but we should utilize, expand and better promote our existing resources. Build targeted communication specifically for such legacy candidates using e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and other emerging technology.
3. Conduct a Fraternity-wide product-satisfaction survey (e.g. annual and exit survey) to better analyze the undergraduate experience at each chapter. Focus the survey questions on the satisfaction of the undergraduate experience.
  - a. The goal of the survey is to assist chapters with membership retention through better programming at the chapter level. This annual survey should solicit information that once compiled should be shared with the chapter, alumni, provinces and RDs.

## RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP 2

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### **Strengths:**

The Fraternity has long been the leader in the Greek-letter world in the numbers of living alumni, traditions – especially with legacy memberships for generations – and the general commitment to being a member for life. Our strengths vary greatly from one geographical area to the next in the area of alumni and their involvement with membership recruitment. The goal and strategies below address the need to take some of the best practices regionally among chapters and alumni associations and institutionalize them through the province structure so that the entire Realm can take advantage of these programs.

### **Goal:**

Increase recruitment and membership training opportunities at the province level.

### **Strategies:**

1. Create a province officer position with the sole responsibility of recruitment and membership. Among other actions, the province officer would:
  - a. Work with local alumni associations to create recruitment functions with high school seniors (e.g. the Atlanta Ivan Allen event). Conduct traveling events where the Fraternity Service Center targets alumni to develop recruitment networks within our large population centers.
  - b. Recruit alumni and make it easier for alumni to volunteer in relation to membership retention and recruitment.
  - c. Coordinate recruitment training with Regional Directors for local alumni associations and chapters.
  - d. Provide training sessions at province meetings that would focus on promoting existing Fraternity resources to both undergraduate and alumni members.

## RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP 3

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### Strengths:

For several decades, the fraternal world has endured a constant barrage of negative publicity surrounding the actions of their undergraduate membership. This negative publicity and the changing educational and social environment have created a chorus of opinion questioning the relevancy of Greek-letter organizations. The goal and strategies below address the need for the fraternal world to present the benefits of Greek life and the ideals and traditions of all Greek-letter fraternities proactively.

### Goal:

Seek collaboration with other national fraternities to better promote the benefits of fraternity membership.

### Strategies:

1. Create an Interfraternity Public Relations Campaign about the relevancy of fraternities.
  - a. National offices collaborate to answer the question “Why are we a benefit on today’s college campus?”
  - b. Work with the National Interfraternity Conference to support a project of this nature.
  - c. Develop an outreach program to high-school seniors promoting the positive aspect of the Fraternity experience before they get to college.
  - d. Seek positive product placements in various media formats that promote a positive image of college fraternities.
2. Better summarize and communicate to concerned alumni how the fraternal experience still can be as productive today as it has always been.
  - a. Develop a succinct summary outlining the advantages and virtues of the Fraternity for undergraduates and alumni.
  - b. Make recruitment information more readily available to and more often consulted by alumni.
  - c. Direct alumni concerned with the place of the fraternity in this day and age to the website for the North-American Interfraternity Conference, but do not directly link our two websites. Develop a succinct summary outlining the advantages and virtues of the fraternity for undergraduates and alumni.

## RISK MANAGEMENT AND HAZING

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### **Strengths:**

The Fraternity has placed much emphasis with regard to addressing the issue of hazing. With the implementation of We Stand Together, more direct education and communication of policies with regard to hazing has taken place at levels higher than in recent years. As an issue that has increased in occurrence, including several law suits, hazing is an issue that must remain a priority. The continuation of We Stand Together as well as the implementation of additional preventative and educational tactics are needed.

### **Goal:**

Eliminate the presence of hazing within the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity.

### **Strategies:**

1. Fully endorse the We Stand Together initiative through the development and implementation of a Best Practices Standard Pledge Education Program. This program would be implemented under section 47B2 of Fraternity Law for chapters with concerns of hazing. A Fraternity Law proposal will be submitted for the 2011 Convention to include the use of a standard program within section 47B 2.
2. Include the elimination of the pledge interview activity in the new version of *Minerva's Shield*. Instead of such activity, recommend more brotherhood activities involving both active members and pledges.
3. Submit Fraternity Law change at the 2011 Convention that reduces the pledge program to a maximum of eight (8) weeks.
4. Institute fines for chapters found to be hazing. Fines for such offenses would be directed towards the implementation of hazing education by a third-party group.