



“If it’s not working,
we must change.
We failed ...
and change
had to happen.”

– **Tyler Ansel (Dartmouth)**



Sigma Nu
EDUCATIONAL
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*The Sigma Nu Educational Foundation mission
is to secure and provide enduring resources
to support the educational and charitable
initiatives of Sigma Nu Fraternity.*

Catalyst for Change

Using College of Chapters as a Returning to Dartmouth College and his second term as Commander, Tyler Ansel (Dartmouth) saw Sigma Nu differently. He now saw what was possible with his chapter and a way out of the the dark place that had taken over his fraternity experience. "I saw the state of fraternity life at Dartmouth College and knew it was out of touch. Over the years, our chapter had insulated itself as a result. What came next was an attitude that it was okay to be a small chapter, it was fine not to have a structure or experience like most Sigma Nu chapters."

What Tyler experienced through College of Chapters and Grand Chapter helped him see fraternity with a different set of lenses. **"My view was that if it's not working, we must change. We failed for the past seven years and change had to happen,"** Tyler shared. "I realized that in Sigma Nu Headquarters, we had a resource and that we are a strong national fraternity."

Looking back to when he joined Sigma Nu, Tyler immediately had a hand in chapter duties. Not necessarily because he took the initiative, but because it was necessary for the chapter to operate and survive. When Tyler was elected Commander, just one year into his Sigma Nu experience, he knew the chapter needed brothers to step up and help.

"The chapter was down to 13 men before I started my term as Commander," he described of that first term. "That meant six brothers serving as officers and seven brothers pitching in as needed."

At that point, Tyler attended College of Chapters which would dramatically change the way he viewed Headquarters and the vast amount of resources available to his chapter. Being immersed with other Commanders in an intensive leadership training experience, being exposed to committed volunteer alumni and Fraternity staff, and networking with others all played a role in shifting the dire trajectory of Tyler's chapter.

The journey wasn't easy. "We were at 24 members and then we got a class of six candidates: two sophomores, two juniors, and two seniors. I knew that level of manpower would not sustain us as a chapter. That class graduated and we recruited two new candidates the next recruitment."

That's when panic started to set in. For some in the chapter it was a feeling of hopelessness, that they were too far gone to turn the ship around. Some took a much



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Number of Commanders who benefited from the 2019 College of Chapters.

more relaxed and lackadaisical approach, telling Tyler that this is what they always did. But others knew it was a opportunity of do or die, including Tyler.

Knowing he needed to find a solution, Tyler used the resources available to the chapter from Sigma Nu Headquarters. Soon, three other chapter brothers stepped up to help him drive change in the chapter. "We knew we needed a plan," he said. "We knew we could rally the alumni, our chapter brothers, and make change happen."

One of the fundamental starting points for change? The Ritual. Tyler knew that fraternity had a ritual, so he persisted in asking a previous Commander where it was. **"I kept asking where is this ritual book? I know we have one,"** Tyler recalls. **"We didn't use The Ritual at all when I joined,** but when we started, I found a lot of good in it. Part of our growth as a chapter was talking about The Ritual. We told them that at the end of the day, our ritual is what makes us Sigma Nu. Now every chapter meeting is started with The Ritual."

The chapter created a Judicial Board and for the first time. There were now clear standards for how brothers should conduct themselves, as well as consequences for poor decisions. They focused on the process of putting things into place to form a stronger chapter.

"The brothers realized there was more to it. We weren't like a club. It meant something to be a Sigma Nu," said Tyler.

The chapter's view of the Fraternity at a national level also changed. The national organization was not something that all Fraternity and Sorority chapters at Dartmouth College utilized or valued.

"We watched Tri Delt change to Chi Delt and leave their national organization and another organization of 80 members come within four votes of leaving their national organization," said Tyler. "I knew from College of Chapters that we had people on our side, ready to offer assistance. For the first time we utilized Sigma Nu Headquarters as an ally."

In fall of 2018, the chapter had 52 men come through the first night of recruitment. For the first time, the faces of the brothers lit up when they were talking about recruitment. There was a confidence and energy present that had been missing for a long time. "For the first time in more than 15 years, we had to determine how many candidates we could really take and ensure the chapter could operate well."

The chapter beat their previous numbers of three- and six-man candidate classes.

The chapter ended up taking 26 candidates.

"Our success that fall put a fire under us. Our recruitment chair was drawing up lists of people we could talk to and recruit. The chapter knew we had to push for active recruitment if we were to build up to the level we needed."

What happened was transformational change. The Sigma Nu experience for the brothers in the chapter now is drastically different than four years ago. Sam Lawson, a sophomore at the time, shared what he saw as the difference in the chapter. "It was like a new chapter. We had a purpose and an expectation to do things that would build our brothers."

Just over a year from when Tyler experienced College of Chapters, he and his brothers can look back proudly on the foundation they laid down at Dartmouth. Not just for the nine brothers they started with, but for the 65 brothers the chapter currently sits at and the thousands yet to come. ✨