

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

Office of the
ASSISTANT
GRAND RECORDER



Dr. Jonathan E. Wenzel, OA
1700 University Ave.
Flint, MI 48504
agr@alphachisigma.org

May 31, 2020

Friends,

It is wonderful serving Alpha Chi Sigma in this capacity. The position of Assistant Grand Recorder (AGR) has taken many forms over the decades as the Supreme Council sees fit as to how to operate the fraternity. From biennia previous to the 54th biennium, the on-site national office manager, a full time paid position was given the title Assistant Grand Recorder. When it comes to career development, the Assistant Grand Recorder job title doesn't have much meaning outside the fraternity. This biennium, as mentioned in Grand Recorder Stipp's biennium report, the Assistant Grand Recorder position is firm fixed-price part time consulting position held by a Brother, like the Grand Recorder position. Like the Grand Recorder, some functions for the National Office have been outsourced to the AGR position as a cost-savings measure. The position of AGR has gained more definition over the 55th biennium with more formal responsibilities assigned to the position by the Grand Recorder and the Grand Master Alchemist. The Assistant Grand Recorder is the Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of the fraternity and works under the direction of the Grand Recorder and the position is a supporting role to the GR and SC. At present the AGR-role has a role in reviewing finances, handling conclave bids and contracts, organizing cost-effective room, board, and meeting space for Supreme Council meetings, advising on legislative matters, and handling assigned one-off financial, tax, legal, and office matters.

It has been wonderful working with our Brothers and office staff in this capacity. A big thank you to Erin Goodwin, Assistant Director of Fraternity Operations, and Amy Posavac-Osborne, Membership and Database Coordinator for their hard work and efforts in enabling success in all of our projects. This report will be brief so as to avoid duplication of the Grand Recorder's and the Grand Master Alchemist's reports. A succinct list of some of the work done individually or jointly is below.

Finances, Taxes, and Administration: Work assisting the Grand Recorder this biennium includes reviewing and participating in financial and insurance correspondence and review of Alpha Chi Sigma's financial accounts. Assigned work also included one-off unusual financial or tax-related issues for chapters and the fraternity, for example maintaining Alpha Chi Sigma's state of Ohio non-profit fundraising registration and handling tax assessments on the national headquarters. The AGR is now jointly responsible for the administration of G-suites for Alpha Chi Sigma and Zoom accounts.

Supreme Council Meetings: The AGR and Assistant Director of Fraternity Operations handle the process of the site-logistics for Supreme Council meetings from providing budgetary quotes for holding the SC meetings at various locations for the GMA to review to handling hotel reservations, payment, check-in, meals, and arranging guest transport.

Conclave: It may come as a surprise to our Brothers, but planning for conclave and the work that goes into it starts immediately after the last conclave has ended. Conclave is a big job with many people involved. For the 55th biennium, the GR, AGR, and Office staff handled all of the financial business items related to organizing conclave, under the direction of the GMA. In particular, this biennium, with the assistance of John Stipp, Erin Goodwin, and Helen Webster, the conclave planning manual of procedure, bid documents, and planning timelines were revised. The AGR processes the conclave bids received by the National Office, estimates delegate travel costs, and prepares a comparative budget for the GMA and GR to review, which the GMA, with the SC, use to make their selection of the winning bid. The AGR then works with the host chapter and conference services on preparing conclave and Kuebler contracts, obtains local tax exemption, works with the insurance carrier for special events coverage, and reviews and prepares tax exempt documentation. These documents are then prepared, along with revised budget, and provided to the GMA and the GR for review. Planning was going well for the 55th biennial conclave prior to the COVID-19 outbreak with all contracts in place. Alpha Upsilon, the host chapter was very helpful and proactive. Following the outbreak, all contracts were successfully cancelled, with marginal financial exposure to the fraternity. It has been a pleasure working with the host chapter, the national office, GLDC Wilson, GR Stipp, and GMA Webster through this process and with the collective effort of the group, the pre-COVID-19 portion of the journey to conclave has gone relatively smoothly, including cancellation. For the remainder of the biennium, diligent work has been performed within a team for handling contingencies for conclave, as well as development of an online conclave for July 2020.

Beta Theta Chapter at University of Texas Austin: When a chapter goes inactive its assets typically are required to be transferred to the Grand Chapter to be held in trust (Bylaw II.E.3). When Beta Theta went inactive in 2000, a sizeable Certificate of Deposit was unclaimed. Though attempts may have been made in the past, no serious effort to recover the funds had been undertaken in years and the story would go “the only way for the fraternity to claim the funds is for the Beta Theta Chapter to be re-activated so they can put it to good use.” In early 2019 a successful effort was made to work with the State of Texas’s unclaimed property to retrieve the CD, valued at \$23,600.25 without the use of services from a third party. This would not have been possible without thorough detective work, as well as assistance from one of Beta Theta chapter’s former faculty advisors. Just to note, it is essential that chapters keep good financial records, not only in the event of an audit and for their own financial health, but to be sure that their funds can be secured and held in trust if the chapter were to go inactive. Without certain and detailed records, it is next to impossible for the Grand Chapter to retrieve unclaimed property. An audit reveal that several chapters, active and inactive, have unclaimed property, though none as sizeable at Beta Theta. By leaving the Beta Theta CD unclaimed, nearly 20 years of growth was missed. Typically reserve fund investments have a superior return compared to CDs and money invested at a 7.2% annual rate of return will double in value every 10 years. The funds of the CD could have been worth more than \$94,000 today!

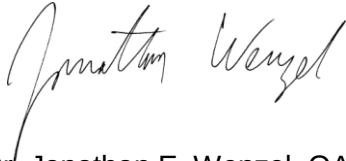
Chapter Audit Process: Working with Grand Collegiate Alchemist Cole and Grand Recorder Stipp, a detailed review of previous practices and forms, as well as current desired outcomes has led to a proposal of a revised financial audit process for the chapters. A new audit process with paperwork has been prepared during winter 2020, but with the outbreak of COVID-19, the deploying the audit has been postponed.

As Grand Recorder John Stipp has mentioned in his biennial and annual report, the fraternity has faced several crises, successfully, over the past few biennia, but finances remain a big concern. This in part is due to the fraternity adjusting financially to the changing insurance

climate. Through the talents of the office staff and others, the business aspects of the fraternity have increased accountability and productivity at decreased expense. Indeed expenses for national office operations are now very lean with few remaining opportunity for realized cost savings. There are likely to be resolutions before the Grand Chapter at the 55th biennial conclave to enable the Supreme Council to realize additional savings for the Grand Treasury. While the fraternity is strong and is fortunate to be able to draw upon reserves in times of little or in times of crisis, it cannot continue to do so indefinitely. The leadership team continues to strive to decrease expenses, increase efficiencies in our operations, and identify new revenue sources without sacrificing service to our members and never forgetting that this is a brotherhood of pure and applied chemists. High insurance premiums are the new normal. We don't exist solely to pay an insurance premium. We indeed do not: the activities our brothers and chapters undertake show that the spirit of the fraternity is alive and well.

It is a privilege to have the chance to serve the fraternity in whatever capacity it may be. Our Brotherhood remains a vibrant and fun group. It is important to continue to looking stars and working towards the strength of our brotherhood.

Yours in the Double Bond,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jonathan Wenzel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dr. Jonathan E. Wenzel, OA, Delta 1996
Assistant Grand Recorder
Grand Vizier
Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity