



The Sig House

A Newsletter from the Board of Grand Trustees

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Basic Math

For many people, math is not a strong suit. Many even have trouble making change and balancing a bank account. And when it comes to geometry, algebra and calculus...forget it. But there are two basic math equations that speak volumes to how well or poorly house corporations and active chapters work together: **R-R=R** and **R+R=R**.

Translated into plain English, R-R=R means **Rules without Relationship equals Rebellion**. The house corporation that uses this approach stays distant and aloof from active chapter except for collection and rules enforcement. Since actives are still maturing, they inevitably will make some immature decisions when it comes to financial accountability and care of the chapter house. With a detached house corporation, these bad decisions usually trigger a parental response. Angry phone calls or emails from house corp rain down on the officers or a surprise visit tirade ensues with comments like "This place looks like s* & #!!!"

With the R-R=R equation, active chapter rebellion is predictable because young brothers carry a fair amount of pride and "I can do it myself" attitude. The rebellion may manifest itself openly or subversively. Open rebellion is in your face. Subversive rebellion is the smile of compliance followed with a failure to follow through. Whether open or subversive, the effects are the same. Either little changes or matters get worse.

R+R=R, on the other hand, translates into **Respect plus Relationship equals Responsibility**. When a house corporation takes the time to respectfully and regularly interact with active brothers about positive things,

the tone of the relationship radically changes. Most young brothers have a desire for approval and a need to be appreciated. Take the time to find ways to compliment and encourage. Gush over rush success and improved grades. Praise the latest house cleaning, charity fundraiser or renovation project.

Take this equation to a personal level. Ask questions like:

- ✪ Where did you come from?
- ✪ What are you studying?
- ✪ How do you spend your time?
- ✪ Have you thought about running for office?
- ✪ What about Sigma Chi is most important to you?

The answers to these questions are very important to the one being asked. Make those answers important to you as well. A closer relationship can be further developed through Active/Alumni social events, house corp board meetings held at the chapter house, mentoring, attending initiation ceremonies, helping with Initiation Week, athletic event tailgates and other ways. Be creative. These contacts should focus on nurturing the "brother" aspect of the relationship. These brothers already have parents and aren't looking for more.

Another advantage of R+R=R is you can get a sense of who the potential leaders are. At active chapter, the cream doesn't always rise to the top. Some obvious leaders still don't recognize they have the talent. An older brother's encouragement could make all the difference. Effective active chapter officers always make house corp's job much easier because they will be more likely to enforce accountability. The better active chapter governs itself, the easier house corp's job is.

Sigma Chi Fraternity's



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The beauty of this basic math is it takes much less time than the damage control house corps deal with when things are in crisis. Use the R+R=R formula for success. Not only will you focus on positive outcomes, you'll nurture lifelong relationships with new Sigma Chi brothers. [iHSV](#)

2014 Outstanding House Corporation Awards

Each year, the Board of Grand Trustees invite all Sigma Chi House Corporations that own and manage a chapter house to apply for this prestigious award. To be selected, a house corporation must achieve a minimum of 15 of 25 points in various operations criteria. This year, we are proud to announce that 27 applied and 26 qualified for the award in two categories.

Gold Award (20 Points+)

Bradley University
DePauw University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Kettering University

Mississippi State University
Oklahoma State University
Pennsylvania State University
Rensselaer Polytechnic
Southern Methodist University
Syracuse University
Texas A&M-Commerce
University of Cincinnati
University of Kansas
University of Memphis
University of Michigan
University of Missouri
University of Montana
University of Wyoming
University of Texas-Arlington
University of Texas-Austin
University of Washington

Blue Award (15 Points+)

Butler University
Massachusetts Institute of Tech.
University of British Columbia
University of St. Thomas
Western Carolina University

Certificates of Recognition may be retrieved by emailing William.Scott@SigmaChi.org with

an appropriate mailing address. Congratulations to all that applied and thank you for all you do for Sigma Chi. [iHSV](#)

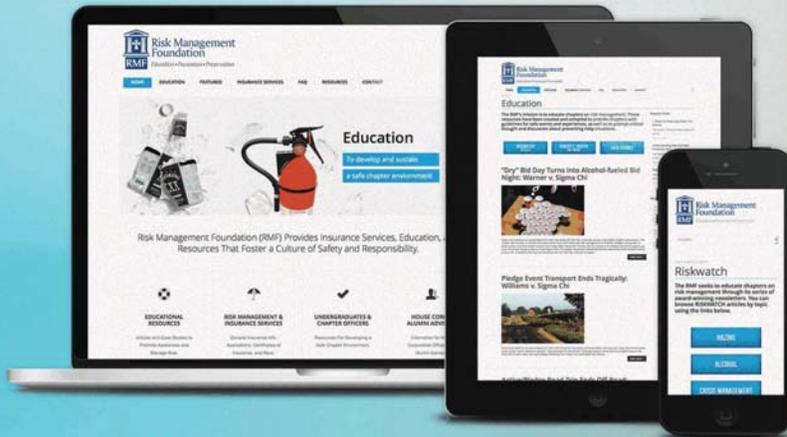
Pick Me! Pick Me!

When it comes to house corporation board elections, are candidates scarcer than snowballs in h-e-double hockey sticks? This is a common frustration where the same few brothers shoulder the responsibility for life. So, how do you get others to raise their hand and step forward? Some suggestions:

Communicate Regularly. Uninformed brothers are uninvolved brothers. If you don't tell them what's going on and give them a reason to get involved, they won't. Regular newsletters get the word out and help recruit the willing.

Put Them on a Pedestal. Most brothers love recognition. Turn a "thankless" job into a position of honor. Hand out kudos and certificates, praise and congratulations. Do this at every opportunity, including board meetings

Announcing our new website...



RMFEducation.org

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Know the Risks, Be Proactive, Develop a Plan



and newsletters. Volunteers are attracted to positive, uplifting environments.

Socialize. People like helping people they know but easily dodge commitment to strangers. House corp or the local alumni chapter should sponsor several socials each year to break the ice. Golf tournaments, rafting trips, pub crawls and other social events promote brotherhood and a desire to join in.

Encourage. Volunteers need to know they are doing the right thing. Remember to build them up and ask if they need help. Value their opinions.

Remember as a kid waiving your hand wildly to be recognized by the teacher? Age tempers that need to stand up and stand out. It takes someone to get the ball rolling. Let'er roll! Pick me, pick ME! [IHSV](#)

So What?

Do you read **The Sig House** and ask yourself, "So What?" How does any of this affect me? After all, you say, "I am protected by insurance and the corporate

structure from any personal liability. A lawsuit against the housing corporation would not affect me personally...or would it?"

As an attorney involved with pursuing those who cause injury to others by their negligence, I can tell you personal liability is something to be concerned about. You, as a volunteer alumnus serving on a house corporation board could well find yourself involved in a lawsuit with your personal assets on the line. So how can you protect yourself, the chapter house, the housing corporation and the chapter?

Here is a list of things you can do to minimize risk:

1. Ensure the housing corporation is properly formed and maintained. Ask a local Sig attorney to review the corporate records to ensure you have a valid (current) charter, that you hold and record the minutes of your meetings, that you have adopted proper by-laws, hold annual elections, report annually to your local and state

governments, hold all proper licenses and permits, report annually to the IRS and state tax authorities as required and that you operate within the bounds of your charter, bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

2. Review and understand the insurance coverage for the corporation. Does it cover the members of the board? The housing corporation should be a "named insured". If your house corporation is insured by Sigma Chi's Risk Management Foundation (RMF), the house corporation and officers have certain liability coverage.

3. Inspect and correct unsafe conditions in the chapter house on a regular basis.

4. Invite the local fire marshal to inspect the house before it is occupied for the academic year. Do not allow the house to be occupied without making the repairs or corrections.

5. Do not interfere with the operations of the undergraduate chapter. Keep the relationship between the house

corporation and the chapter strictly landlord and tenant. Do not collect the chapter's dues for them. Communicate with the undergraduates, yes. Attempt to direct and control them, no.

6. Consult with your Grand Trustee on a regular basis. (Contact information is listed on Page One of The Sig House.) Complete and respond to requests for information when asked. Apply to attend House Corporation Officers Training Seminar.

7. Consider obtaining a personal umbrella liability insurance policy. Disclose your membership in the housing corporation.

8. Perform your volunteer duties and encourage others to perform theirs.

Generally speaking, following these guidelines will protect you from the vast majority of trouble. That, my Brother, is the "So What"!

By Grand Trustee Harv Silverman IHSV

House Corporation Resource Directory

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES

Aynesworth Architects & Consultants 512.328.2272
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PO Box 161434, Austin TX 78716 www.aynesworth.com
Architectural design and construction management. Texas Registered Architect, Certified by National Council of Architectural Registration Board.

Hug & Associates, LLC 678.297.2929
Mike Hug mhug@HugArchitects.com
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Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

Reid Studio Architecture LLC 217.390.7403
Rod Reid rod.reid@comcast.net
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CHAPTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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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

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Pennington & Associates 785.843.1661
Patrick Alderdice palderdice@penningtonco.com
www.penningtonco.com Capital campaign coordination, gift management, alumni relations programs, website development

The Laurus Group 770.903.3987
Bill Paris bparis@thelaurusgroup.net C 404.441.9630
www.thelaurusgroup.net Fundraising consulting specializing in capital campaigns, gift management, alumni communications, annual funds

HOUSE DIRECTOR SEARCH & SCREENING

Greek House Resource 512.836.7176
greekhs@gmail.com www.greekhouse.net
Screen, interview and placement for chapter house directors.

INCORPORATION ASSISTANCE

Grand Trustee Harvey Silverman 703.319.8806
harveyas@aol.com

Do you provide a product or service for Sigma Chi Fraternity chapter houses? Get listed in The Sig House Resource Directory! Email rich.thompson@sigmachi.com IHSV

The Sprinkler Effect

One of the Grand Trustees' core charges is chapter house fire safety. While there are many relatively simple and inexpensive fire safety protocols that all house should have (like fire extinguishers, lighted EXIT signs, fire rated doors, etc.), the single best way to control a fire is a fire sprinkler system which is designed to automatically discharge water when the heat of a fire has been detected. So, if a fire breaks out in one area of the building, the system will put it out quickly before it spreads, limiting property damage, personal injury and loss of life.

A bit of history...Henry Parmelee created the first fire sprinkler system in 1864 to protect his piano factory. Parmelee patented his idea and had great success with it in the U.S. He then traveled to Europe to demonstrate his invention but did not get the reception he hoped for. Most simply could not afford the cost.

Parmelee turned his efforts to educating the insurance industry by demonstrating how the system would reduce claims. With reduced claims, the insurance companies could offer reduced premiums which would be an inducement for the insureds to install fire sprinkler systems.

Parmelee was able to promote his invention to the Textile Manufacturers' Association which had a policy of encouraging risk improvement and the use of the most up-to-date apparatus for extinguishing fires. Even so, by 1883 only about 10 factories were protected by the Parmelee sprinkler.

Fredrick Grinnell designed a newer and better system known as the Grinnell sprinkler. He increased effectiveness by removing the fusible joint from all contact with the water. And by seating a valve in the center of a flexible diaphragm, the valve seat was forced against the valve by the water pressure, producing a self-closing action. The greater the water pressure, the tighter the valve. Grinnell got a patent and marketed it in Europe where it was a

much bigger success than the Parmelee version. Eventually, the Parmelee system was withdrawn, which left an open path for Grinnell and his invention.

Residential fire sprinklers work automatically and operate at a predetermined temperature using either a fusible element which melts or a glass bulb containing liquid which breaks. When activated, a plug is pushed out by water pressure and the water stream impacts a deflector which produces a spray pattern. Ceiling sprinkler heads are designed to direct spray downwards while spray nozzles provide spray in various directions and patterns.

One of the biggest misconceptions propagated by Hollywood is that when a fire sprinkler system is activated, all the heads fire at once all over the building causing massive water damage. In fact, residential systems are designed to only activate and suppress the fire where it actually is. And while there is bound to be some water damage, it pales in comparison to the damage done by a fully deployed fire hose dragged into a burning building by the fire department.

Does your chapter house have a fire sprinkler system? If not, it is only a matter of time before the local fire marshal makes it a requirement. Why not put one on your priority list of fire safety upgrades. [IHSV](#)

Here to Serve

The Grand Trustees are available to assist house corporations in a myriad of ways. The eighteen Grand Trustees have over *700 years of combined professional expertise* in areas like property management, project administration, politics, maintenance, renovation, insurance, tax planning, accounting, construction, fund raising, legal, education, housing, risk management and more. Give us a try. [IHSV](#)



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