



The Sig House

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOARD OF GRAND TRUSTEES
SPRING 2021 EDITION

THE BOARD OF GRAND TRUSTEES

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GOLDEN GOOSE STRATEGY

House corporations are forced to deal with their active chapter's bad behavior sooner or later. Disturbing the neighbors with loud parties and music, substance abuse, damage or injuries can happen anytime, day or night. While these activities are usually kept under control, every year there is a new crop of brothers all too willing to test the limits of reasonable behavior. Most institutions have a naturally dim view of this raucous behavior and tend to compile damning histories of the activity. While a single event is bad enough, adding up multiple violations over multiple years creates the impression that the problem is systemic and terminal. When the violation list gets long enough, the administration's all too frequent solution is force chapter closure, punishing both bad and good alike.

Let's face it. Some active chapters have a deserved poor record of self discipline. While some chapter officers do their best to control bad behavior, they often lack the confidence and leadership skills to pull it off. Or worse, some "circle the wagons" and attempt to conceal or protect the guilty. What's a house corp to do when the lunatics have taken over the asylum?

Before we go there, let's look at how a house corporation can better position itself with the administration.

Golden Goose Strategy. All too often, the only relationship a house corp has with the university is a crisis relationship. The boys have done something bad and there is a threat of chapter closure. A preemptive strategy that will bear significant fruit is to establish a "business partnership" with the university. There are several elements to this strategy:

1. Greeks are gold. Historically, Greek alums contribute more money to a university than any other alumni group. So, a healthy Greek system pays big dividends to the university. Conversely, as Greek numbers wane, so do contributions. This point is compelling. Get the administration to recognize that the Greek system is a Golden Goose worth preserving and nurturing.

2. Stand in the gap. Assure the administration that the house corp will handle the discipline issues with real consequences (and do it). This approach should win significant points since it makes the administration's job much easier.

3. Raise funds using the university. Explore the possibility of raising tax deductible donations by way of the university foundation. This strategy builds the partnership relationship.

4. Invest with the university. If you are funding a scholarship endowment, let the university manage the funds. This is a win-win partnership. The house corp is helping build the foundation's bottom line and reenforce the partnership strategy.

5. Use the university for collections. Get the university to collect house bills just like they do for the dorms. The university has the advantage of withholding grades and blocking registration of unpaid account holders. They also take credit cards.

So, now that you've established a good working relationship with the university, how do you deal with discipline issues? There are a number of options:

Invoke the Rental Agreement. Your rental agreement, whether with the active chapter or individual brothers (both are recommended), should clearly identify violations of law, university or fraternity policies as grounds for eviction. Unless the violation is severe, consider a "two strikes and you're out" approach.

Know Your Clients. Getting to know the undergraduate brothers at a more personal level can help keep you alerted to both leadership potential and red flags. To facilitate this:

1. Hold board meetings at the chapter house. It will give you a reason to inspect the chapter house condition and incentivize the actives to clean it up.

2. Encourage the active chapter officers to attend the house corp board meetings. Give the Consul and Quaestor places on the agenda to give reports. Ask about issues of concern like poor grades, house maintenance and out-of-control brothers.

3. Get to know the actives individually. Ask if they are interested in holding an office. If so, encourage them to run. Confidence can be an issue for some and your encouragement could go a long way to promoting the right men to office.

Purpose of CAMAC. Sometimes, discipline matters can be severe enough to result in individual members or the entire chapter being subject to a Member Review by Sigma Chi's Chapter and Member Accountability Committee (CAMAC). CAMAC represents the interests of Sigma Chi Fraternity International.

GOLDEN GOOSE STRATEGY_____

The house corporation should steer clear of directing active chapter discipline matters unless they pertain to violations of the rental agreement.

The purpose of a Member Review is to promote a meaningful dialogue with all undergraduate members, not just problem members. Each member is interviewed to discuss grades, financial accountability, purpose of a Member Review is to promote a meaningful dialogue with all undergraduate members, not just problem members.

Each member is interviewed to discuss grades, financial accountability, Suspension or Expulsion from the Fraternity. In some cases, immediate consequences are needed due to illegal and/or egregious acts. Suspending or terminating fraternity membership should be processed by active chapter with assistance from the Grand Praetor and chapter alumni. The house corp board should not take such action. The house corp is a landlord and should limit its actions to violations of the rental agreement. **IHSV**

ASK THE GRAND TRUSTEES_____

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Our house corporation has an active chapter member on the board. This is typically the House Manager since many of the issues we discuss pertain to physical plant repairs and concerns. It seems that this position creates an undesirable link between the two entities, however, we are reluctant to change it because we think it's important for the active chapter to be represented in house corporation decisions that affect the structure they are living in and the rent that is collected from them. Do you have any suggestions?

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No member of the active chapter nor its chapter advisor should serve on the house corporation board of directors. The fraternity and the house corporation are separate and distinct legal entities and must remain so to insulate the general fraternity from liability.

It is also done to protect the individuals serving on the house corporation from liability for the acts of the members of the active chapter. An example is a chapter advisor that is aware of a situation at the chapter house involving underage drinking that the house corporation would not otherwise be aware of. In the event of a related incident, a plaintiff could contend that the house corporation is liable because a voting board member was aware of that situation and it was not prevented.

The responsibility of the chapter advisor is to give guidance and counsel to the undergraduate chapter and the role of the house corporation is to maintain the property, rental agreement and related rules. Those two objectives should be separated as much as possible. The house corporation should have nothing to say about chapter operations except as they relate to the rental agreement. The house corp can seek input from the chapter and chapter advisor but they must not have a vote nor sit on the house corp. **IHSV**

FIRE DRILLS FOR SAFETY

The purpose of fire drills is to insure efficiency of house evacuation procedures and to test the alarm system. Proper drills ensure orderly exiting without panic or horseplay. Evacuation speed is secondary to order and discipline. Drills should be held at least twice each semester to familiarize all occupants with the drill procedure and to make the procedure a matter of established routine.

In general, residents should be instructed well in advance of the drill to follow these procedures:

1. Wear adequate clothing and shoes.
2. Close windows and leave lights on in room.
3. Close bedroom door and walk to nearest exit.
4. Assemble with other residents at the pre-designated location outside well away from the house.
5. Do not reenter the house until advised by the officer in charge of the drill.

Procedure for Conducting Fire Drills

1. Determine a date and time for the drill. Contact the local fire department before the start of the semester to schedule the drills. Scheduling should be known only to the Fire Safety Committee so that the drill will have as much spontaneity as possible to simulate an actual emergency evacuation. A representative from the house corporation should attend to verify that the event takes place and is done properly. The date and time should be selected to insure maximum participation.

2. All fire drills should attempt to simulate actual emergency procedures in the evacuation process; however, no fire, smoke bombs, or other simulated smoke should ever be used at such a drill to enhance the realism of the situation. No running or horseplay of any kind should be permitted.

3. After the drill is completed, all observers and participants should meet briefly to critique the drill. Criticisms or comments and the date and time of the drill should be recorded for entry in a fire/safety file. This information should be forwarded to the house corporation. **IHSV**

CONSTANTINE HOUSING INITIATIVE (CHI) FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

Student Housing has become big business. Not only are today's students more demanding of a quality living environment, but both universities and private developers are spending tremendous sums of money to attract the student populations. In order for Sigma Chi to provide attractive housing options to our undergraduates, CHI is available to provide financing for: new property acquisition, remodeling or life safety projects.

Loans may be for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, renovating, rehabilitating, or refinancing. Commitments may be made for the guaranty of real estate loans made by other parties. Loans or guarantees will be secured primarily by a first or second lien on real property used for the housing of Sigma Chis.

The CHI Loan Committee is comprised of brothers with exemplarily achievements banking and financial industries. These men hold executive and ownership roles within their respective institutions and utilize their expertise to structure financial loans for House Corporations across the country.

The primary consideration in extending credit is the credit worthiness of the applicant. Rental cash flow is important to the credit decision. CHI uses underwriting standards and documentation procedures generally followed by commercial financial institutions.

Applications must be submitted in complete form and in accordance with the application guidelines supplied by CHI.

To obtain a loan application, email info@constantinehousing.org **IHSV**

2021 OUTSTANDING HOUSE CORPORATION AWARDS

Each year, the Board of Grand Trustees honors Sigma Chi house corporations that demonstrate superior business practices in these 16 areas.

1. Minimum of 3 board members
2. Minimum of 2 board meetings a year
3. Have written bylaws.
4. Current with state/province annual reporting requirements.
5. Segregate house corp funds from chapter funds.
6. Have a written rental agreement for each tenant.
7. Charge each tenant a security deposit.
8. Have regular janitorial service.
9. Fund a plan for repairing/replacing major building components.
10. Have a fire sprinkler system.
11. Have an annual fire/life safety inspection.
12. Have a property manager.
13. Publish at least 2 newsletters/year.
14. Maintain an alumni database.
15. Maintain a website.
16. Have a fund raising campaign.

This year, 44 house corporations submitted applications for this prestigious award. The winners listed alphabetically are (drum roll please):

Gold Award (20-25 points)

Albion College
Auburn University
Clarkson University
DePauw University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Kansas State University
Louisiana State University
Missouri State University
Ohio University
Oregon State University
Penn State University
Purdue University
San Diego State University
San Jose State University
Southern Methodist University
Syracuse University
Texas A&M University-Commerce
University of Alabama
University of British Columbia
University of Cincinnati
University of Illinois
University of Maryland
University of Memphis
University of Michigan
University of Mississippi
University of Montana
University of Rhode Island
University of Southern California
University of Texas-Austin
University of Tulsa
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Yale University

Blue Award (15-19 Points)

Kent State University
Montana State University
North Dakota State University
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Texas Tech University
University of Arkansas
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
University of Tennessee-Knoxville
University of Utah
Western Michigan University

Honorable Mention (< 15 Points)

University of California -Davis IHSV

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES

Aynesworth Architects & Consultants

G. Tim Aynesworth
PO Box 161434, Austin TX 78716
Architectural design and construction management.
Texas Registered Architect, Certified by National Council of Architectural Registration Board.

CHAPTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Pierce Education Properties, L.P.

Matt Maruccia, VP for Acquisitions
www.PierceEducationProperties.com
National developers, buyers, owners and operators of student housing with specific expertise in Greek Housing acquisition, disposition, development, finance, etc.

CHAPTER HOUSE FINANCING

Risk Management Foundation

Steve Davidson
Affordable financing to Sigma Chi house corporations for chapter house life & safety upgrades, construction, renovation and loan guaranty

FINANCIAL & DATABASE MANAGEMENT

GreekBill, Inc.

www.greekbill.com
Web-based billing and financial management service enables billing, collecting, budgeting, reporting, online payment options.

OmegaFi

www.omegafi.com
Chapter and alumni management tools to bill and collect dues and rent, manage rosters and records, pay bills and employees and file tax returns.

Food Service

Campus Cooks

www.campuscooks.com
William Reeder
wreeder@campuscooks.com
Comprehensive program: on-site cook plus management of staffing, payroll, food and supply ordering, menu preparation

College Chefs

www.collegechefs.com
Jordan Wigton
jwigton@collegechefs.com
We provide trained professional chefs to prepare delicious meals and maintain a spotless kitchen.

Gill Grilling

Brian Gill
brian@gillgrilling.com
www.gillgrilling.com
Equipment consultation & purchasing, Nutritional analysis, payroll, custom menus. Serving Maryland, Massachusetts & Alabama.

Greek Kitchen Management

Amy Poklinkoski
www.greekkitchenmanagement.com
Kitchen management company specializing in staffing, high quality food preparation, food allergy accommodations and exceptional customer service

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATION

Pennington & Associates

Patrick Alderdice
palderdice@penningtonco.com
www.penningtonco.com

Capital campaign coordination, gift management, alumni relations programs, website development

Elevate

Bill Paris
bparis@elevateims.com
www.elevateims.com
Specializing in capital campaigns and alumni communications.

HOUSE DIRECTOR SEARCH & SCREENING

Greek House Resource

greekhs@gmail.com
www.greekhouse.net
Screen, interview and placement for chapter house directors.

Reserve study plans

Regenesis Reserves

info@regenesisreserves.com
www.regenesisreserves.com
30 year plans for renovating chapter house components like furniture, roof, carpet, HVAC and more. Indispensable for planning, scheduling and fund raising.

RESTORATION & CLEANING SERVICE

ServiceMaster Recovery Management

Cal McCarty
cal.mccarty@smdsi.com
www.smdsi.com