

David A. Harrington

Alpha Kappa '85

Friendship ♦ Brotherhood ♦ Openness ♦ Fun

Why I Am Running

For me, joining Alpha Chi Sigma at the University of Virginia over 30 years ago was a life-changing experience. I made lasting friendships and helped carry on cherished traditions that form the bond of brotherhood. I want to see my experience available to future generations of brothers.

Sadly, our fraternity has taken a wrong turn. I want to return Alpha Chi Sigma to its roots - to the first object of true and lasting friendship. This is achieved by enabling the collegiate branch to socialize and have fun with one another - not by decreeing that games played by elementary school children constitute hazing. This is achieved through openness and trust - not by punitive actions decided in secret. It is not widely known, but nearly one in five collegiate chapters was sanctioned during this past biennium. And one chapter chose to leave Alpha Chi Sigma entirely, rather than endure an onerous probation.

I bring my love for our fraternity, experience running a national non-profit organization, and the skill set of an attorney with insurance law experience to put us back on track. If I am elected, our national leadership will partner with collegiate chapters to restore the virtues of friendship, trust, openness, and fun for brothers today and in the future.

Professional Qualifications

Legal Acumen: Our fraternity deserves bold and experienced leadership. As an Assistant Chief at the United States Department of Justice, I supervise a team of a dozen trial attorneys litigating complex environmental cases worth billions of dollars. I have personally handled over 100 cases in trial and appellate courts. And previously, as an attorney in the private sector, I represented insurance companies, experience that makes me uniquely equipped to meet AXΣ's current challenges.

Non-Profit Leadership: In 2023, after serving several years on its board of governors, I served as president of the United States Court of Federal Claims Bar Association - a nationwide nonprofit with hundreds of members. As CFC Bar President, I was responsible for the bar's budgeting, judicial conference (which much like this Conclave draws participants from across the entire country), Law

David A. Harrington

Alpha Kappa '85

Day celebration, insurance coverage, educational programs, scholarship awards, and other national programs.

Fraternal Bonds: My connections to the Fraternity run deep. For over 20 years, I have served the Alpha Kappa chapter of AXΣ as president of its housing corporation, spearheading a major renovation of the chapter's house. I have been involved in fraternal activities since the 1980s as an undergraduate chemistry major and fraternity officer (VMA), during my years as a graduate student, and as an officer in the Alpha Kappa Alumni Foundation.

Fresh Perspective: I am *not* a long-time member of Alpha Chi Sigma's national leadership – and let me suggest that is a real virtue. It means I am not vested in the status quo. I am able to look at problems with fresh eyes. And at a time when the Fraternity needs new solutions to ongoing challenges, more of the same is not the answer.

My Vision

As Grand Master Alchemist, I would focus on three major areas of concern:

- The insurance problem. Right now, it feels like our Fraternity is working for our insurer, not the other way around. Insurance costs are eating up roughly one-fifth of our annual budget. That is a huge amount - over \$100,000 and more than 10 times what the fraternity used to pay - which has led in turn to dramatically increased pledge fees.
- Leadership with integrity. We need to operate with transparency; as brothers, we have a right to know what is happening with our fraternity. We also need to focus more on supporting our collegiate chapters, not sanctioning them.
- Remembering why we're here. The first object of AXΣ is to bind its members with a tie of true and lasting friendship. It is the first object that brings meaning to everything else.

Personal Statement

I have been a member of Alpha Chi Sigma since 1985, when I joined during my second year at the University of Virginia. It is no exaggeration to say it was a life-changing experience for me, as a 19-year-old, to find my place among people who I connected with both academically and socially. After graduating, I did analytical work in the UVA Department of Physiology, and then moved to a small biotech company in New Jersey, where I was a bench chemist working on the development of monoclonal antibody-based cancer treatments. Eventually, I pivoted to law school, and returned to

David A. Harrington

Alpha Kappa '85

UVA. While there, I reconnected with my old chapter, and also found that the discipline of chemistry helped me during law school.

I did not begin the year with any expectation of running for GMA. However, after my own chapter, Alpha Kappa, was put on probation under circumstances that I found troubling, I discovered that other collegiate chapters had had similar experiences. And after talking to them, I was urged to run to provide our Fraternity a choice in leadership and, moreover, in governing philosophy.

I am running against someone who has been involved in fraternity leadership at a national level for many years. We share a lot in common. We all wish to see Alpha Chi Sigma thrive in the years to come, and for our connections to grow stronger and more vital. Unfortunately, it is my belief that our current path makes these goals more difficult to achieve. We have implemented policies created by an insurer who has profit - not brotherhood - as a goal, and we nevertheless find ourselves spending a significant portion of our budget on insurance. This is not the path to growth and sustainability.

The law and chemistry have this in common; it is the mandate of both fields to understand the extent of what can be done, and to not create such a wide margin for "safety" that no progress can be made. My concern is that we have lost trust and transparency in our organization. My opponent said in her own statement that, *"[t]here are many decisions and actions that need to be undertaken that most of the Fraternity never sees or hears about, but they are important and undertaken with much consideration regardless"*. As an organization, we should be deeply concerned by such a sentiment. Every member of this organization has the right to know about important decisions and actions and why they occur. Trust and cooperation emerge from transparency, not in spite of it.

I believe my background as an attorney with insurance experience, along with my leadership values, allows me to meet the moment. My leadership values are this: the collegiate chapters are the most important and valuable part of this organization. It is where we first join Alpha Chi Sigma and where our deepest connections are formed. As such, collegiate chapters should not be treated as recalcitrant children to be reprimanded and sanctioned at whim. Instead, the national organization should be working hand-in-hand with our brothers, to develop relationships rooted in trust and mutual respect. This is the path for our brotherhood to thrive and prosper.