

55th Biennium Grand Master of Cermonies Report

May 31, 2020

I am excited and humbled to be submitting my biennial report as Grand Master of Ceremonies. I must take the time to thank the collegiate and professional brothers who helped make this biennium's installations a fun and memorable time.

There are a few specific milestones I wish to point out:

- **Sourcebook.** In 2018, the sourcebook was revised incorporating changes from the revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws, the Tartan, and other aspects as a result of Grand Chapter legislation out of the Pittsburgh Conclave. A special thanks to Erin Goodwin at the National Office for all of her assistance with the revision. For the 2019-2020 edition, a full review of the Sourcebook was performed due to formatting recommendations. We added the new Health and Safety Policy which should help chapters teach new members how they need to care for their fellow brothers and themselves. In adding the Health and Safety Policy it was found that the sourcebook has swelled to a nearly unmanageable size for our organization. It was discussed at the 2019 Summer SC meeting that no changes would happen to this version due to the limitation set by the Constitution and Bylaws. I believe that there are some changes that could be made that will benefit our chapters education efforts. I have written a motion to strike the language forcing the Fraternity to print physical copies of the sourcebook which hamstrings future GMCs from making the necessary consolidations to the sourcebook to make it more approachable for a digital world. After discussions with the District Counselors it was noted that a majority of the chapters are not requesting and distributing the print version to their pledges so I believe that this will be a beneficial move for the Fraternity as shipping and printing costs are expensive.
- **Trademark and Intellectual Property.** The biggest task that I have handled this biennium was the protection of our intellectual property and enforcing our trademarks. With the lack of oversight by Facebook and other social media apps in advertising I have been very busy investigating apparel and materials using our crest, badge, name, and/or letters. Some companies are very responsive and remove the infringing materials right away. Others take multiple contacts and the threats of legal action. One of the most frustrating encounters that I have experienced is dealing with fake stores that pop up on Facebook. These are malicious organizations looking to defraud individuals by presenting themselves as legitimate. The most insidious was a company at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic selling Alpha Chi Sigma masks on Facebook. The organization did not respond to any contacts nor did they remove the post. I was able to work with Facebook initially to get their store front removed due to IP infringement however a recent check has seen them pop back up with new wares. They did not have anything Alpha Chi Sigma related on their page this time though. There was one other large IP issue this biennium that was seemingly solved before the issue became fully public and out of respect to the other party will not be discussed here.
- **Ritual Committee.** Kate Cavanaugh was the chair for this biennium. The ritual committee had a quiet year monitoring the adoption of the updated ritual per the 54th biennial conclave. The most the committee had to undertake was checking in with chapters to see how the new ritual

roll-out is proceeding. I often received many questions as a DC by new MCs that I believe can be answered quickly and easily with a resource book which I believe that a future ritual committee would be well tasked to undertake.

- ***Delta Xi Installation.*** The installation of the Delta Xi Chapter at the University of Tampa was on September 29, 2018. The Delta Xi Brothers did an absolutely excellent job putting together a wonderful Installation event. The event was well attended by other collegiate chapter representatives. GMA Helen Webster presided with GPA Kip Nalley, GCA Howard Mayne, and GMC Sean Pawlowski participating in the ceremony. Thank you Delta Xi for a wonderful weekend.
- ***Delta Omicron Installation.*** While I was unable to personally attend the The installation of the Delta Omicron Chapter at the Florida A&M University was on November 3, 2018. The Delta Omicron Brothers also did an excellent job putting together a wonderful Installation event. GMA Helen Webster presided with GPA Kip Nalley, and GCA Howard Mayne participating in the ceremony. Thank you Delta Omicron for a wonderful weekend.
- ***Delta Pi Installation.*** The installation of the Delta Pi Chapter at the York University of Pennsylvania was on October 5, 2019. The Delta Pi Brothers did an absolutely excellent job putting together a wonderful Installation event. The event was well attended by other collegiate chapter representatives. GMA Helen Webster presided with GPA Kip Nalley, GCA Merryn Cole, and GMC Sean Pawlowski participating in the ceremony. Thank you Delta Pi for a wonderful weekend.
- ***Delta Rho Installation.*** The only installation that we were unable to perform this biennium was at Oregon State University. I will work with the incoming GMC to ensure a smooth transition of duties and to make sure we can get the chapter installed as soon as we safely can.
- ***Token Update.*** Along with the South Dakota School of Mines the Fraternity has replenished our stock of copper boxes and lead and silver tokens. We have essentially caught up to our backlog and are now ordering to fulfill new installations. The new tokens look great and chapters have been overwhelmingly happy with them. We have worked towards a more streamlined fabrication process that will allow future GMCs to order and replenish supplies on a more expedient timeline.
- ***Initiation and Safety.*** As of the writing of this report, outside of some fear over missing ritual copies which were unfounded, no major issues or incidents have been reported. There have been some discussions about old copies reappearing so I worked with the DCs through the biennium to have them review with their chapters the disposal procedure for hard copies of the ritual. In February, a GMC Directive was sent to every chapter emphasizing the importance of the usage of PPE in the ritual ceremony. It came to the attention of the GMC that proper PPE wasn't being used as consistently as it should be. Feedback from the directive was mostly positive. Before the COVID-19 pandemic I requested that several chapters undertake an experiment in the way they hold their initiation that I believe will make it safer and more accessible without modifying the ceremony. This has been delayed until chapters can hold initiations, hopefully in the fall, and I will discuss with the incoming GMC the goals for that experiment.

- ***Ceremonies in the time of COVID-19.*** In this uncertain time we need to remember to follow the CDC's as well as local authorities rules on safe practices. We encouraged the postponement of Spring Initiations until the Fall as well as emphasizing that states that have social distancing implemented would limit the ability to perform those ceremonies. This was disappointing for some chapters to hear but overall I'm very happy with how the collegiate MCs handled these hurdles.

Overall this biennium brought its own challenges, IP infringement is on the rise as both small apparel companies and fake storefronts print and advertise with our logo to try and bolster sales from brothers who unwittingly purchase them. I believe this will only get worse as organizations such as Facebook take a very hands-off and reactive approach to their digital ads/storefronts. As we have no sway over private companies' policies it will be imperative for future GMCs to be vigilant in pursuing the companies who use our IP without permission or risk losing that IP.