

The Ritual of Recruitment

Today, we RUSH. 153 years ago, however, we RECRUITED. How do we know? Our Founders told us so. Here is what they told us:

Historical Overview

William Lewis Lockwood—THE FIRST RECRUIT

Founder Lockwood was the only founder not part of the DKE Rebellion. He was recruited by Founder Scobey, who put forth the extension of membership as a motion to the others. Selection was unanimous, and the magical number of seven was complete. Perhaps, as the first to be recruited, Lockwood was more vigilant in his views as to the privilege of membership.

Alpha Chapter Address, January 1856

"I look back over the few short months since our union of kindred hearts. The various secret societies and literary societies are pulling and tugging after new members. There is quite a large number from which to choose and we are taking it quite cool. **The idea of rushing a member in without giving him time to breathe is very bad.** Sometimes we can get good men and then again we bet **awfully sold.** We therefore have determined to look before we leap."

Eta Chapter, September 16, 1857

"The influx of new students this term is unusually large. They are coming from all parts of the Union, and it will indeed be strange if, out of the number, we do not find some worthy to wear the badge and bear the name of Sigmas.

As you are rather „young and inexperienced" in the Society you will, I feel confident, excuse me if I make some suggestions. **Then, too, you must look out for good fellows who have just come to College. Be careful to get those who, possessing the requisite mental and social qualities, are expecting to finish their course „with joy and gladness".** The perpetuity of the society depends on having such members in it."

Gamma Chapter, November 1857

"About a week ago we expelled a member. **He was a boy possessed of more than ordinary genius, but he perverted his talent,** and sought his company in whiskey shops and delighted in the caress of depraved women. *He forgot what was due to the Sigma Chi, and the Brothers considered him no longer worthy of membership. Better a few of those pure and strong hearted, than a host of degraded men.* There are but six here at present; there will be seven next session, but **we are determined to take none who are not talented gentlemen. We have our eyes on one or two, and will determine before long.** Though few in numbers, we are very strong in spirit."

Lambda Chapter, upon the close of Alpha Chapter, September 13, 1858

"The Alpha was established in Miami University, June 1855; at that time we numbered in our ranks the talent of the University. This made us proud, and, **when we grew few, unfortunately introduced uncongenial elements. This destroyed our unanimity, and now we are gone,** at least for the present.

When you recruit your ranks, be certain to choose congenial, high-minded talented fellows. Though you may be strong now, take all you can get who have the ring of true metal. "hale the evil days come not, prepare for their approach."

Benjamin Piatt Runkle—on the value of interpersonal skills Province Convention, Chicago, December 5, 1908

"Without Frank Scobey I do not believe that Sigma Chi would have succeeded and expanded and endured. We had our disappointments, our months of gloom, times when it seemed that we had no chance of success. Everyone was against us. **But Frank Scobey was never discouraged...his very smile and cheerful words gave us new heart. (He) was popular even with our enemies whose name was legion and whose inimical activities were unceasing. This disposition recruited to our cause.**"

The Ritual of Recruitment

Franklin Howard Scobey—seek men to trust
Alpha Chapter 1855

“{There must be in a fraternity, the expression and bond of friendship; at the same time, each must be free in the pursuit of his chosen ideals.”

Gamma Chapter, December 11, 1856

“Nothing so much tends to promote friendship, as the free mutual interchanging of our thoughts, hopes, and fears with one in whom we can confide.”

Daniel William Cooper—sounding very much like the Consul
Semi-Centennial Celebration, Oxford Ohio, June 28, 1905

“But while we rejoice in the spirit and power, which have accomplished all this, and can accomplish vastly more in the futures, permit me a word of warning. It is easy for that which is strong to become weak; for that which is ascending to lose its balance and fall to grovel in the dust; and just in proportion as it was strong and noble and exalted, if it falls, will it become weak and worthless and perish. The mighty forces found in nature, the material world—light, heat, attraction and electricity—so long as they remain in their normal condition and act as the Creator designed, bring health and joy, peace and beauty, prosperity and abundant fruitfulness; but, when out of their proper condition, work only devastation and death, as see in the earthquake’s throes, burying cities and even continents with all that pertains to them, deep in the bowels of the earth, and in the tornado’s deadly rush, and in the thunderbolt’s resistless might. And just so in the social, the moral and the spiritual worlds. The very forces which, when working according to the law under which they were designed to work, produce abundantly the fruits of purity, peace and love, and advance the best interests of all—these forces, when working abnormally, out of their order, produce results most destructive and fatal.

Be it yours, then, my Brothers, in laboring for the advancement of all that the Sigma Chi Fraternity stands for, to do all in the right spirit and from the right motives, so that you may hand down our Fraternity to those who come after you with its strength undiminished, its beauty untarnished; and it continue to advance in all that is good and true, until time itself shall be no more!”

Basis For Need

What, then, is the difference between RECRUITMENT & RUSH?

Certainly a lot has changed on college campuses since the 1850’s, especially in respect to Greek societies. Yet Sigma Chi’s fundamental vision and principles for recruiting worthy men into membership will forever endure. Some might claim that our timeless legacy is what makes our beloved Fraternity so uniquely special. The simple truth is that our shared values and ideals are just as relevant and revered as they were 150 years ago at Miami.

From our founding, we have taken great pride in selecting only the men of highest caliber. The recruitment process on most college campuses today is not conducive to such an in-depth and insightful consideration process of potential members. Even more likely, the Inter Fraternity Council or the university have imposed a very rule-laden, time-constricted structure for making new friends. “Men, Rush will be four days in the second week of the term. Pick up your copy of the IFC Rush Manual. Pages 3-144 are the things prohibited. Good Rushing!” Does this sound familiar? This is RUSH—not RECRUITMENT.

Elements of Rush:

Temporary, hectic, limited in form, highly competitive, risky, deadline-driven, burdensome and social in nature, surface level interaction.

Elements of Recruitment:

The Ritual of Recruitment

Systematic, continual, addresses needs through high involvement.

Webster's Definitions

Rush: to move forward, progress, or act with haste or without preparation; to perform in a short time or at a high rate of speed.

Recruit: a process to replenish, restore or increase the health, vigor or intensity of something.

Which sounds more like the lifeblood of your chapter? Which method will leave a strong and enviable legacy? The process of making friends, seeking out the best men on campus and convincing them that Sigma Chi offers both immediate and lifelong benefits is RECRUITMENT. Rush is just the luck of the draw. Which will you trust the future of your chapter to? Which act of yours has a greater chance of success?

Guidance

And finally, of course, the words that have become synonymous with recruiting and pledging Sigma Chi, the standard delineated by Founder Jordan. But have you seen all of it? What? There's more??

Isaac M. Jordan—the actual delivery of the standard Cincinnati Grand Chapter, August, 1884

"In my judgment our Fraternity has grown to be what it is, by **adhering to the principle with which we started in the beginning, of admitting no man to membership in it who is not believed to be a man of good character, of fair ability, of ambitious purposes, and of congenial disposition.** In a word, by the admission of **none but gentlemen**; and in no other way can such a society be continued. *It is much more important that we should have but few Chapters and have them be good ones, that we should have but few members and have them be honorable ones,* than to have many Chapters or many members. The decadence of other societies can be traced to a violation of this principle, and to an ambition to have many chapters and a large membership.

And let me here give a word of advice and admonition **to the members of every Chapter.** Whenever you find an unworthy member of your society, expel him at once and without hesitation. Evil communications corrupt good morals, and one dishonorable man will bring reproach and dishonor upon your Chapter and upon the whole Fraternity. The amount of mischief which one abandoned and dissolute young man can do is incalculable; he destroys everything around him; avoid him as you would a pestilence. One drop of poison will defile the purest spring. Avoid by all means the poison, the virus, the hemlock of bad associations.

Brothers, we belong to a society worthy of our highest regard and warmest affection. We are united in the strong and enduring bonds of friendship and esteem. Let us each and all so do our duty and conduct ourselves that we bring no dishonor upon our society or each other. And we may have the high and proud satisfaction of knowing that our beautiful White Cross, at once the badge of our society and the emblem of purity, **will never be worn over any breast which does not beat with pure, generous, and noble emotions, and by no man who is not a man of honor."**

Ritualistic Practices vs. Repetitive Practices

Personal ACTS of YOURS

1. Lead by example. Keep all brothers accountable to the same rules, expectations and ideals.
2. Market aggressively. Every forum and medium should be used to spread the message. But this will only be effective if the brothers „walk the talk."

Appendix B: The Ritual of Recruitment

3. Training. Spend time learning. Get all of the brothers on the same page as to processes, tools, expectations and goals.
4. Remain committed for the long haul. This is not Rush.

A potential member should be ready for pledgeship if Sigma Chi values and teachings align with his personal philosophy and he is seeking true friendship. The best recruiters determine if these elements are present and then ensure this future brother's route to pledgeship.

The Jordan Standard

Recognizing the Standard

The Jordan Standard lists qualities that describe the behavior of people. Certainly we are also aware that actions speak louder than words. Actions that support the words or that require no words at all provide us with genuine measures of a person's worth, and evidence that a potential member is in our midst.

Past Behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.

Interaction of drives within individual predicts behavior. It is the primary motivation force for behavior. Behavior is most likely influenced by the strongest drive in the personality.

1. Drive to dominate
2. Drive to induce positive feelings
3. Drive for stability
4. Drive for correctness

Certainly though, we as recruiters cannot personally observe all the actions of our potential members all the time to determine whether membership would be correctly offered. What then are we to do? We need to ASK. We need to develop the skills to use our daily conversations for meaningful character assessments.

How do guys communicate?

5 Cornerstones of "Guy Talk"

1. Movie Lines
2. Women
3. Sports
4. Ball-busting
5. Silence

Not necessarily in that order.

Movies—there is an unspoken short list of universally acknowledged mover quotes. (These may or may not be generational, depending on the movie.) Examples most often cited would be Casablanca, Caddyshack, and Napoleon Dynamite, listed by generation.

Why use movie lines? They are safe. They are time-tested. They are familiar. They are effective conversation starters. This category is often considered the wild-card for guys. Play them as needed.

Our own words, real words, can land us in situations we are not sure we can handle. We would be vulnerable in using our own words and expressing our own emotions. Let the writers for Hollywood do that for us.

Women—generally these are hot, beautiful, supermodel types. At times the other extreme is referenced, but never on an initial conversation. The universality of accepting what God created to be gorgeous is much safer.

Appendix B: The Ritual of Recruitment

If, by some stroke of fortune, one is intimate with the lady in question, the line is drawn. Men talk about women, but not about those who have seen us naked.

Sports—every red-blooded male has some knowledge of some athletic endeavor, whether as participant or observer. Trace it back to the Coliseum and the Romans. And we who fall in the latter category of observing are sure that a talking knowledge of the latest stats, scores, and highlight reels equates to superior insight and a higher level of manliness. Fortunately those we are communicating with believe this also.

Ball-Busting—we poke fun at one another. Whether it be telling stories, or minor ridiculing, or snappy one-liners, when we make our friends laugh, we are in control. The cleverness also sets us apart as superior. In early conversations, or a room full of strangers, it is a tremendous ice breaker to hear laughter. Laughter helps to break the tension and sets up an atmosphere of ease and acceptance. It can end an awkward situation. The true master of this cornerstone is especially adept at self-deprecating humor. And he is ever popular.

Silence—exactly that. Nothing. Five men can sit in a room for an hour, saying nothing and not worry that one of them is mad at another. If there is a working television set or a video game console, this is even more pronounced. Nary need a word be spoken, yet everyone is comfortable. Why then do we have uncomfortable silences with new acquaintances? That is something we force on ourselves. Quiet still works, as long as there is still a heartbeat or two.

SO How do we get to those “meaningful conversations?”

There are two types of questions we can ask.

1. Theoretical/Philosophical types: Are you a good student? How are your grades?
2. Experiential/Behavioral types: Classes and academics here at college are different than in High School. What are you doing to adapt?

Which one is more likely to give us insights into character? Which one gives us answers to behavior that may lead to a better assessment?

Conversation killers are questions that be answered with a “yes” or “no.” Avoid questions beginning with “Are you...,” “Do you...,” “Have you...” Phrase your questions using who, what, where, when, why, and how.

Progressive Questioning:

Often our conversations scratch the surface of some character revealing revelations, but we never quite get there. Using a progressive questioning stream helps to get where we want to be as we develop friendships.

1. What meant the most to you about belonging to the baseball team?
2. If you join our team (fraternity), what would you hope it would help you to achieve?
3. If you become a Sig, what can we count on you to do?

Remember too that this method is meant to be conversational, not interrogatory. How then do we become adept at these processes without seeming to be a mole from Survivor Island? Practice!

The Jordan Standard is not the definition of a Sigma Chi!

The words of the Jordan Standard are so familiar to Sigma Chi and are so prominent in our legacy, that the wise message expressed in its simplicity by Founder Jordan may be lost, despite our reverent fervor to uphold it. Occasionally, we may even forget that the Jordan Standard describes, in general terms, the kind of person we ought to bring into our Order. **It is not** intended to define the “ideal” Sigma Chi. **It is not** an ideal that is impossible to meet but worthy of our aspirations. The Jordan Standard is meant to help members understand Founder Jordan’s words and ideas at a deeper level, so that they can better identify potential members. It is meant to identify “gentlemen” who would appreciate a deeper form of friendship offered by Sigma Chi.

Appendix B: The Ritual of Recruitment

Becoming a true Sigma Chi goes well beyond living up to the basic qualities found in the Jordan Standard, and will most likely lead to a lifetime of endeavors to do exactly that.

In plain language, Jordan tells us that, given the nature of our order, the men most likely to fit are those who almost anyone would agree are “gentlemen.” Meeting the threshold expectations in the Jordan Standard does not, by itself, make one worthy of membership. We should think of it this way: those who do possess the qualities described in the Standard are more likely to strive toward and succeed in fulfilling our fraternal goals, vision, and personal obligations. And these are far more demanding than merely being a man of good character. One must also have with his heart the desire to engage in the pursuit of friendship of a higher level, to join others in seeking our state of brotherhood.

Some could meet the Jordan Standard, but who have no particular desire to participate fully in the life of a real Fraternity. There are those who wish to enjoy all the rewards of fraternal experience, but who lack the personal qualities that are likely to make them strong Brothers.

YOUR chapter’s future will be dependent upon our ability to recruit those men who possess both the genuine desire to become part of the Fraternity and the character traits that will make them friends of whom we are proud to call “Brother.”