

## **PREAMBLE**

We the members of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority in order to secure for ourselves, the people of the nation and of the world, the rewards that come from the affiliation of members and to deliver a program of service to our fellow men, do hereby adopt and establish the following constitution and by laws.

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Article I Name and Organization**

- Section 1. The name of this organization shall be Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority.
- Section 2. The colors shall be dark blue, light blue, and golden yellow.
- Section 3. The sorority flower shall be the yellow rose.
- Section 4. The national publications shall be called the Chevron.

### **Article II Purpose and Goals**

The purpose and goals of this sorority shall be to assemble its members in the fellowship of Omega Phi Alpha, to develop friendship, leadership, and cooperation by promoting service to the university community, to the community-at-large, to the members of the sorority, and to the nations of the world.

### **Article III National Policies**

- Section 1. Alcohol and Illegal Drug Policy
  - Clause 1. Omega Phi Alpha complies with all federal, state, local, and university laws and regulations regarding the use, possession, and distribution of alcohol and illegal drugs.
  - Clause 2. There shall be no use, possession, or distribution of alcohol or illegal drugs of any kind at an OPA Event. OPA members and invited guests may not attend an OPA Event if they are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
    - A. An OPA Event is defined as an event, project, meeting, or gathering that has been officially coordinated, sponsored, or

promoted by a chapter, an active, alumna, pledge, or colonist as a part of sorority activities.

- B. An OPA Event is also defined as any outing, meeting, or gathering that is discussed or planned 1) at another OPA project, meeting, or gathering or 2) through official means of sorority communication, including but not limited to sorority email, email lists, or social media groups.
- C. When an OPA Event ends, or an individual active, alumna, pledge, or colonist leaves the Event with the intent of not returning, attendees are subject to federal, state, local, and university laws and regulations.

## Section 2. Discrimination and Harassment Policy

- Clause 1. Omega Phi Alpha complies with all federal, state, local, and university laws and regulations governing various forms of discrimination and harassment.
- Clause 2. Omega Phi Alpha has a responsibility to maintain an environment for sisters, pledges and all interested parties that is free of discrimination and harassment. Harassment of any person in the form of verbal or physical conduct for any reason including, but not limited to race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin or disability will not be condoned when such conduct:
  - A. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment
  - B. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance; or
  - C. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunities associated with the sorority.

## Section 3. Hazing Policy

- Clause 1. Omega Phi Alpha complies with all federal, state, local, and university laws and regulations pertaining to hazing.
- Clause 2. "Hazing" means doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person. No person shall recklessly participate in the hazing of another.
- Clause 3. The negligence or consent of the plaintiff or any assumption of the risk by the plaintiff is not a defense to an action brought pursuant to this section.

#### Section 4. Policy Violations

- Clause 1. In the event there is a violation of sections 1-3, the active, alumna, pledge or colonist found in violation, or the chapter if the event, meeting, or gathering is coordinated, sponsored, and promoted by the chapter, shall be responsible for any and all damages and/or repercussions caused by such violation.
- Clause 2. In the event there is a violation of sections 1-3, neither the national organization of OPA nor the National Executive Board, individually or jointly, shall be responsible for any damages caused by a violation of this policy by a chapter, active, alumna, pledge or colonist.
- Clause 3. In the event there is a violation of sections 1-3, collegiate chapters found in violation will be placed on suspension.
- Clause 4. In the event there is a violation of sections 1-3, actives, alumnae, pledges or colonists found in violation will be subject to the following steps:
- A. Their names will be given to the National Standards Board.
  - B. For the first offense, actives, alumnae, pledges or colonists found in violation will be subject to a consequence set by the National Standards Board. Consequences may range from a fine to automatic disassociation, depending on the severity of the violation.
  - C. In the event there is a subsequent violation, actives or alumnae found in violation will be disassociated; pledges or colonists found in violation will be dropped from the pledge class or colonization process, respectively.

#### **Article IV Membership Status**

- Section 1. To be eligible for active membership a student must be duly enrolled in the college or university in which the chapter is located.
- Section 2. Active members shall be in compliance with all local university policies, rules and regulations allowing members to participate and become members of campus organizations.
- Section 3. Active membership shall be granted to those students having completed the national pledge requirement as prescribed by the national by laws.

- Section 4. A pledge member shall be a student in the process of fulfilling requirements to become an active member. Until all requirements, both local and national, are fulfilled, the student would be considered a pledge.
- Section 5. A colonist shall be a member of a group in the process of establishing a new active chapter.
- Section 6. An active member may be granted a one-semester leave of absence upon approval of the Chapter Standards Board. This status is meant to reflect a temporary condition that prohibits the active from participating in the sorority fully.
- Clause 1. An active member whose course of study removes them from the main campus will automatically be granted leave of absence status.
- Clause 2. The Chapter Standards Board may grant a member an emergency leave of absence for the remainder of the term at any point during the semester. This status does not relieve a sister from financial obligations she owed the chapter prior to her emergency leave of absence being granted.
- Clause 3. The local chapter shall not place any requirements on any sister on leave of absence.
- Section 7. A disassociated member is one whose lifetime membership has been revoked at the local and national level.
- Clause 1. Members may be disassociated only for the following reasons:
- A. At the written request of the member via the voluntary disassociation form (available in the National Handbook).
  - B. Failure to complete local and/or national service requirements.
  - C. Placement on disciplinary probation by the university.
  - D. Failure to attend the locally required number of chapter meetings and/ or functions listed in the chapter's local constitution.
  - E. Violating National Policies as stated in Article III of the National Constitution
- Clause 2. Members must be disassociated for the following reasons:
- A. Failure to meet national and/or local financial obligations for an entire school semester.
  - B. The member is found guilty of an illegal act impacting the sorority.

- Clause 3. All disassociations for reasons in clause 1 and 2 must follow the disassociation procedures in the National Handbook.
- Clause 4. To disassociate an alumna member, a written request including the rationale for disassociation, must be submitted to the National Standards Board chair. The National Standards Board must approve the disassociation by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote.
- Clause 5. The National Standards Board chair will provide a written document with the National Standards Board's decision to all parties involved in the disassociation of an alumna, as well as the procedures for appealing the decision, within 30 days of the disassociation decision.
- Clause 6. Disassociation as decided by the local chapter may be appealed one time in writing to the National Standards Board, within 90 days from the postmark date of the disassociation letter. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the National Standards Board is required to overturn any disassociation decision.

Section 8. Lifetime membership shall be granted upon completion of National and Local pledge/colonist requirements and payment of an activation fee as prescribed by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the voting delegates at National Convention.

- Clause 1. This activation fee shall be waived for the charter members of a chapter in recognition of the extra dedication required to start a new chapter.
- Clause 2. Charter members shall be granted lifetime membership, with all its rights and privileges.
- Clause 3. Any member who loses her lifetime privileges as decided by the National Standards Board may be able to regain such privileges by submitting an appeal to the National President, per Article IV, Section 7, Clause 6.

Section 9. An active sister may declare alumna status automatically for the following reasons:

- A. Is no longer enrolled in the university at which the member was active.
- B. Is a student in her final term prior to graduation.
- C. Is a student who has been an active member for at least four years.
- D. Meets a special condition listed in the alumnae membership procedures.

Clause 1. Sisters must notify their Chapter Standards Board in writing of their status declaration to remain in good standing.

Clause 2. Sisters not meeting the previously listed conditions may petition the National Standards Board chair for alumnae status, which

requires approval of 3/4 of the National Standards Board. All petitions must be filed by September 15 for the fall semester and February 15 for the spring semester.

Clause 3. Any alumna that owes the sorority money or does not return sorority property will not be considered in good standing until these issues are resolved.

Section 10. Active chapters conduct recruitment events to attract new members at the collegiate level.

Clause 1. If a chapter deems it necessary to conduct selective recruitment, they must receive prior written approval from the Vice President of Membership and comply with procedures outlined in the National Handbook. Selective recruitment is defined as a recruitment period in which some interested students attending recruitment are not invited to pledge.

Clause 2. Once an invitation to pledge is extended and accepted, Omega Phi Alpha does not deny membership on any basis other than the non-fulfillment of established requirements for membership and/or policy or rule violations.

Clause 3. Membership may include members and non-members of social fraternities, sororities, other Greek-letter organizations, and students enrolled in all departments of the college or university.

Section 11. Honorary members may be elected at the discretion of the sorority, national and/or local, but shall not have voting power.

Section 12. Any Omega Phi Alpha lifetime member who transfers to or enrolls in a school where an Omega Phi Alpha chapter exists may gain membership into this chapter. To join this chapter, the said member must have a favorable recommendation letter from her most prior chapter sent to the chapter at her new school.

Clause 1. This letter shall include, but not be limited to, information regarding the following topics:  
A. Said sister's membership status when the prior school was left or graduated.  
B. Any outstanding obligations or issues the said sister has to the prior chapter.

Clause 2. This letter must be obtained in the following way:  
A. The said sister is responsible for requesting the letter and ensuring that the letter is received by the chapter.  
B. The said sister should request the letter early enough in the term that the new chapter receives the letter no later than the fifth regular meeting of the term.

- C. If the new chapter does not receive the letter from the prior chapter within 30 days of the written request, the sister should contact the Vice President of Membership.
- D. After this letter is received by and presented to the chapter, the said sister will be considered an active in that chapter.

Section 13. All members of Omega Phi Alpha, regardless of gender, shall be referred to as 'sisters' and shall respect the preferred pronouns of each member.

## **Article V National Officers**

Section 1. National Executive Board. The National Executive Board shall consist of the following members: President, President-Elect, Vice President of Business Operations, Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Administration, Vice President of Communications, Vice President of Alumnae Relations, Vice President of Chapter Support, Vice President of Expansions, Vice President of Advancement Planning(ending in 2014), Vice President of Membership and Vice President of Finance

Section 2. National Board. The National Board shall consist of the following members. National Executive Board, national legal counselor, the immediate Past National President, and the president of each local chapter. The National President shall appoint, with the approval of the National Executive Board, the national legal counselor and any special officers as decided necessary to this board. The terms of the legal counselor and special officers shall coincide with and be limited to the term of the National President that appointed them.

Section 3. District Officers. District officers shall consist of:

Clause 1. Traveling Leadership Consultants – elected by the District Summit Delegation of the District Summit they wish to serve; and

Clause 2. Active District Officers – elected by the active sisters of each district annually in the manner upon which they have agreed.

Section 4. Regional Officers. Regional officers shall consist of directors of alumnae activities – appointed in compliance with procedures in the national handbook to serve a one-year term.

Section 5. All national, district, and appointed officers must be members in good standing of Omega Phi Alpha.

Section 6. All members of the Board of Alumnae Affairs and traveling leadership consultants must be alumna members of Omega Phi Alpha.

Section 7. Officers. Officers' duties shall be prescribed in the national procedures.

**Article VI**  
**Elections – National**

Section 1. Any active or alumna member of Omega Phi Alpha may run for a national office.

Clause 1. Candidates for President shall have served for one year as a member of the National Executive Board.

Clause 2. All candidates for the National Executive Board offices and Alumnae Membership Director shall be alumnae.

Clause 3. All candidates for national office shall have been a member of the sorority for a period of one year after their activation or induction date.

Section 2. Members of the National Executive Board will be elected at the national convention.

Clause 1. Vice President positions shall serve two-year terms and be elected every two years beginning in 2015 with the exception of the offices up for election in 2014 and those ending in 2017.

- A. 2014: Vice President of Communications, Vice President of Chapter Support (ending in 2017), Vice President of Expansions (ending in 2017), and Vice President of Administration (ending in 2017).
- B. 2015: Vice President of Business Operations (ending in 2017), and Vice President of Membership (ending in 2017)..
- C. 2016: President, Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Lifetime Membership, Vice President of Communications and Vice President of Finance.

Clause 2. A written election schedule shall be placed in the national handbook for further clarification.

Section 3. A member of the National Executive Board may not be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive full terms.

Section 4. Vacancies.

Clause 1. The National President with the recommendations of the National Executive Board shall fill vacancies on the National Executive Board and/or National Board with the exceptions of local president. Any person appointed to elected offices shall

serve until the next national convention, at which time a replacement shall be elected to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

- Clause 2. In the case of a vacancy of the national president, the president-elect shall become president. In the case where there is no president-elect, the next officer in succession as per the order stated in Article V, Section 1 of the constitution should assume the position of interim president until the National Executive Board can elect a new president to serve until the next national convention, at which time a replacement shall be elected by the delegation to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

## **Article VII Committees and Councils**

- Section 1. National standing committees shall consist of: Nominating, Budget, Constitutional Revisions, Leadership Development (LEAD) Team, Chapter Assistance, Standards, and Financial Review.
- Section 2. National standing councils shall consist of: Alumnae Liaison, Membership, President's, and Service.
- Section 3. Special committees shall be appointed by the National President when it is deemed necessary by the National Executive Board.
- Section 4. Alumnae committee chairpersons and task forces may be appointed by the Vice President of Alumnae Relations at her discretion.
- Section 5. Duties of these committees and councils shall be assigned by the National Executive Board or as outlined in the national by laws.
- Section 6. The terms of these committees and councils shall coincide and be limited to the terms of the appointing National Executive Board Member.

## **Article VIII National Records**

The national records shall be located at Alpha Chapter, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. A time capsule was placed in the national office in 1992, to be opened at convention 2017.

**Article IX**  
**Finance**

- Section 1. National dues, paid semi annually, shall be set by three-fourths of the voting delegates to national convention. The national dues are required of all active members and are non-refundable.
- Section 2. National pledge fees shall be one-half of the yearly dues for active members. The national pledge fees are required of all pledges and are non-refundable.
- Section 3. An activation fee shall be set by three-fourths of the voting delegates at the national convention. The activation fee is a one-time fee required of all pledges when they activate and may be refunded only if all local and national requirements are not met during pledging.
- Section 4. The financial records shall be reviewed after the books are closed each year by the Financial Review Committee appointed by the National President. The books and records shall be subject to audit and/or review by a licensed public accountant who is not affiliated with OPA at any time deemed necessary by the National Executive Board.

**Article X**  
**Meetings - National**

- Section 1. There shall be a biennial national convention beginning in 2017. The national convention shall be used to conduct national business. Voting members of the convention shall be active chapter delegates and alumnae delegates.
- Section 2. There shall be regular meetings of the National Executive Board just prior to and just following each convention. The incoming and outgoing National Executive Boards shall meet at the end of the convention to organize ideas for the coming year. The National President shall determine the time and place of such meetings.
- Section 3. The National President shall call a mid-year meeting each year to be held prior to the submission deadline for the constitutional revisions.
- Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the National President or by petition of five or more members of the National Executive Board.
- Section 5. All meetings of the National Executive Board or the National Board shall be considered open to any lifetime member of the national organization unless otherwise specified by the National Executive Board.
- Section 6. The National Executive Board shall meet a minimum of three times a year.

Section 7. The National Board shall meet at the call of the National President.

## **Article XI National Voting**

Section 1. All substantive proposals brought before the national convention are to be decided by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the ballots cast at the convention.

Section 2. Each active chapter in good standing present at the convention shall have two votes. If a chapter has only one delegate present, that delegate shall have the power to cast the two votes. Any active chapter on conditional status shall have only one vote.

Section 3. For every three possible votes at convention, alumnae shall have one vote. Alumnae votes shall be distributed among the alumnae delegates as described in procedures. The number of alumnae votes shall be determined on January 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

Section 4. A majority vote is required to elect a national officer. Voting shall be carried out in the established procedures adopted by the convention.

Section 5. To be considered an official voting delegate at national convention, delegates must:

- A. Attend at least 75% of business meetings and
- B. Attend at least 75% of workshops and council meetings and
- C. Have paid in full all monies due to the convention coordinator no later than the start of convention. Any exceptions to this policy may be reviewed and approved or denied by the National Executive Board, based on individual circumstances.

## **Article XII Chapter Constitutions and By Laws**

Section 1. Chapter constitutions and by laws shall not conflict with the national constitution and by laws.

Section 2. Chapter constitutions and by laws shall be submitted to and approved by the legal counselor of the sorority before becoming effective.

Section 3. Chapter constitutions and by laws shall be filed with the National Office Administrator each year before the end of the spring school term.

## **Article XIII**

### **Chapters**

Section 1. The national organization shall have the power to place its chapters on conditional status for one year at any time. The recommendation of the National Executive Board must be obtained to bring the conditional status issue to a vote and a three-fourths affirmative vote of the convention delegation is required to place the chapter on conditional status. A chapter may be placed on conditional status for any of the following reasons:

- A. Failure to send a delegate to two consecutive national conventions.
- B. Failure to perform at least six service projects per year.
- C. Failure to send written report to the National President for a period of one year.
- D. Failure to pay national dues within thirty days of due date.
- E. Failure to attend at least one event planned as a district summit per school year for two consecutive years.
- F. Any other reason(s) the NEB feels are necessary

Clause 1. The Vice President of Chapter Support, in cooperation with the Traveling Leadership Consultant for and a representative from said chapter, will establish written guidelines for the chapter to follow for one year.

Clause 2. The status of the conditional chapter shall be reviewed by the National Executive Board at the end of one year.

Clause 3. Failure to correct deficient condition(s) or to comply with the purpose of Omega Phi Alpha will result in further action deemed necessary by the National Executive Board.

Section 2. The national organization shall have the right to suspend any of its chapters upon 3/4 affirmative vote of the National Executive Board for any one or more of the following reasons:

- A. Violation of the national constitution, national by laws, policies or procedures
- B. Violation of university rules, regulations, or policies
- C. Violation of local, state, or federal laws
- D. Having any kind of disciplinary action taken against the chapter by the university or any law enforcement body
- E. Loss of university recognition

Clause 1. The suspended chapter may appeal its suspension in written form to the national organization through the National President.

Sub-clause 1. The appeal will be reviewed by the National Executive Board at mid-year or national convention. A special meeting of a majority of the

National Executive Board may be called by the National President to review the appeal.

Sub-clause 2. This meeting shall be restricted to the National Executive Board, the national legal advisor or legal counsel, and a representative(s) of the suspended chapter.

Sub-clause 3. After review of the appeal, the entire National Executive Board shall vote again on suspension. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote is needed to overturn the suspension.

Sub-clause 4. A chapter may appeal only once per each suspension.

Clause 2. Chapter suspension will include the following:

Sub-clause 1. The National Executive Board shall present to the chapter a plan for the chapter to follow for one year to best correct the problems at the chapter.

Sub-clause 2. The chapter will be responsible for carrying out the plan provided and for contacting the National President, Traveling Leadership Consultant or other appointed national officer on a monthly basis to update the status of the chapter.

Sub-clause 3. If a problem involving legalities has occurred, the national legal advisor or counsel for the national organization shall be dispatched to aid the chapter in whatever way possible.

Clause 3. Any suspended chapter which does not comply with the ruling set forth for it by the National Executive Board will have their charter revoked and the chapter will be dissolved. The dissolved chapter cannot re-colonize on the previously affiliated campus for a minimum of 5 years.

Clause 4. A chapter placed on suspension will be deprived of all national voting rights and/or chapter privileges, as specified in the chapter plan until said action is lifted.

Clause 5. A suspended chapter will have a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years to comply with the rulings set forth by the National Executive Board. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote of the National Executive Board is needed to remove the suspension.

- Section 3. An active chapter whose membership drops below ten active members must notify the Vice President of Membership, who must then take action to help the chapter with membership problems.
- Section 4. An inactive chapter is one, which has had no activity for two consecutive years. The charter of an inactive chapter shall be declared null and void by the National President.
- Section 5. A chapter that wishes to dissolve must contact the National President. The National Executive Board must approve by a majority vote that the dissolution is the best or only course of action. Files shall be transferred to the national records office.
- Section 6. To re-charter, a chapter must meet all requirements for a new chapter.
- Section 7. Active chapters shall hold regular meetings at least twice a month as designated in their local constitutions.
- Section 8. All chapters shall elect the following local officers to serve on their chapter executive board: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, membership director and service director. Each active chapter shall have an alumnae liaison whose executive board privileges shall be at the discretion of the chapter. Their suggested duties are prescribed in the national by laws. Additional offices, chairs, and committees may be appointed and/or elected at the discretion of the local active chapter.
- Section 9. Should a vacancy occur on the chapter executive board, the chapter president may appoint an interim officer to fulfill the duties on a short-term basis. The chapter should hold an election to fill the remainder of the term no sooner than 1 week after the vacancy is announced.
- Section 10. All chapters shall have a chapter standards board. Its duties are outlined in the national by laws.
- Section 11. To attain alumnae chapter status, the alumnae group must petition the Vice President of Alumnae Relations and complete a provisional period of at least two years. The petition must include the following information:
- Sub-clause 1. Location of the group.
  - Sub-clause 2. Names and respective chapters of all members.
  - Sub-clause 3. Chapter goals and reasons for desiring chapter status.
  - Sub-clause 4. Names and addresses of all elected officers.
  - Sub-clause 5. A \$25 non-refundable petition fee.

## **Article XIV Districts**

Section 1. The sorority shall be divided into districts using the procedures described in the national handbook. A list of all the chapters in each district shall be placed in the national handbook.

Clause 1. Each district shall have at least one traveling leadership consultant.

Clause 2. A district shall consist of no less than two chapters.

Clause 3. Each district shall have a number of Active District Officers equal to or greater than the number of active chapters in that district.

Clause 4. Active chapter distribution will be evaluated at least once every ten years using the procedures in the national handbook to ensure proper arrangement of chapters into districts.

## **Article XV Regions**

Section 2. The sorority shall be divided into regions using the procedures described in the national handbook. An actual map depicting the region boundaries shall be placed in the national handbook.

Clause 1. Each region shall have at least one director of alumnae activities. The number appointed will be determined based on procedures in the national handbook.

Clause 2. Alumnae membership will be evaluated at least once every ten years using the procedures in the national handbook to ensure proper representation of all alumnae members.

## **Article XVI Service**

The chapters shall have a service program for all of its members. The service program shall be planned and carried out so that a reasonable balance is achieved among Omega Phi Alpha's four areas of service, which are:

1. Service to the university community.
2. Service to the community-at-large.
3. Service to the members of the sorority.
4. Service to the nations of the world.

## **Article XVII Impeachment**

- Section 1. National officers may be impeached for misconduct or malfeasance in office. Charges must be submitted in writing to the members of the National Executive Board.
- Section 2. Charges shall be investigated by the National Executive Board. If two-thirds of the Board deems these charges to be sufficient reason for impeachment, the officer shall be removed.
- Section 3. An appeal of the action of the National Executive Board may be made at the next national convention.

## **Article XVIII Method of Amending**

- Section 1. Amendments to the National Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Constitutional Revisions Committee on or before February 15 prior to national convention, so that the Chair of the Constitutional Revisions Committee can distribute copies to each chapter on or before March 15 for discussion before the conclusion of the academic year. The Chair of the Constitutional Revisions Committee shall be appointed by the Vice President of Administration.
- Section 2. Amendments to the national constitution require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the ballots cast. All revisions to the national constitution shall take effect upon the final adjournment of that convention.
- Section 3. Amendments to the by laws may be proposed at the national convention and voted upon at a national business meeting allowing time for a discussion of said amendments.

## **Article XX Dissolution of the Sorority**

No member, officer, or employee of this sorority, or any private individual, shall receive at any time any of the net earning or pecuniary profit from the operations of the sorority, provided that this shall not prevent payment to any person as such reasonable compensation for service rendered to or for the sorority in affecting any of the purposes for which this sorority is formed; and no such person shall be entitled to share in the distributions of the sorority's assets upon the dissolution of the sorority. All members of the sorority shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon the dissolution or winding up of the affairs of the sorority, the assets of the sorority, after all debts have been satisfied shall be distributed conveyed, delivered, and paid over, in such amounts as the National Executive Board may determine, exclusively to charitable,

religious, scientific, literary or educational organizations which qualify under the provision of Section 501 (c) (3 of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.

# BY LAWS OF OMEGA PHI ALPHA

## Article I

The by laws of this sorority shall supplement the constitution and not conflict with it.

## Article II

### Principles, Motto, and Mission

- Section 1. The three cardinal principles shall be friendship, leadership and service.
- Section 2. The national motto shall be "Today's Friends, Tomorrow's Leaders, Forever in Service."
- Section 3. The mission of Omega Phi Alpha is to provide service to the university community, to the community at large, to the members of the sorority, and to the nations of the world; and to promote friendship, leadership, and service..
- Section 4. The vision of Omega Phi Alpha is to be an inclusive and diverse provider of life-long, service-oriented leadership development through a community of dedicated sisters. The sorority will strive to better the lives of others worldwide by collaborating with organizations and by volunteering through a flexible service program.
- Section 5. The core values that guide Omega Phi Alpha are service, leadership, diversity/inclusiveness, sisterhood, education, and tradition.

## Article III

### Membership Status

- Section 1. Active members shall have the power to vote, decide chapter questions, to be delegates to convention, to hold local, regional, or national office, to have a little sister, and to participate in chapter functions, both service and social.
- Section 2. Any active member not adhering to the standards of Omega Phi Alpha is to be brought before the chapter's executive board for review. If the board feels the reasons given warrant investigation, then it shall take place at a called meeting of the chapter's standards board.
- Section 3. A member on leave of absence may have the right to attend social and service functions, participate in meetings, wear the letters, and receive the *Chevron*. Said member cannot vote on sorority issues, hold local, regional, or national office, serve as a convention delegate, or have a little sister. Said member does not pay national dues and is not included in chapter-level awards programs.

- Clause 1. A member must petition the chapter standards board for leave of absence status.
- Clause 2. A member with special circumstances, who cannot complete her first active term immediately after activation, may petition the National Standards Board for a leave of absence.
- Clause 3. A member may have up to two chapter granted leave of absence terms. After two leave of absence terms, a sister must petition the National Standards Board by contacting the National Standards Board chair for any additional leave of absence terms. All petitions must be filed by September 15 for the fall semester and February 15 for the spring semester.
- Clause 4. After serving at least one active term if a member wishes to have leave of absence status said member must petition the chapter standards board.
- Clause 5. A leave of absence may not be granted for longer than two academic terms at a time. In the case of a yearlong school related absence, a member may petition the National Standards Board for alumna status by contacting the National Standards Board chair.
- Clause 6. The chapter standards board has the right to revoke a member's leave of absence status if the reason a sister requested the leave of absence is found to be false or if the original reason has changed.
- Sub-clause 1. This must be done within two weeks of when the leave of absence was granted. If the leave of absence was granted at the end of the previous term, a decision must be made by the second meeting of the current school term.
- Sub-clause 2. This decision must have a unanimous vote from the chapter standards board.
- Sub-clause 3. A chapter standards board cannot revoke a member's emergency leave of absence.
- Section 4. A disassociated member has no rights as a member in the sorority. Her lifetime membership has been permanently revoked.
- Section 5. An alumna member shall have the right to attend convention, serve as an alumna delegate, hold district or national office, and may receive the *Chevron*.
- Section 6. Honorary members shall have the following rights:
1. She shall be allowed to any open meetings when invited by the National President or chapter president.

2. She may attend convention functions but shall not be permitted in business meetings unless invited by the National President.
3. She shall receive an annual copy of the *Chevron*.

Section 9. A chapter may not recognize any membership status other than those outlined in the national constitution and by laws.

Section 10. Any member who attained alumna status because of leaving the university of active membership may petition the chapter standards board for return to active membership status upon re-enrollment at that university. If said member enrolls at another university where there is an active chapter, membership may be attained by following the guidelines in Article IV, Section 12 of the national constitution.

#### **Article IV Duties – Officers**

Section 1. Duties of all officers: It shall be the duty of all elected and appointed officers of Omega Phi Alpha to perform all duties as described in the national handbook to the best of their abilities, and to obey and uphold the constitution and principles of Omega Phi Alpha. Terms of office for all national officers will begin at the conclusion of the national convention at which they are elected, or upon appointment. All officers may serve in more than one role concurrently; however the National President and the Vice President of Finance may not be the same person.

#### **Article V National Committees and Councils**

Section 1. The President's Council shall consist of the National President, President-Elect, and all chapter presidents. They shall seek to provide open channels of communication and understanding. It is the duty of all council members to respond promptly to communications received, to remain objective, to provide constructive criticism, to attend or send a representative to convention or any special meetings, to keep national's objectives and goals in mind, and to represent their members as a whole while serving as members of this council.

Section 2. The Service Council shall be chaired by the National Service Director or Vice President of Programs, in the instance where a Service Director has not been appointed or is unavailable, and include at least one service director from each chapter. Its duties shall include assisting all local service officers in the coordinating of projects and providing ideas for service projects. It is the duty of all council members to respond promptly to communications received, to remain objective, to provide constructive criticism, to attend or send a representative to convention or any other special meetings, to keep

national objectives and goals in mind, and to represent their chapter while serving as members of the council.

- Section 3. The Constitutional Revisions Committee shall be chaired by a sister appointed by the Vice President of Administration. This officer shall be named before December 1 to serve from that time until the end of the next national convention. The committee shall consist of the chair and members of the National Board. This committee shall review all amendments and forward them to the national convention. It shall have the power to screen duplicate amendments before presentation and shall inform the convention of said screening.
- Section 4. The Nominating Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President of Administration and be comprised of former National Executive Board officers. This committee shall meet before elections of officers at each convention and review all petitions. They shall recommend a slate of candidates consisting of no more than two or three for each office.
- Section 5. The Budget Committee shall consist of the National Executive Board and be chaired by the Vice President of Finance. It shall be the duty of the committee to propose an annual operating budget for the approval of the convention delegation.
- Section 6. The Alumnae Liaison Council shall be chaired by the Vice President of Alumnae Relations and consist of the alumnae liaison of each chapter and the president of each alumnae chapter. Members shall serve as a liaison between the alumnae and the local chapters. They shall assist with chapter growth, maintain alumnae rosters according to the national handbook, and work together to establish relationships between alumnae and active sisters.
- Section 7. The Membership Council shall be chaired by the Vice President of Membership and be composed of a pledge educator from each chapter. Its purpose shall be to assist the Vice President of Chapter Support in keeping active membership to ten or higher and to assist in maintaining membership and pledging guidelines.
- Section 8. The Chapter Assistance Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President of Chapter Support and shall consist of all Traveling Leadership Consultants, all Chapter Alumnae Advisors, and any other persons appointed by the Vice President of Chapter Support. The committee chairperson may call upon any active to serve on the committee as deemed necessary. The committee's purpose shall be to assist chapters exhibiting distress signals before they reach the point of conditional status and to assist chapters that are on conditional status.
- Section 9. The Leadership Development (LEAD) team shall be chaired by the National Leadership Program Director and consist of alumnae and actives appointed by the chair and Vice President of Programs. These members will serve as

coordinators and facilitators of the National Leadership Program. The team will organize, develop, coordinate and distribute all materials relating to the National Leadership Program.

- Section 10. The Financial Review Committee shall be chaired by the Vice President of Business Operations and consist of two other national executive board members. Other members may be appointed at the discretion of the National President. Each year, after the books are closed, they will review the sorority's financial records. This review will include (but not be limited to): Confirmation of all assets held by the sorority, review of financial statements, review of sample of transactions, and review of Tax Return
- Section 11. The National Standards Board shall be appointed by the Vice President of Membership. It shall be the duty of this committee to ensure that the standards of Omega Phi Alpha are being upheld by all members, in the fashion that Chapter Standards Boards do. National Standards Board members shall be responsible for making decisions on the national level regarding disassociations and statuses of members, and providing training materials to Chapters Standards Boards.

## **Article VI Initiatives**

- Section 1. The week beginning with the first Sunday of November is Omega Phi Alpha National Service Week.
- Section 2. The National Permanent Project shall be mental health. Each chapter shall complete two projects per year to further the cause of mental health.
- Section 3. Every National President shall declare a National President's project each year. Each chapter shall hold two projects per year for the cause named as the president's project. The project shall be named at the close of each national convention.
- Section 4. The first full week of October will be designated National Insignia Week in order to recognize and publicize the organization. All members are encouraged to participate by wearing sorority insignia during the week.
- Section 5. To promote sisterhood, unity, and awareness of Omega Phi Alpha on campuses, the first Monday of every month will be declared National Pin Day. Members from every chapter are encouraged to wear business casual clothing along with their active pin or pledge pin when they are on campus.
- Section 6. The fourth Monday of January every year will be designated Susan Terzian Day. Active and alumnae members are encouraged to wear business casual clothing along with their active pin that day in honor of Susan Terzian.

- Section 7. To celebrate the expansion of Omega Phi Alpha, sisters are encouraged to dress in ceremony attire (all black and active pin) on the day that a new colony is inducted as a chapter.
- Section 8. The sorority shall encourage sisters to support the sorority's mission and vision through contributions to the Sister Giving Program.
- Section 9. The sorority shall encourage families and friends of sisters to honor the sorority's mission and vision through contributions and support.

## **Article VII Service**

- Section 1. Each chapter shall promote service by doing at least six chapter service projects during each term.
- Clause 1. One project shall represent service to the university community.
- Clause 2. One project shall represent service to the community-at-large.
- Clause 3. One project shall represent service to the members of the sorority.
- Clause 4. One project shall represent service to the nations of the world.
- Clause 5. One project shall represent service to the national permanent project, mental health.
- Clause 6. One project shall represent service to the president's project. The project shall be named at the national convention by the President.
- Clause 7. Chapter projects shall be defined as those that have at least 60% participation of the active chapter.
- Section 2. All active sisters shall complete a minimum of 10 service hours during each term.
- Clause 1. All 10 of these hours must be completed through participation in chapter planned projects. Hours completed through individual participation in service projects outside of the chapter will not be counted toward meeting the minimum requirement.
- Section 3. All active chapters shall complete a service project report form to be submitted to the National Office twice each year, December 15<sup>th</sup> and June 1st. This form shall contain the total number of chapter project hours as well as the project hours for each sister.

**Article VIII**  
**Chapter Management**

- Section 1. Every chapter must adhere to the following national rules regarding pledgship:
- Clause 1. Each pledge must be in good standing with the university.
  - Clause 2. There shall be a pinning ceremony for pledge induction and activation. The local chapter shall determine when a pledge shall wear her pin.
  - Clause 3. Pledge pins or ribbons are to be worn above the heart on all suitable attire as determined by the local chapter. Pledges shall not wear their pins in any situations that conflict with the national drug and alcohol policy. Disciplinary actions are not to be taken by local chapters in consequence to pledge pins and their wear.
  - Clause 4. Every pledge is required to have a pledge book that includes national pledge material. The local chapters shall decide when she shall carry it and how it is made.
  - Clause 5. Each chapter must make a mid-pledging check and report the progress of each pledge. Pledges should have one-half of their local requirements completed at this time and reminders of deficiencies should be made. After review of each pledge has occurred, each pledge shall be voted on individually and must have an affirmative 2/3 vote of the active chapter members present in order to continue.
  - Clause 6. Pledges must attend at least one active meeting per pledge period as designated by the chapter in order to provide better relationships between actives and pledges
  - Clause 7. Upon activation the pledge class will present a gift to their chapter.
  - Clause 8. Each pledge class will select an outstanding pledge that shall be recognized as established by the local chapter.
  - Clause 9. Any pledge not adhering to the standards of Omega Phi Alpha is to be brought before all available members of the chapter's executive board for review. If the board feels the reasons given warrant investigation, then it should take place at the next active meeting.
    - A. All meetings, reviews and/or investigations should be well documented.
    - B. This documented information should include written confirmation that any pledge in question was made aware of her infractions and their consequences.

- C. Signatures of the chapter president, membership officer, and pledge should be included in the documentation.
- D. If pledges have been duly notified and choose not to attend or provide an alternate time for said meeting, notation of this should be included in the documentation and signed by the chapter president and membership officer.

Clause 10. A pledge will be dropped from pledging if attendance is not in accordance with local regulations. An excuse in writing should be given to the pledge educator or other stipulated person for any meeting missed.

Clause 11. The pledge class should be voted in individually by three-fourths affirmative vote of all active members before activation. If there are any negative votes, there will be a discussion of the individual in question and a revote taken. Lack of service project completion, an infraction of the local or national pledge rules, failure to pass national pledge test, failure to complete local requirements, nonpayment of dues or monetary obligations will result in a negative vote.

Clause 12. Pledge activation outfits are to be all white with no jewelry worn except the pledge pins.

Clause 13. At least one big sister/little sister function is to take place before the end of pledging. To qualify as a function for credit, the function must be attended by at least 75% of the big sisters and 75% of the little sisters.

Clause 14. At least one pledge/active function is to take place before the end of pledge-ship. To qualify as a function for credit, the function must be attended by at least 75% of the pledge class and 50% of the active chapter.

Clause 15. Each pledge class is required to participate in a pledge-planned project in each of the following areas of service: university community, community-at-large, members of the sorority and nations of the world. In order for each project to count, 75% of the pledge class is required.

Clause 16. Each pledge must individually participate in 75% of her pledge class's required projects.

Clause 17. Each pledge class is encouraged to participate in one active planned president's project and one active planned permanent project.

Clause 18. Each pledge class is required to plan and carry out a fundraising project to raise money for their activities. At least 75% of the entire pledge class must participate.

Clause 19. All pledges must complete their local and national requirements.

Clause 20. All pledges are required to take and pass the national pledge test with a score of 85 percent.

Clause 21. A pledge may retake one section of the national pledge test in order to improve her score. If retaking the one section does not improve the score to an 85 percent or higher, she shall be dropped from the pledge membership.

Clause 22. All pledges must pay a pledge fee and an activation fee as determined by the local and national organization.

Section 2. Duties of local officers: It shall be the duty of the local elected officers to each Omega Phi Alpha chapter to perform all duties to the best of their abilities, to obey and uphold the local and national constitution, by laws and the principals of Omega Phi Alpha.

Clause 1. The local chapter president shall preside at chapter meetings, represent the chapter in sorority related functions, and be aware of all committee and officer business.

Clause 2. The local vice president shall preside at chapter meetings in the absence of the local president, be at the head of the chapter standards board, maintain the local constitution and keep accurate records of members' statuses.

Clause 3. The local treasurer shall be responsible for the accurate recording and reporting of all chapter financial activity. She shall ensure that the chapter prepares an annual budget and coordinate fundraising activities. She shall collect all monies for national (national dues, convention fees, loan payments, etc.) and submit them along with all required forms to the national office.

Clause 4. The local secretary shall be responsible for the taking and preparing the local chapter minutes, shall keep and accurate record of attendances or meetings and functions and shall maintain an accurate record of addresses for actives.

Clause 5. The local membership director shall be responsible for recruiting, training and activating pledge members. She shall forward the permanent home addresses to the appropriate national officer. She shall submit a copy of the local pledging rules to the Vice President of Membership at the end of each academic year for

review. She must submit copies of the original national test answer sheets, the pledge summary form and the pledge roster to the Vice President of Membership two weeks prior to the activation ceremony. She must report the activities of the pledge class to the active chapter at each meeting. She cannot activate the eligible pledges until she receives written confirmation from the Vice President of Membership.

- Clause 6. The local service director shall be responsible for maintaining an accurate record of all actives' participation in service projects. She shall oversee the service function for the chapter.
- Clause 7. The local alumnae liaison shall establish and maintain relationships with alumnae, contact alumnae with information pertaining to upcoming events, activities, and projects, address alumnae issues that may arise, and keep chapter records up-to-date and current in regards to alumnae addresses and other pertinent information.
- Clause 8. Active chapter standards boards shall oversee the following duties.
  - A. They shall make status recommendations to the active chapter after meeting with a member.

## **Article IX District Rallies and Retreats**

- Section 1. All active chapters in a district shall attend and participate in at least one District Summit per school year with 25 percent of each chapter's active members attending at least 75 percent of the Summit, planned by the District Summit Coordinator, in cooperation with Active District Officers of each chapter.
- Section 2. To qualify as a district summit:
  - A. The summit date and location must be approved by the Vice President of Chapter Support, and all active and alumnae chapters in the district must be notified no less than 8 weeks before the summit date.
  - B. A module from the National Leadership Program will be delivered by a member of the Leadership Development Team.
  - C. A sisterhood activity must take place.
  - D. A service project must take place.
- Section 3. Other workshops may be given by either a sorority representative or an outside consultant with knowledge in a specific area.
- Section 4. Chapters may hold other district-level events in addition to a district summit.

**Article X  
Finances**

- Section 1. The national organization's fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30. The annual operating budget must be a balanced budget in compliance with guidelines set forth in the national/district officer's manual. The annual operating budget is approved by a majority vote of the delegates at the national convention. Amendments to the annual operating budget to change the total expenditure/uses must be approved by a 2/3 vote of all active chapters and the alumnae delegates present and voting at the previous convention. Amendments to the annual budget to move money between line items without changing the total budget must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the National Executive Board.
- Section 2. The national organization may grant non-interest bearing loans to chapters using the guidelines set forth in the national handbook.
- Section 3. The national organization shall require competitive bids for all purchases paid from the national treasury greater than one thousand dollars in compliance with purchasing procedures set forth in the National Handbook.
- Section 4. Reimbursement for authorized sorority travel will be made in compliance with the travel procedures in the national handbook.
- Section 5. In cases of extreme financial hardship, national active dues, pledge fees, activation fees, and colonization fees may be waived by the national organization in compliance with guidelines set forth in the national handbook.

**Article XI  
Records**

- Section 1. A permanent set of records shall be stored at the national records office.
- Clause 1. These records shall include the most current copies of the National Executive Board Manual and the National Handbook.
- Clause 2. These records shall include one copy of each national officer's annual report and one copy of the national convention minutes.
- Clause 3. These records shall also include files of all chapters that have gone inactive or have been suspended by the national organization. These records shall be returned to the chapter for reactivation or lifting of suspension.
- Clause 4. These records shall include a copy of each chapter's annual report.

- Section 2. Each national officer shall keep a copy of her electronic files pertaining to the office held and a duplicate copy will be given to the Vice President of Administration for safekeeping. Each national officer will be responsible for maintaining her files and forwarding the files of her office to her successor upon the end of her term.
- Section 3. National Executive Board members shall file their annual reports with their successor, the National President and entered in the national files.

## **Article XII Colonization**

- Section 1. A colony is a group of students in the process of earning an Omega Phi Alpha charter.”
- Clause 1. A colony can be formed only at campuses that do not currently have an active chapter.
- Clause 2. To be recognized as an Omega Phi Alpha colony, the group must submit a petition for colonization to the Vice President of Expansions.
- Clause 3. To be considered for colony affiliation, the petitioning group must have at least 25 enrolled members. A petitioning group that does not meet this requirement, that has no fewer than 20 enrolled members, may apply for a colonization waiver. Waiver approval is at the discretion of the Vice President of Expansions.
- Clause 4. The Vice President of Expansions must formally accept the petition for colonization before the group is considered an Omega Phi Alpha colony.
- Clause 5. The colony shall be named after the college or university at which it is located.
- Clause 6. The colony has between 3 to 12 months to complete the requirements for charter. This time period begins when the Vice President of Expansions formally accepts the petition for colonization.
- Section 2. Requirements for a colony to earn a charter are as follows. Documentation of each completed requirement must be included with the application for charter.”
- Clause 1. The colony must submit a list of activities conducted during the colonization period. This list should include colony meetings,

committee meetings, service projects, fellowship projects, and any other activities organized by the colony.

- Clause 2. The colony must conduct at least two fundraising projects. The proceeds of one project shall be sent to and held by the national treasury until used by the colony/chapter to offset convention attendance expenses. The proceeds of the second project shall be used to supplement the colony's operating budget.
- Clause 3. The colony must plan and implement at least six service projects, each of which must have a 75% participation rate among colony members. One service project must be conducted in each area of service.
- Clause 4. At least 15 colony members must complete the individual requirements written below. These colony members will be listed on the new chapter's charter as its founding members.
- Sub-clause 1. Each colony member must participate in at least five colony-sponsored service projects, earning at least one hour of service in each.
- Sub-clause 2. Each colony member must successfully complete the national pledge test with a score of 85% or better.
- Clause 5. The colony must submit a local constitution to the Vice President of Expansions.
- Clause 6. The colony must submit a written budget that includes all anticipated revenues and expenses. The budget must also include an addendum that specifies the amount of local dues per semester.
- Clause 7. The colony must conduct recruitment during the colonization period, and must submit a detailed recruitment plan to the Vice President of Expansions no less than one month before the first recruitment event takes place. The plan should include details pertaining to the new chapter's first recruitment events including but not limited to: rush dates, rush events, locale, publicity plan, event agendas, estimated cost, and specific assignment of responsibilities for each member.
- Clause 8. The colony must submit a detailed action plan of all activities to be conducted for the first full year of the new chapter's life. This action plan must include a chapter meeting schedule, tentative service projects, fellowship projects, active committees in use, dates for pledge pinning and pledge activation rituals, dates classes begin and end each semester, an operating budget, proposed dues, and a membership goal.

- Clause 9. Each colony member must attend weekly meetings. A colonist may miss up to three meetings in a semester.
- Clause 10. The colony must be represented to Convention, if Convention takes place during the colonization period.
- Clause 11. The colony must participate in the district summit of the district closest to them geographically, if the rally takes place during the colonization period.
- Clause 12. The colony must hold weekly meetings. Minutes of these meetings must be submitted to the Vice President of Expansions within 48 hours of the meeting.
- Clause 13. The colony must hold and organize an overnight, off campus retreat. It shall be scheduled with the Vice President of Expansions and held at least halfway through the colonization process.

Section 3. The Vice President of Expansions will determine whether the requirements have been met, based on her review of the application for charter and supporting documentation. With the Vice President of Expansions' approval, a charter shall be issued for the new chapter.

- Clause 1. The charter shall be presented at the chapter's induction ceremony.
- Clause 2. The charter shall be presented by a representative of the national organization, as designated by the National President.

Section 4. If the colony generated alumnae as a local organization prior to its affiliation with Omega Phi Alpha, those alumnae may be granted lifetime membership in Omega Phi Alpha. These members will have the same rights and privileges as members who pledged at or founded an active chapter.

- Clause 1. The colony must provide a list of all local alumnae, including contact information (if known) prior to submitting the Application for Charter.
- Clause 2. Each alumna of the local group will be contacted jointly by a colony leader and an Omega Phi Alpha representative, inviting them to affiliate and informing them of the process.
- Clause 3. Each alumna who wishes to affiliate must:
  - A. Provide contact and networking information as defined by the Vice President of Alumnae Relations;
  - B. Pay a one-time fee equal to the current activation fee;

C. Participate in an activation ceremony, presided over by an Omega Phi Alpha member.

Clause 4. Alumnae who affiliate with Omega Phi Alpha through this process will have a member-since date that corresponds with the date the colony was inducted.

### **Article XIII Naming Chapters**

- Section 1. Collegiate chapters shall be given a Greek letter name by the Vice President of Expansions at the chapter induction event.
- Section 2. Alumnae chapters shall be named with the Greek letter Omega and a second Greek letter. The second letter shall be assigned by the by Vice President of Alumnae Relations.
- Section 3. A re-charted chapter shall receive its original Greek letter name.
- Section 4. In order to maintain alumnae chapter status, the chapter shall submit an annual report by Jun 1 to the Vice President of Alumnae Relations outline activities of the chapter for the preceding year long with names and addresses of current members and officers.

### **Article XIV Parliamentary Procedure**

- Section 1. The national convention shall follow the current accepted edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Section 2. The National President shall designate a parliamentarian for each convention.

### **Article XV Amendments**

Amendments to the by laws may be proposed at the national convention and voted upon at a national business meeting allowing time for discussion and consideration by the National Executive Board. Ratification of by law amendments requires an affirmative two-thirds of the ballots cast. All revisions to the national by laws shall take effect upon the final adjournment of national convention