



# SIGMA PI



## CHARTERING MANUAL FOR COLONIES

# ***Petition***

The petition is a formal request that outlines the intent of the Colony to become a chartered Chapter of Sigma Pi Fraternity, Inc. This is a collection of college/university records, Colony history and records, and a summary of Fraternity & Sorority Life at the host institution. Before preparing a petition, the Colony must notify the Executive Office of its intentions. A petition should be submitted only after becoming eligible upon completion of the Four Degrees.

Do not wait until the last minute to submit your petition; it will save you a great deal of time in the long run if you begin working on sections of the petition beforehand. Obviously, there are certain portions of the petition you need to have developed in your early stages as a Colony. The most obvious examples are the Statement of Goals, Mission Statement, and the various programs, including Scholarship, Membership Recruitment, New Member Education, Alumni, and Housing. All of these are concepts and programs the Colony needs to have a firm grasp on in order to achieve, and ensure continued success. The petition should reflect and document everything you have completed in the accreditation process for Chartering for the Grand Council to see upon voting on installing you as a chapter.

You have undertaken a very unique and rewarding experience in building a new Fraternity chapter. Preparing the petition to charter signifies the Colony is in the final phases of its development, and soon will be ready to begin its life as a Chapter. Take the preparation of the petition very seriously; it should be the only one your Chapter ever has. This document will represent your Colony at Sigma Pi Fraternity, and will become a part of its historical archives.

After being invited to submit the petition by the Department of Strategic Growth, the petition should be sent in .PDF form to the Executive Office a minimum of sixty days in advance of the anticipated chartering date. This will allow ample time for the petition to be approved and for preparations for the installation to be made.

Summary copies of the petition will be made and distributed among chapters in the province, Grand Council Officers, and other members requesting a copy. The final copy of the petition, which you will present to the Grand Council and Executive Office Staff at your Chartering Banquet, will be permanently archived at the Executive Office in Nashville, TN.

While there are no specific requirements as to the length and design of the petition, several guidelines are suggested. Keep in mind that it is up to the Colony to decide how professional and impressive the petition looks. Remember that you are selling yourselves; the better the petition looks, the better the group looks. For examples of recent .PDF petitions, as well as bound-and-printed petitions in the Executive Office, contact the Department of Strategic Growth.

# ***Suggested Guidelines***

## **Size**

8 and 1/2" x 11" or larger, professionally hardbound book.

## **Length**

There is no set number of pages as long as you include what is required. Keep in mind that it should be clear, concise and easy to read.

## **Printing**

Must be typed. Text other than the bylaws and captions must be justified.

## **Cost**

There is no set minimum or maximum. Several beautiful petitions have been made inexpensively. Make it look professional. Remember, what you submit will sit in the Executive Office library as a visual representation of your colony.

## **Content**

The material content should include the sections included in the following pages, in order.

You are encouraged to send the Strategic Growth Department a rough version of your petition prior to officially submitting so they can help to make suggestions/corrections, etc.

# ***Submitting a Petition***

When submitting your petition for chartering to the Sigma Pi Executive Office, **DO NOT MAIL US A COPY. ALSO, DO NOT GIVE A COPY TO YOUR SCHOOL UNTIL WE LOOK AT IT.** Instead, e-mail the petition to the Executive Office (contact information is available here.) We prefer it to be in .PDF form, but if you need to send it in Microsoft Word format, please do so.

**YOUR PETITION IS DUE NO LATER THAN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO YOUR ANTICIPATED CHARTERING DATE.** We need to make travel arrangements for the banquet, and the Grand Council must formally vote on the petition for chartering.

# ***Contents of The Petition***

- **I. Prayer of Petition**
- **II. Statement of Goals**
- **III. Mission Statement**
- **IV. Chapter Constitution and Bylaws**
- **V. Historical sketch of the institution**
- **VI. Fraternities and Sororities on Campus**
- **VII. Historical Sketch of Petitioning Organization**
- **VIII. Members of Petitioning Body**
- **IX. Historical Data**
  - A. Financial**
  - B. Scholarship**
- **X. Programs**
  - A. Scholarship**
  - B. New Member Education**
  - C. Membership Recruitment**
  - D. Alumni Involvement**
  - E. Housing**
- **XI. Photographs**
- **XII. Letters of Recommendation**
- **XIII. Closing Photo (Formal group photograph)**

## **I. Prayer of Petition**

The Prayer of Petition is intended to be a formal statement of the petitioning groups' desire to be installed as a chapter of Sigma Pi Fraternity. Many petitioning groups use this section to sum up the developmental experience the Colony has emerged from, demonstrating a solid foundation for the future as a chartered chapter.

## **II. Statement of Goals**

The Statement of Goals is included to allow the petitioning group to create goals and a direction for its future as a chartered chapter. It is generally recommended that the Colony hold a goal-setting retreat once it is on the final track toward receiving its charter. Up until the date of the installation ceremony, the thrust of the colonies' efforts have been toward receiving a charter. In order to ensure that the newly installed chapter continues to progress and grow, the Statement of Goals shall allow the Colony to demonstrate its intentions for the future. After all, what is the purpose of working for the charter if that is the end of it all? As you will learn after experiencing the ritual, the quest has just begun!

# ***Contents of The Petition***

## **III. Mission Statement**

The mission statement is a very simple inclusion in the petition. Ideally, from day one, the Colony should have its mission/purpose clearly defined. Many corporations and institutions form mission statements. They not only serve as an opening statement to what they are striving to achieve, they also allow an opportunity to return to the statement, in order to make sure the actions and direction of the group are in line with its purpose.

## **IV. Constitution and Bylaws**

Before receiving a Charter, each petitioning Colony must have adopted its own Constitution and Bylaws. It is essential to have a functioning set of rules, regulations, and ideology in order to become a successful chapter. Make sure that the GPA stated reflects both current Sigma Pi Fraternity and University Standards. It is important to keep the Grand Chapter Constitution and Bylaws in mind when voting on local bylaws. This is necessary because no part of an individual chapter's laws is to supersede the Constitution and Bylaws of Sigma Pi Fraternity International.

## **V. Historical Sketch of the Institution**

The historical sketch of the institution should serve as an accurate description of the university, such as those included in student admission materials, and other promotional items. Using photos when appropriate is encouraged. It should be written in a manner to enthusiastically spotlight the institution in a positive manner. In order to maintain some continuity with the petitions from other chapters, there is certain information that we request you include in your description:

- Founding and history of the institution.
- Source of funds (Land Grant, State Supported, Private, Religious Affiliation, etc.).
- Present physical facilities; plans for the future.
- Activities, traditions, features of interest.
- Other important or interesting facts.

## **VI. Fraternities and Sororities on Campus**

The Fraternities or Sororities on Campus section of the petition should serve to provide an accurate description of your Fraternity & Sorority Life Community from an unbiased view. This section should be written in an informative manner, highlighting the history, tradition, and expectations for the future of the FSL Community at your institution. Please specify and elaborate on the standard criteria given below to paint a more accurate picture of your FSL Community:

- Attitude of administration and faculty toward Greek-letter organizations.
- Requirements for recognition/accreditation.
- Supervision: FSL Advisor, Director of Student Activities etc.
- Fraternities & Sororities currently established on campus (list year, in order of founding year and current size).
- Inter-Fraternity Council (if available include I.F.C Bylaws).
- Inter-Fraternity Relations.
- Percentage of student body in fraternities, total FSL Community.
- Other facts and information about campus organizations.

# ***Contents of The Petition***

## **VII. Historical Sketch of Petitioning Organization**

The Historical Sketch of the Petitioning Organization (your Colony) is one of the most important variables in the petition. In short, this is a history of the Colony from day one to installation. Ideally, the Colony will have kept an up to date history, for ease of organization and completion. Be sure to include these specific subjects in this section:

- Date of Original Chartering (if applicable), date of colonization, purpose, ideals.
- Development and Membership Growth.
- Important, defining events.
- Any other interesting facts, occurrences, etc.

## **VIII. Members of Petitioning Body**

This personal section of the petition is intended as a biographical sketch of each Colony member. It is up to the Colony to decide how to use this section, but it must include at least the following information:

- Name in full.
- Photograph of each individual in a shirt and tie, using a consistent background. (If your colony takes photos for a composite, those photos work well)
- Year in college and major field of study.
- Hometown and high school graduated from.
- Legacy information (if applicable), parents names.
- Activities, offices held, and other significant background information.

## **IX. Historical Data**

### Financial Snapshot of the Colony

- Statement of assets and liabilities (balance sheet).
- Condensed statement of income and expenses for one full year.
- Sample, or proposed budget for semester or quarter.
- Breakdown of dues payments.

### Academic Information\*

- University produced academic comparison (GPA, rank, etc.).
- Individual GPA of members.

\*Please note that this data isn't intended to be used negatively, and will remain confidential within the Fraternity. It is necessary in evaluating the progress of the Colony on the initiation requirements.

## **X. Programs**

### A. Scholarship

Please submit a detailed copy of the chapter's scholarship program, in a logical format. Present the program as if it were a proposal, organized in related areas. Your program may be a model for other chapters to use!

# ***Contents of The Petition***

- Are there minimum grade requirements for pledging and initiation?
- Grade level requirements for Colony members?
- What steps are taken for academically troubled brothers?
- In-house tutoring or payment for university tutoring services?
- Utilization of campus academic resources?
- Incentives program for brothers?

## **B. New Member Education**

Give a weekly breakdown of the program and its contents. How long does the program last (maximum of eight weeks)? What sorts of activities are included?

- Team Building exercises?
- Big brother/mentor?
- New member class projects?
- What type of education on the history of the Fraternity is included?
- What outside involvement is there in the program?
- Alumni Speakers?
- University speakers?
- Community representatives?

## **C. Recruitment**

Please submit a copy of your chapter's membership recruitment program, listing in detail, the activities, structure, and planning that it requires. This should highlight dynamic recruitment. Always make sure that you are constantly re- evaluating your recruitment program in order to ensure continued success. Membership Recruitment is the lifeblood of any Fraternity.

- Who composes the membership recruitment committee?
- What type of recruitment exists at your Greek system?
- Summer rush?
- Formal and structured, or informal and open?
- Deferred rush?
- Open bidding rules?
- What kind of events do you hold?
- Do you hold rush clinics for all members before rush begins?
- What is the process to vote, and extend bids for new members?

As a Colony, it is essential to recruit year-round in order to build your membership up to a comparable size, without sacrificing its quality. By recruiting year-round, the Colony should notice that by never closing its doors to members, it had an advantage over the established fraternities on campus. Try to find a way to keep your program fresh, as opposed to assimilating to what the other chapters on your campus do every year.

# ***Contents of The Petition***

## **D. Alumni Involvement**

- Profile the members of the Colony advisory board (6 Members).
- Have any newsletters or other publications been sent to the area alumni?
- What efforts have been made to involve area alumni?
- Please list all alumni who have contributed time, money, effort, etc.?
- Please submit a copy of your alumni program, in detail.\*

\*Include efforts the Colony has taken to involve area alumni, plus planning for the future needs of the alumni as the chapter begins to build its base of alumni. For re-chartered chapters, please indicate what your chapter has done, and will continue to do so in the future, to integrate the past alumni back into the chapter.

## **E. Housing**

- What is the group's current housing situation?
- What is the housing situation within the FSL community?
- What are the plans for future housing needs?
- Building?
- Improvements?
- Methods of financing?
- University plans and regulations?

## **XI. Photographs**

Photographs should be included along with the petition, including the following subjects:

- An all-Colony group picture
- Pictures of the Campus, house, etc.
- The Colony in action during its activities, events.
- Picture of each Colony member with biographical information (Refer to the Members of the Petitioning Body section of this manual).

## **XII. Letters of Recommendation**

The final part to include in the petition is Letters of Recommendation. The purpose of including Letters of Recommendation is to show the general standing of, and attitude toward, the Colony on the part of the different organizations, institutions, and individuals the Colony has been exposed to. This should include, but is not limited to the following:

- Other campus fraternities, sororities, IFC, Panhellenic, etc
- College administration and faculty.
- Business and community organizations.
- Sigma Pi alumni familiar with the group.



# Chartering Weekend

This outline contains an ideal schedule and list of things to be attended to and taken care of in preparation for the Chartering Weekend of a new chapter of Sigma Pi. The officers of the Colony should carefully note all requirements contained herein and make certain that nothing is overlooked. This may be best achieved by having a separate committee chairman to handle these responsibilities.

## Date

After the petition has been filed, and while it is being acted upon, the petitioning Colony shall ascertain recommended dates from the college/university and suggest to the Grand Council of Sigma Pi several alternative dates that would be suitable for the installation. A date will then be selected and decided upon that is most convenient for both the Colony and the Grand Council of Sigma Pi. The Executive Office will inform you and select a chartering date. An absolute minimum of sixty days should be allowed so that the Grand Chapter can take care of all the preliminary arrangements and details that are necessary for a successful and well-planned installation.

## Chartering Weekend Breakdown

While the actual Initiatory Ritual and Dinner Banquet will only take place on Saturday, your Chartering Weekend will consist of three or four total planned days that you will need to prepare for. The following is an anticipated breakdown of how each of those days will play out.

- Thursday Night

The Executive Office Staff will arrive in town. Typically, when a new chapter is chartering, the Executive Office Staff that attend are the Executive Director, Director of Strategic Growth, Director of Chapter Management, Growth Specialists and/or Chapter Management Associates. Arriving on Thursday night gives the staff time to make sure the accommodations for the Grand Council and other members of the chartering team are in order, and allows time for the staff to meet the chartering officers for dinner somewhere near campus and answer any specific questions you may have prior to your busy weekend.

- Friday

Friday, during the day, while some members of the staff work from their hotel and welcome Grand Council Members and Volunteers as they arrive, other staff members will meet with the Herald and Third Counselor of the colony to go purchase several remaining items for ritual the next day. The purpose of doing this with staff in town is so that we can assure you not only get all the right and necessary materials, but that we can show you the easiest (and most affordable) places to purchase them in the future. The colony should prepare for this expense (it is not included in your chartering fee) and budget between \$100 and \$150 for supplies.

That evening, you should plan for two events. Once all the volunteers have arrived in town, we will hold a meeting with the entire colony in attendance. You should plan on reserving a room on campus large enough to accommodate everyone. If you have a typical room on campus that you reserve for your business meetings, plan on reserving that again. The purpose of this meeting is to answer any members' questions regarding the initiatory ritual and to make sure that everyone knows exactly what time to arrive, and what to bring with them. Typically, this meeting won't last longer than 30 minutes.

# *Chartering Weekend*

Finally, and only if you wish to coordinate it, you should plan on making a dinner reservation for your officers, the executive office staff, and the members of the chartering team in attendance. (roughly 15 people) This is not required, nor is it something you are expected to use colony funds to pay for. The intent is simply to create an opportunity for the Grand Council and the officers to meet and get to know each other better before a busy Saturday.

- Saturday

Saturday is typically a very long day for everyone involved in a chartering weekend. Since Saturday has the most happening and has the longest events, it is usually a good idea for the committee chair or members assigned to be in charge of chartering to have the day planned out as far in advance as possible. The two big events of the day are the Initiatory Ritual, and the Chartering Banquet.

## **Initiatory Ritual**

Initiations are a very special time in the lives of men. It represents a huge milestone in the chapter's development. The length of time required for the ceremony usually ranges from two to three hours depending on the size of the colony. The room should be reserved for more than the minimum period of time required because equipment has to be set up in advance for the ceremony and has to be dismantled and packaged afterwards. It is necessary to have the room accessible at least one to two hours before the time set for the ceremony to begin. A definite time should be set at which the installation ceremonies are to start. In order to make the best use of time and give everyone a break before the banquet that evening, 10:00 AM is typically when ritual is scheduled. We must be able to access the room as early as 9:00 AM for setup. Reserve a small ballroom or very large classroom with at least one adjacent and accessible smaller room from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

In addition to the chartering and installation of the chapter, ritual also includes the installation of the men who are to serve as the first officers of the newly chartered chapter. Any necessary election should be held prior to the installation. The materials needed to conduct the ceremony will be listed in the following page. All other equipment will be furnished by the Executive Office and will be given to you after the ceremony. Every member is responsible for bringing one white bed sheet, one white pillowcase, and flip-flop style sandals.

## **Chartering Banquet**

The installation of a constituent chapter of an international organization is an unusual event in the history of any campus group, as well as an International Fraternity. It represents a milestone, as well as the attainment of a goal, and is a very significant occasion. Sigma Pi does not insist upon anything special in the way of entertainment, and requires only a fixed time and place for the actual installation ceremonies. Anything else is entirely up to the petitioning group. However, it is customary to hold a banquet in connection with the chartering and installation of a new chapter. This, of course, is optional for the group being installed.

If a banquet is held, it should be in a different room than the one used for the installation ceremonies. Most groups will either reserve a banquet room at a nearby hotel or conference center, or utilize campus resources and catering to hold their event in a campus ballroom. Similar to an Orchid Ball, you want this to be a fun, exciting, and memorable dinner event for you and your guests. College officials,

# ***Chartering Weekend***

representatives of other fraternities, and members who have not qualified for initiation, should be eligible to attend any banquet or social function in connection with an installation. The dinner/banquet will usually begin at 7:00 PM and conclude at 9:00 PM. Some items you need to send and confirm with the Executive Office as soon as it becomes available to you are:

## A. Dress Attire

Dress for a Chartering Banquet is usually black tie or suit. Please be sure to specify the dress code when inviting guests, and make sure your members understand and adhere.

## B. Speakers

The Grand Sage and Executive Director will need to present the charter to the newly installed chapter. If they are not able to attend, they will send a representative. It is also customary to have university officials, alumni volunteers, and respected brothers speak.

## C. Cost/Attendance

Generally, initiating members will ask dates to accompany them to their Chartering Banquet. Make sure you factor the number of members, dates, alumni volunteers, university officials, chartering team/Grand Council members and additional guests into your total cost. Additionally, if you need to charge guests to attend, how much will tickets be?

## D. Photographer

It is important that an official photographer be present at the installation banquet to take pictures for chapter history and for the Emerald, the fraternity's quarterly publication. Chartering is an important event in the life of the chapter as well as for the Fraternity as a whole, and should be properly documented.

## E. Program

You may also want to consider providing a printed dinner program for your guests outlining the speakers and order of events for the evening. Ask your Expansion Consultant for an example from a recent chartering.

# *Things to Keep in Mind*

## **After Chartering**

The Chapter should send out thank you cards to Grand Council members who attended, guest speakers, and university officials; as well as anyone who contributed time and/or money and to those who deserve special recognition for any other reason.

## **Faculty, Alumni and Advisor Initiate Fees**

During the installation ceremony of a chapter the Colony may wish to have honorary persons initiated along with Colony as an alumni initiate. These members may consist of Faculty members, local University alumni, or any interested non-fraternity initiated advisors, given that he does not belong to another International Social Fraternity. In view of the prestige and services, these men can and do render the Fraternity, the Grand Chapter offers a special membership fee of \$200 dollars. With this they will become an alumni initiate member and they will receive the initiate badge of the fraternity, a membership card, and a shingle.

- All initiation fees (\$350 initiation fees per colony member) must be paid two weeks prior to chartering and the chartering fee is due 30 days prior to the anticipated chartering date.
- Invitations to all local alumni, chapter alumni, university officials, and parents need to go out at least six weeks prior to the chartering weekend.
- The petition must be sent in 60 days prior to the anticipated chartering date.

# ***Ritual Equipment***

Aside from the large amount of ritual equipment you will receive for your chartering fee, and the small amount of supplies you will need to purchase when the staff arrives, there is one other major responsibility that the colony must meet when preparing for ritual. The colony will be responsible for constructing one Altar and four Pedestals to be used in their ritual equipment from the day of chartering, forward. They should be constructed according to the following exact measurements and specification to assure their function within ritual, and their consistency with ritual equipment used by chapters across North America.

## **Altar (One)**

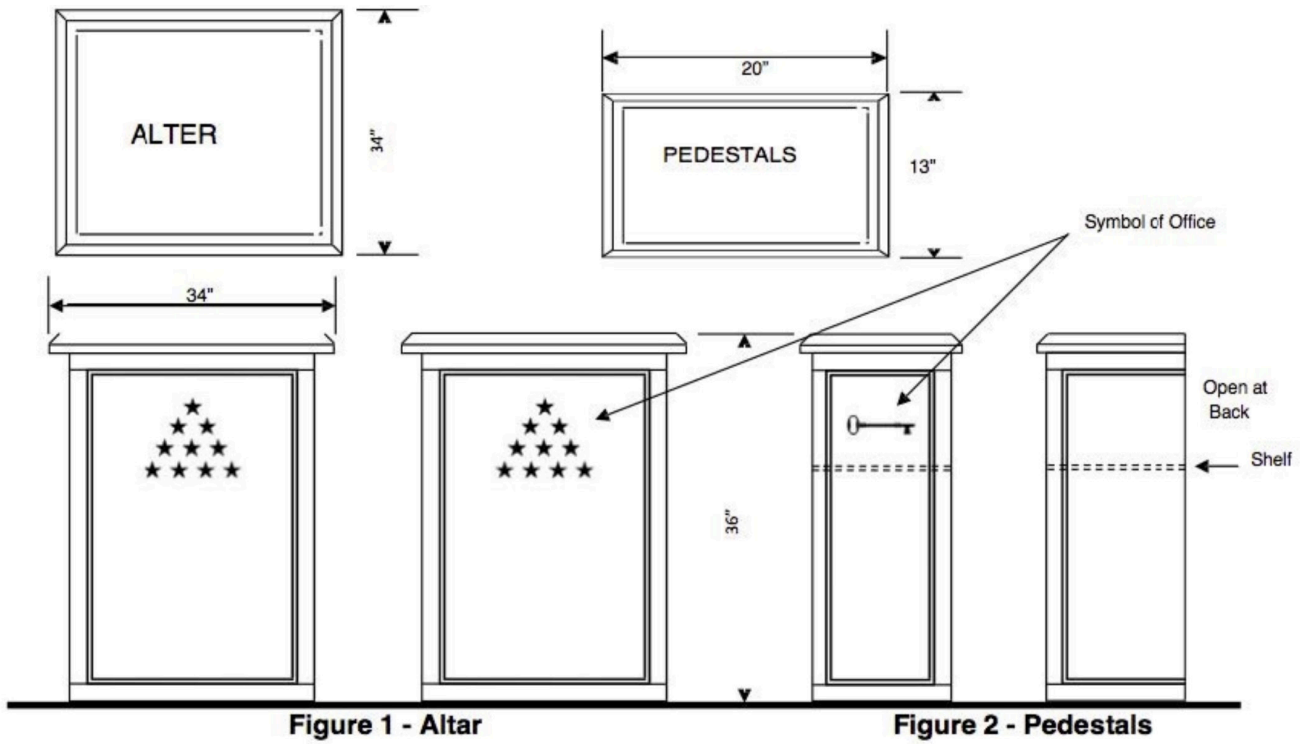
The overall dimensions and general features are shown in Figure 1 on the next page. The Altar may be made of plywood edged with 1/2" x 2" or 3/4" x 3" boards (slightly wider boards for the base) so as to form panels; or the sides may be plain. A walnut, mahogany, oak, or other dark finish is recommended. On all four sides of the Altar is an equilateral triangle consisting of 10 stars in gold coloring. For Chapters with a room set aside exclusively for meetings, a permanent Altar is recommended, but for a Chapter which has to meet or hold initiations in a room not devoted exclusively to this purpose, the Altar should be constructed so that it may be easily taken apart in sections for storage. It would be very practical to build the Altar so that it could be used as a storage case for the Pedestals and other items. One side of the Altar could be hinged and provided with a lock, the inside arranged so as to accommodate the storage of the equipment, with handles affixed to two sides so that it could be conveniently carried.

\*Be sure the Altar is able to fit through a doorway or is able to be broken down and transported through doorways.

## **Pedestals (Four)**

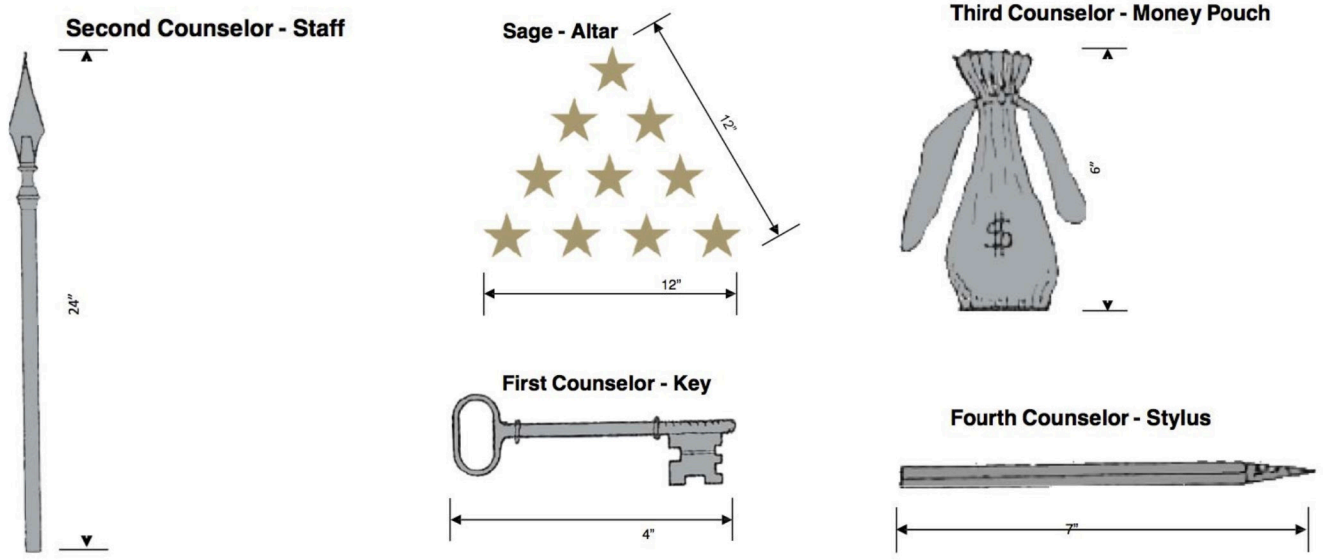
The overall dimensions and general features of the Pedestals are shown in Figure 2. The Pedestals may be made of plywood edged with 1/2" x 2" or 3/4" x 3" boards (slightly wider boards for the base) so as to form panels; or the sides may be plain. A walnut, mahogany, oak, or other dark finish is recommended. The symbol of office for each Counselor shall appear on the front of his respective Pedestal as follows: First Counselor, Key; Second Counselor, Staff; Third Counselor, Money Pouch; Fourth Counselor, Stylus. The symbols of office shall be silver in color. The back of each Pedestal shall be open and equipped with a shelf. For Chapters with a room set aside exclusively for meetings, permanent Pedestals are recommended, but for a Chapter which has to meet or initiations in a room not devoted exclusively to this purpose, the Pedestals should be constructed so that they may be easily taken apart in sections for storage.

# Dimensions for Altar and Pedestals



The altar is four-sided and the pedestals are three-sided.

# Symbols for Altar and Pedestals



## Contact Information

Want to learn more? Contact the Executive Office at [interest@sigmapi.org](mailto:interest@sigmapi.org)

### **SIGMA PI FRATERNITY**

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