

## A Guide for Parents

For your son, making the transition from high school to a college or university may seem like an imposing challenge. One or more of the following questions may be on his mind:

*Will I fit in and make new friends?*

*Will I succeed academically?*

*Will I be able to get involved in campus organizations and better my leadership skills?*

*Will I find other people interested in the same things that I am?*

*How can I best prepare for my career?*

*Will I feel like a part of the campus community or just another number?*

Fraternities exist as a proven support network for your son as he embarks on this new period in his life. Over 3,000 students across the continent are currently members of Sigma Alpha Mu. Since 1909 over 50,000 men have been initiated into Sigma Alpha Mu.

Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity can help personalize your son's college experience by offering a scholastic support system; hands-on experience in leading committees, managing budgets, and interacting with faculty and administrators; exposure to potential careers through educational programs; the chance to give back to the community through service projects and close friends who will cheer him on when he is successful and support him when times are tough. With all the opportunities available to them, it is no wonder that fraternity members tend to graduate from college at a higher rate than those men not involved in fraternities.

As a parent, you are undoubtedly concerned about your son's college experience and the choices he will make. This brochure is designed to answer some of the questions you may have about fraternity membership.

The following code of ethics represents some of the basic expectations of Sigma Alpha Mu membership:

I will know and understand the ideals  
expressed in my fraternity Ritual and will  
strive to incorporate them in my daily life.

I will strive for academic achievement and practice academic integrity.

I will respect the dignity of all persons;  
therefore I will not physically, mentally,  
psychologically or sexually abuse or  
haze any human being.

I will protect the health and safety of  
all human beings.

I will respect my property and the property of others; therefore, I will neither abuse nor  
tolerate the abuse  
of property.

I will meet my financial obligations in  
a timely manner.

I will neither use nor support the use of  
illegal drugs; I will neither misuse nor  
support the misuse of alcohol.

I acknowledge that a clean and attractive  
environment is essential to both physical and mental health; therefore I will do all in my  
power to see that the  
chapter property is properly  
cleaned and maintained.

I will challenge all my fraternity members to abide by these fraternal expectations and  
will confront those who violate them

**The Basic Expectations talk about alcohol. What is it really like in the fraternity?**

Alcohol abuse is unhealthy and inconsistent with fraternity ideals. All fraternities are

expected to uphold state, county, and city laws, and university policies regarding the consumption of alcohol. In addition, our chapters are not allowed to purchase alcohol for members, nor have any kegs or common sources of alcohol on chapter premises.

The days of large quantities of alcohol at a social function are gone. Instead, you will find fraternity members participating in alcohol-free social activities. Students who choose not to drink will know that it is OK and feel comfortable with their decision.

### **I'm concerned about my son's grades--what impact would fraternity membership have?**

Students often find managing their time difficult when moving from the highly structured high school environment to the freedoms of college. Sigma Alpha Mu can assist in that transition, many chapters offer scholarship programs which might include study partners, mandatory study hours, and time management workshops. Your son can access the network of fraternity members who already know how to use campus resources like the library, study skills centers, computer labs, and academic advisors.

While Sigma Alpha Mu is concerned about the academic achievement of its members, your son is still ultimately responsible for utilizing the resources made available.

Each year the Sigma Alpha Mu Foundation awards many scholarships to its currently enrolled members, based on criteria such as academic excellence, financial need or field of study. After your son's initiation, he is encouraged to apply when his chapter receives notification.

### **What about pledging and hazing?**

New fraternity candidates all experience a period of orientation and education. During this time your son and the other new candidates will participate in weekly meetings to learn about the fraternity and the university, leadership retreats, community service projects and activities designed to build friendships among the new candidates and the older fraternity members.

Sigma Alpha Mu is opposed to hazing and is committed to an eight-week membership education period which instills a sense of responsibility and commitment in the new members. This period will assist your son in overcoming some of his concerns about success in college.

### **Who is actually in charge of the fraternity?**

Chapter members elected to officer positions manage the day-to-day operations of the local chapter organization. These officers are assisted by members serving on committees and by alumni who act as advisors.

In addition, your son's chapter is part of an international fraternity organization which

offers support, advice, and direction through a paid professional staff and regional alumni volunteers. As you can see, a variety of individuals oversee the operations of the fraternity.

### **Doesn't it cost a lot of money to be in a fraternity?**

Sigma Alpha Mu is supported through dues charged to all undergraduate members and through voluntary alumni dues of alumni members. In the first year of membership, a one-time initiation expense is assessed as well as yearly dues and liability insurance charges. If housing is offered by the local chapter, lodging and meal costs are competitive with other housing options. A variety of payment plans is usually offered.

### **What is the liability insurance program?**

Sigma Alpha Mu maintains group liability insurance coverage so that all chapters, colonies, housing corporations, alumni clubs, regional governors and chapter advisors are covered for general liability at a reasonable premium. Currently the total liability limit is \$2 million general liability and \$5 million excess liability. The premium for this insurance is assessed to each initiated member and candidate.

### **Being in a fraternity sounds like it takes a lot of time.**

Participating in any worthwhile activity always requires an investment of one's time. Research has shown that involved college students are more likely to graduate and they report greater satisfaction with their college experience. Through his fraternity involvement your son will learn how to balance his academic, work, campus involvement, and social commitments.

### **What is my role as a parent?**

Be supportive and learn as much as you can by asking questions of your son as he meets people through the fraternity network. Fraternity members will be more than happy to tell you more about their chapter and the international fraternity.

*If you wish further information about Sigma Alpha Mu, you may contact the Executive Office at (317) 846-0600 or write to: Executive Director, Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity, 9245 N. Meridian Suite 105, Indianapolis, Indiana 46260*