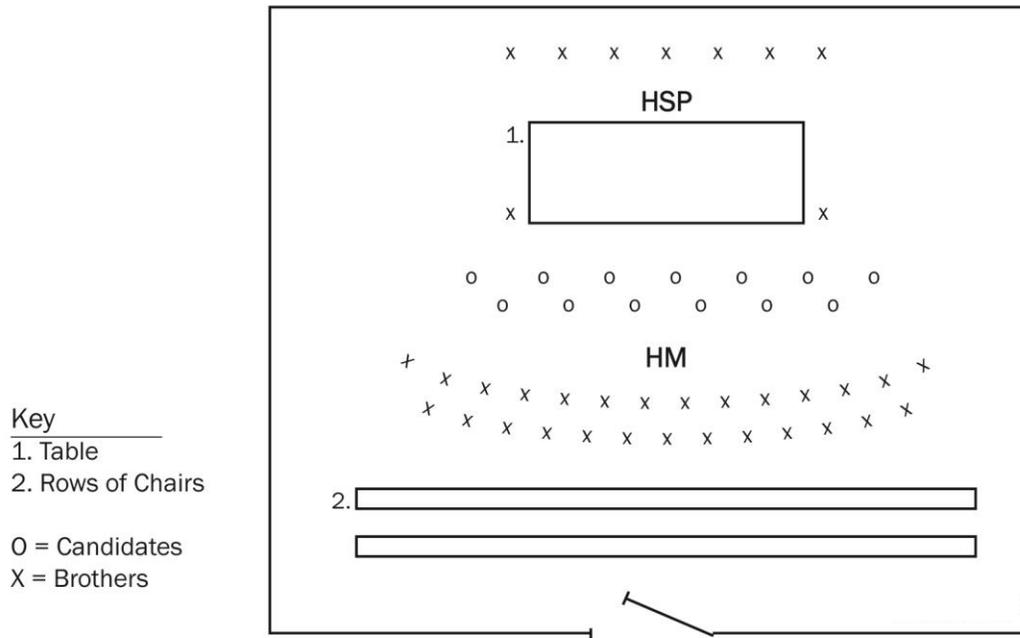


Instructions – Pledge Ceremony



EQUIPMENT

- Candles (9 new, tapered)
- Candle Guards (7 - printed with the Seven Points)
- Candle Holders (2)
- Draping (Black)
- Blindfolds (1 per candidate)
- Pledge Pin Replica
- Pledge Pins (1 per candidate)
- Sabers (2)
- Table

The Pledge Ceremony is an **EXOTERIC CEREMONY** and can be conducted in front of non-initiated members of the Fraternity.

REQUIREMENTS

Each candidate must have been presented with the preliminary examination and certified by the HSP as eligible for membership.

TIME OF CEREMONY

Generally, the Pledge Ceremony immediately follows the Preliminary Examination. The ceremony is to be conducted for the entire group of candidates as soon as possible following the completion of the campus recruitment period. For men not pledging during the regular recruitment period, the ceremony should be conducted as soon as practical.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Prior to the start of the ceremony, select seven Brothers who will read the seven points of the Pledge Pin.
- While the contents of the ritual are a sacred trust held only by members of the Fraternity, chapters may, at their deliberate option, allow guests to witness the Pledge Ceremony. It can be meaningful for parents, wives, fiancées, and other special friends of the chapter to witness the ceremony and gain an understanding of the serious nature of Alpha Sigma Phi and that our purpose is, indeed, *to Better the Man*.
- Should a chapter choose to admit guests, invitations should be sent prior to the ceremony, so that arrangements to attend can be made.
- Guests should be escorted into the room only the setting is prepared and all members are in place. They should be seated where they can view the ceremony but not intrude.

PRESENTATION

The Ceremony shall always be presented by the HSP. Robes are not to be used. Candidates and all members are to wear coats and ties. Silence must be maintained throughout the ceremony. The mood should be serious, so that a deep impression will be left with the new candidate.

ARRANGEMENTS

It is recommended that two rooms be used for this ceremony. Ask the new members to gather in a different room than where the ceremony is being performed. When the ceremony begins, members should be standing during the entire ceremony in a semi-circle facing the HSP's table, leaving adequate room for the candidates and HM to stand in front of the table. If available, cushions or pads should be put in place, upon which the candidates may kneel. The HSP is seated at the table. Behind him are seven brothers, each holding a new, unlit candle, with printed guard to catch any wax drippings.

SETTING

The table is draped in dark fabric to the floor. On the center of the table, there is a replica of the Pledge Pin, flanked by two candles, which should be the only light in the room. Lined up on the table are the pins that will be placed on the candidates. On each side of the table a brother stands holding a saber. The two brothers should hold the sabers identically and be completely motionless.

TIMING

If the Pledge Ceremony is to take place immediately following the Preliminary Examination, the candidates are blindfolded and waiting in another room with the HM. ★

Pledge Ceremony

If the Preliminary Examination was earlier, the candidates should arrive about half an hour before the Pledge Ceremony is to begin. They should gather in one room, one blindfold on each chair. When all candidates have arrived the HM should recite from memory or, if necessary, read this paragraph to the candidates:

HM: To symbolize that you are now in darkness concerning the teaching of the Fraternity, we now blindfold you before leading you on the first step of the journey toward the light, represented by the ideals of Alpha · Sigma · Phi. You will be safe in the care of a brother as you wait and meditate on the step you are taking.

Brothers should blindfold each candidate. Candidates will wait until the Pledge Ceremony is ready to begin. Candidates should be comfortably seated, and the wait should not be long. Before the candidates are brought into the room, the HSP should rise and say the following to all guests that are in attendance:

HSP: We welcome our special guests. The Pledge Ceremony you will witness is one of several ritualistic exemplifications the candidate will experience on his path to full membership. While this ceremony does not reveal the secrets of Alpha Sigma Phi, it does explain the requirements for membership and the basic ideals of the members. Your indulgence is appreciated as you realize what you witness is not for general publication.

Alpha Sigma Phi is the Fraternity *to Better the Man*, and all of her functions and actions should exhibit this as listed in our Code of Conduct. The Constitution and Bylaws provide for all members and pledges to conduct themselves as gentlemen at all times, to command the respect of the colleges, as well as communities, at which we are located. The new member period is an educational experience in which the candidates, along with the entire brotherhood, mature socially, mentally, and spiritually. The pledgship of Alpha Sigma Phi serves to foster this growth through the constant interaction with the brotherhood. In turn, the importance placed upon this commitment is such that the educational experience can only be fulfilled gradually. This assures the security of our Reasons for Being. The pledgship of Alpha Sigma Phi is of vital importance to the continuation of the traditions and values of the Fraternity. Unfortunately, pledging one's loyalty and the term "pledge" itself has, today, become identified with practices that are clearly dysfunctional.

Specifically, “pledge” has too often become synonymous with “hazing.” Hazing has no place in Alpha Sigma Phi. For the Old Gal, the prospective brother is “pledging,” upon his honor as a gentleman, to prepare himself to be worthy of the hidden teachings of Alpha Sigma Phi, to abide by the tenets of the Brotherhood Creed, and to be personally governed by the seven precepts represented by the seven points of our Pledge Pin. Thus, begins the journey toward full membership as an initiated brother within the Mystic Circle.

To symbolize that they are in darkness concerning the teachings of Alpha Sigma Phi, the candidates will enter blindfolded.

When the special guests have been informed and all is ready, line the candidates up single file and place their right hands on the shoulders of the men in front of them. Then, place the new members' left hands on top of the hands touching their own shoulders. The man at the front places his hand on the shoulder of the HM. The HM then leads the line of candidates into place in front of the table for the ceremony. When the candidates are in place, brothers should stand immediately behind each of the candidate so they can remove the blindfolds simultaneously at the signal from the HM. The candidates must be facing the HSP. The HM speaks from behind the candidates:

HM: You stand within a circle of members of Alpha · Sigma · Phi. These men have conferred upon you a high honor because they believe that your character, your personality, and your ideals make you worthy to become one of them in this brotherhood, which they so highly cherish. Before it will be possible for you to enter the portals of Alpha · Sigma · Phi, from the darkness and ignorance of the outside world into the light and warmth of fellowship, it will be necessary for you to pass through a period of pledgship. It will demand important obligations and duties as a period during which your actions and attitudes must justify our faith and confidence in you.

I now present you to the President for the obligation. I leave you entirely in his care.

After this is spoken, the HM signals the brother behind each of the candidates to remove the blindfold from the man in front of him. Then, these brothers then step back into position with the other members.

Pledge Ceremony, cont.

HSP: Brothers, I am pleased to report that each candidate has successfully passed his Preliminary Examination.

Before we administer the obligation to you, we solicit your agreement to two cardinal principles of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

The Fraternity that is offering its pledge of guidance and teaching to you and that seeks from you a solemn pledge of loyalty, was founded in 1845 at Yale University, on high literary purposes- a tradition which remains to this day.

To that end, will you pursue your studies faithfully so that your standing will be such that neither your brothers-to-be nor you will be humiliated and you may receive the fullest measure of benefit thereby?

Candidate: I will.

HSP: Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity endeavors at all times to support the faculty and the laws laid down for her by the government of this institution-to so conduct herself as an organization as to command the respect of the community in which she is located-and to this end does not permit her structures, nor any part thereof, to be used for immoral or other unseemly conduct by her members or others-and endeavors to appeal to her members and candidates to conduct themselves as gentlemen at all times and in all places. Will you comply with these regulations henceforth?

Candidate: I will.

HSP: We find you qualified to proceed. We will now administer the obligation to you. Kneel upon your left knee, raise your right hand, and repeat after me the following obligation:

I, [and give your full name], / upon my honor as a man / and in the presence of these members / of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, / do hereby promise and swear / that I will when called upon / in due time and form / proceed with the ceremony of initiation / into Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity; / that I will be governed / by the rules and regulation of the chapter / as they are communicated to me / by the duly constituted officers; / that if I am in doubt /

as to my course of conduct / through misunderstanding, / confusion, / or complexity of commands given me, / I will at once submit my problem / to the president of the chapter / and be governed by his explanation / or orders therein; / and that I will henceforth / consider myself to be bound to the Fraternity / until I shall be duly initiated / or released from my obligation / if for any reason satisfactory to this chapter of the Fraternity / it shall decide to cancel my affiliation. / So help me, God. Amen.

HSP: Please rise. Brothers, you have heard each man commit himself, by pledging to uphold the same obligation we have all taken and to stay true to our path on his journey to Alpha · Sigma · Phi. We have chosen each from among our friends to make him our brother. Do you now also pledge to support his affiliation during this period of examination, which once fully initiated, will admit him within our sacred walls?

All: We do!

HSP: I congratulate you upon the step you have taken, which, if persisted in, will make you a member of a brotherhood of gentlemen, wherein truth, honor, rectitude, respect for duly constituted authority, and for God, the Creator of the universe, all abound—a brotherhood that holds in high repute a good name in man or woman; wherein education is fostered and pursued; and wherein culture is valued for the use it can render in the spirit of service for mankind.

HSP: As a token of my confidence in you and on behalf of the chapter that has delegated to me the power to confer it, I will in due time, place upon your person, the Pledge Pin of the Fraternity, as evidence to the outside world that we are pledged to one another. It is to be worn by you until you have been duly initiated or regularly released from the obligation you have just taken. Under no circumstances must you allow any other person, male or female, to wear it even for a brief time, and you must be prepared to surrender it only to the President or the Membership Education Director. Until such time, protect it as you would your own life. As a pledge to this Fraternity, you will not be permitted to wear or display any insignia of the Fraternity except this Pledge Pin, the Greek letters by which we are known, and the symbol of the Phoenix.

Pledge Ceremony, cont.

This pin, which you shall wear as a constant reminder of our mutual pledge to one another, and by which you shall be recognized as a pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi, is a seven-pointed star with crossed sabers in gold.

It is established on a field of black, indicating the deep and hidden meanings of the Fraternity, which will be revealed to you when you become an initiated member of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

The Pledge Pin is contained within a border of gold, connoting the unity of spirit and purpose that prevail in the brotherhood of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

The seven points of the pin represent seven precepts by which you shall be governed as a pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

When the HSP has finished speaking, the brother in the line of seven that is to the HSP's far right steps forward and lights his candle from the large candle on the table. He then steps back into the row of seven men behind the HSP and speaks.

Brother #1: The top point: is emblematic of the first and foremost precept: *to Better the Man*, through the creation and perpetuation of brotherhood founded upon the values of character.

The second brother turns and lights his candle from the man to his right and then speaks his part. After the second point is spoken, the third man turns to his right and lights his candle. Each of the men, in turn, lights their candle from the man to his right, and then speaks his part.

Brother #2: The second point: To develop the strength to embrace silence.

Brother #3: The third point: To devote yourself to the tenet of charity toward all others.

Brother #4: The fourth point: To consistently strive for purity of mind, body, and soul.

Brother #5: The fifth point: To govern your every action with a high sense of honor.

Brother #6: The sixth point: To dedicate yourself to the principle of patriotism, which has made this the land of justice, freedom, and opportunity.

Brother #7: The seventh point: To impress in your heart and mind that initiation into Alpha · Sigma · Phi will bind you to her as a brother all through life.

The two brothers who have been standing at opposite ends advance, carrying their sabers upright. They place them in a crossed position on the table in front of the replica of the Pledge Pin and then return to the back of the room. The HM then speaks from behind the pledges:

HM: The crossed sabers symbolize the militant loyalty of Alpha · Sigma · Phi to her ideals and teachings, the spirit of harmony and friendship in which this loyalty is championed, and the courage ever to defend the rights and liberties of each and every brother in Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

HSP: All of this you will be expected to learn and by your behavior, to exemplify.

Pause.

HSP: Kneel on you left knee and place your right hand over your heart.

The President rises, takes one of the sabers in his right hand, and says:

HSP: In the name of the Founders, and by virtue of the authority vested in me, and in this traditional symbolism of knighthood, I pronounce you a Pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

The president repeats the phrase "I pronounce you a Pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi," almost touching each man first on the left shoulder, then the head, and then on the right shoulder with the saber, repeating the phrase for each man. After he has knighted the last man, he returns to the table and says:

Pledge Ceremony, cont.

HSP: I now pronounce you fully pledged to Alpha · Sigma · Phi and entitled to the rights and privileges of one striving to enter our sacred brotherhood.

Rise. In token of our esteem, I present to you the Pledge Pin by which you shall hereafter be known as a Pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi. In due time, you will complete your pledge period and move from Pledge to a Candidate for Initiation, and then from Candidate to Brother.

The President steps in front of the table and properly places the pin on each man. After which he steps behind the table, remains standing, and says:

HSP: Brothers, please join me in properly congratulating the newest Pledge of Alpha · Sigma · Phi.

The HSP then leads the brothers, singing "For He's An Alpha Sig." A reception or celebration is generally in order; advisors, alumni, relatives and friends of the chapter should be invited. If a small reception or celebration is planned, the HSP should thank guests for attending and invite them to enjoy the reception.

Once the HSP has made any final announcements, each brother should personally congratulate and shake hands with each pledge.

Before leaving the room, the HZ and HM should meet with the new members to provide final instructions. The HM should share with the new members the proper way to wear their Pledge Pin (crossed sabers pointing down and over left chest). He should also tell them when they are expected to wear the Pledge Pin, as well as how they are to dress while wearing the Pledge Pin. The HZ should conclude with the time and location of their first new member education session.

End of the Pledge Ceremony.