

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

Office of the
GRAND
MASTER OF CEREMONIES



Dr. Jason S. Ellis
391 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
gmc@alphachisigma.org
(573) 673-2262

June 27, 2022

Grand Master of Ceremonies' biennial report: This report will encompass the time from July 2020 through June 2022.

Brothers,

I have started both of my annual reports the same way, but it bears saying one final time. Before the pandemic, the very idea of virtual Initiations or Professional Induction Ceremonies would have been considered far-fetched. Now, as we end the Biennium with the pandemic still underway, Fraternity ceremonies have slowly returned to regular in-person events at almost all of our chapters. While a few chapters still need to perform virtual rituals due to local COVID conditions or university guidelines, many chapters were able to safely return to in-person ceremonies in the Fall of 2021 and Winter of 2022.

Ritual Committee and Virtual Ceremonies

The Ritual Committee began working delving into the uncharted waters of virtual ceremonies as soon as the final gavel fell at the close of Conclave in July of 2020. The Ritual Chair Kathryn Cavanaugh and I began working on a set of guidelines to help our chapters conduct both in-person and virtual ceremonies while maintaining the Ritual's secrecy and our Brothers' safety. This began with a draft by GPA Sean Pawlowski when he was GMC. The Ritual Committee was tasked with refining these plans into something broad enough to guide all of our chapters while also being specific enough to keep our Brothers safe. This was a challenging task, given that the facts regarding transmissibility and effectiveness of various safety measures were still being gathered by scientists and healthcare professionals worldwide. The members of the Ritual Committee are Kathryn Cavanaugh (Chair), ACDC Stephanie Bates, Alexis Brissette, Sean Burke, PR Don Cole, Jillian Genova, Christina Grigoropoulos, Cora Lind, Mike Raffay, CDC Matt Senter, Olivia Thomas, and Jonathan Webster. I am incredibly thankful for the collegiate Brothers who served on the committee, as they had vital first-hand experience with the uncertain and highly stressful conditions on college campuses and within collegiate chapters at the time. On August 29, 2020, the Delta Mu Chapter at Kettering University, Alpha Theta Chapter at the University of Iowa, and Gamma Xi at North Carolina State University were the first to hold virtual Initiations. I can't say often enough how impressed by these Brothers and the fantastic ingenuity they showed to maintain the impact and meaning of the ceremony for their incoming Brothers.

The wide variety of state, local, and institution-specific restrictions our collegiate Brothers were under created many unique challenges for chapters. The speed of campus closures in the Spring meant that many Chapters had pledges still needing Initiation when the Fall semester began. Most chapters had smaller than regular pledge classes. As a whole, about half the usual number of new Brothers were welcomed into the Fraternity. Very few chapters were able to hold

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

Office of the

**GRAND
MASTER OF CEREMONIES**



Dr. Jason S. Ellis
391 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
gmc@alphachisigma.org
(573) 673-2262

in-person Initiations. Many chapters took advantage of the ability to hold Initiation virtually. To help chapters plan their ceremonies, I held a series of 16 GMC Q&A Forums to discuss the guidelines and the many chapter-specific hurdles they faced. In addition to these group Forums, I had more than 13 meetings with individual chapters and their DCs.

Virtual ceremonies continued to be the norm within the Fraternity in the Winter/Spring of 2021. As with the Fall of 2020, the wide variety of state, local, and institution-specific restrictions our collegiate Brothers were under created many unique challenges for chapters. Most chapters had been able to catch up with the pledges who were put on hold because of the rapid campus closures earlier in the year, but some chapters had not been able to hold ANY ceremonies until early 2021. Most chapters continued to have smaller than normal pledge classes, but several had begun to adjust to the new normal and recruit near-normal numbers of pledges. Very few chapters were able to hold in-person Initiations. As we approached the end of the Winter/Spring 2021 semester, the ritual committee was tasked with going through the same process for the Professional Induction Ceremony as it had in 2020 with the other collegiate ceremonies. Once again, they did a phenomenal job, and virtual PICs were held for graduating Brothers and professional Brothers who had not had the opportunity to participate in the PIC.

In the Fall of 2021, several chapters were able to begin holding in-person ceremonies again. I would like to thank the Gamma Theta Chapter for pioneering the safety measures we eventually implemented for our other chapters. Again, I can't praise the creativity of our collegiate Brothers and the thoughtfulness of their Chapter Advisor, Anne Moody, in making this a success. I again held a series of educational forums for chapters. This time the topic was how to hold in-person ceremonies. These forums were a combination of COVID safety and general Initiation planning. Many chapters had not held in-person Initiations in several semesters by this point. A significant proportion of the officers planning Initiations had either never seen our Ritual in person or had only done so when being Initiated themselves. Any chapter wishing to hold in-person ceremonies was required to attend one of these forums or meet with me individually. With the help of the DCs, many chapters were able to not only hold safe in-person ceremonies, but they were able to perform the Ritual well despite the lack of experience. I am very appreciative of the hard work that the DCs have put in this biennium to support our collegiate chapters in this trying time.

Alpha Chi Sigma Scholar Committee

The Alpha Chi Sigma Scholar Award Program continued to honor the amazing research work of our Brothers. The selection committee was chaired by Michael Clager (Gamma Iota 1993). Brother Jill Belluomini (Delta Nu 2018) was selected as the 2021 Alpha Chi Sigma Scholar. The Brothers chosen for Honorable Mention awards in 2021 were: Cade McAllister (Gamma Xi 2017), Austin Murray (Gamma Iota 2017), and Lauryn Martin (Delta Beta 2019). Brother Daniel Tinney (Alpha Kappa 2011) was selected as the 2022 Alpha Chi Sigma Scholar. Justin Hochberg (Beta Iota 2014) was chosen for the Honorable Mention award for 2022. Brother Clager will be retiring from the Committee at the end of this Biennium. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his long service as Chair of this committee.

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

Office of the
GRAND
MASTER OF CEREMONIES



Dr. Jason S. Ellis
391 Rolling Meadows Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
gmc@alphachisigma.org
(573) 673-2262

Conclusion: It has been a great honor once again to serve the Fraternity as Grand Master of Ceremonies. Beginning in the wake of the Fraternity's first virtual Conclave, through the shift to virtual ceremonies and meetings, through the many challenges faced by all of our Brothers throughout the pandemic, to a shift back to in-person ceremonies and an in-person Conclave this biennium has been historic in so many ways. The many hours of Zoom meetings have been worth it. The opportunity to meet with Brothers anywhere in the country (or world) has been extraordinary. This biennium has reinforced to me how important our Initiation ritual is, but it has also shown that the spirit of the Ritual creates strong ties.

Respectfully submitted.

Yours in the Double Bond,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JSE', enclosed within a large, loopy oval stroke.

Dr. Jason S. Ellis, Delta 1997
Grand Master of Ceremonies
Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity