



Sigma Nu Fraternity, Inc.

Alumni Advisory Board Overview

Alumni Advisory Boards

The Purpose

The purpose of an Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) is to provide ongoing support and assistance to the collegiate chapter. Splitting the duties among several individuals will lessen the time commitment for each alumnus, as well as increase the overall support available to the collegiate members. This is the optimal model for involvement, as opposed to the single chapter advisor model.

Each member of the board works individually with one chapter officer to support his efforts and act as a mentor for that officer. As a board, the members work with the collegiate officers to establish goals, monitor progress, and give support to the chapter as it grows and develops. Ensuring that the collegiate officer knows and understands his role within the chapter is crucial to his development as an officer and his ability to effectively serve the chapter. Assisting the collegian to develop beyond his role as a chapter leader and helping him prepare for experiences after graduation are important aspects of being an effective advisor.

The Make Up

The Alumni Advisory Board can be made up from Sigma Nu alumni, faculty members, parents, and those men and women interested in bettering the fraternal experience of our Sigma Nu chapter, officers, and men. The most important element is to ensure that each board member assists the collegiate chapter and helps individual members develop into ethical leaders by serving as a mentor and coach to assist them to work through complex issues, avoiding severe mistakes/missteps, and providing them guidance so they can reach their full potential.

The Alumni Advisory Board is a replacement for the traditional Chapter Advisor role, by expanding the level of knowledge and experience, so that all key officers and chairman have a “chapter advisor” for their area of chapter operations. By design it eases the burden of transition of officers from one term to the next by retaining a source of critical knowledge and experience in someone who will be there for more than one term. This reduces the impact and time required on the volunteer and hopefully eliminates the “single point of failure” of experience and guidance when an advisor is lost. It allows for any alumnus or other volunteer to dedicate the time they have available to have a meaningful impact on our Fraternity and its young men.

Time Commitment

Advisory Boards should meet at least quarterly to discuss what is happening with the chapter and what specific focus or direction the board needs to provide. Individually, each board member needs to maintain contact with the officer whom they mentor and assist him as needed. Contact may be as often as weekly meetings, or as limited as periodic emails or phone calls, depending on what is agreed to by the collegian and the Advisory Board member, and what is needed by the chapter.

The members of the Alumni Advisory Board will attend weekly chapter meetings in rotation, ensuring there is at least one alumnus at every meeting without overburdening any individual’s schedule. Attendance at other fraternity functions will work in similar fashion.

Responsibilities:

- It is the responsibility of the advisor to make themselves available for consultation with a chapter officer by phone, e mail, and/or in person at regular prearranged intervals. They are to be available whenever possible in emergencies.
- The advisor is responsible for increasing their knowledge through reading officer manuals and communications, corresponding with regional and national officers if necessary, and attending Sigma Nu Institutes and Grand Chapter when possible.
- An advisor is to support officers in decisions that they have reached jointly.
- Advisors should be familiar with [The Law of Sigma Nu Fraternity, Inc.](#), [Risk Reduction Policy](#), chapter bylaws, and relevant college/university policies in order to support chapter officers and members in upholding these rules.
- Chapter business is to be kept confidential between the chapter and the advisor/advisory board.
- It is the responsibility of an advisor to exemplify the ideals and standards of the General Fraternity and to serve as an example of continuing and dedicated brotherhood, to elicit pride as well as respect.

Primary Expectations of Alumni Advisory Boards

- Three or more volunteers will serve on the Alumni Advisory Board
- Member(s) of Alumni Advisory Board attend chapter meetings once a month (or more often)
- Member(s) of Alumni Advisory Board attend all candidate and initiation ceremonies
- Meet quarterly (or more often) to review chapter goals and objectives
- Continually identify, recruit, and train new Board members to ensure the sustainability of the Board
- Review The Law of Sigma Nu Fraternity, Inc., the *Risk Reduction Policy*, and relevant college/university policy each year
- Member(s) of Alumni Advisory Board meet with the Leadership Consultant during each consultation visit
- Individual advisors maintain monthly communication with their designated chapter officer(s) to offer mentoring/coaching advice
- Member(s) of Alumni Advisory Board assist and advise the chapter officers in completing the annual Pursuit of Excellence Program evaluation
- Facilitate an officer transition workshop each election cycle
- Facilitate a strategic planning session with measurable goals and objectives with the chapter leadership each year

Alumni Advisory Board Positions

Alumni Advisory Board Chairman

Advise the Alumni Advisory Board members on management and goal setting for the chapter officers. Facilitate regular communication between board members and chapter officers. The Chairman also maintains a relationship with the Division Commander, General Fraternity staff, and Fraternity/Sorority Life professional.

Chapter Advisor

Assist the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman in the management of board members and goal setting for the chapter officers. Facilitate regular communication between board members and chapter officers. Together with the Chairman, maintain a relationship with the Division Commander, General Fraternity staff, and Fraternity/Sorority Life professional.

Financial Advisor

Advise the Treasurer on the management, budgeting, and goal setting for the chapter's finance committee.

LEAD Advisor

Advise the LEAD Chairman on program management, recruiting and scheduling of facilitators, and goal setting for the LEAD Program.

Recruitment Advisor

Advise the Recruitment Chairman and his committee on program management and goal setting for the chapter's Values-Based Recruitment program.

Alumni Relations Advisor

Advise the Alumni Relations Chairman on management and goal setting for the Alumni Relations program.

Social and Risk Reduction Advisor

Advise the Social Chairman and Risk Reduction Chairman on the management and goal setting of the Social and Risk Reduction program.

Alumni Advisory Board Member Responsibilities

Alumni Advisory Board Chairman

- Coordinate the quarterly meetings of the Alumni Advisory Board
- Coordinate the schedule of chapter meeting attendance by an Alumni Advisory Board member
- Coordinate alumni attendance at candidate and initiation ceremonies
- Coordinate a goal setting retreat for the chapter at the beginning of each semester
- Coordinate an officer transition workshop each election cycle
- Ensure Alumni Advisory Board members are maintaining their mentoring relationship with their respective officers and assessing progress towards goals
- Ensure that each board member is accomplishing position specific goals and expectations
- Provide a written report of quarterly Alumni Advisory Board meetings to chapter officers and Alumni Advisory Board members as well as House Corporation and Alumni Chapter officers as necessary
- Regularly review chapter goals and objectives
- Report periodically to the Division Commander on the progress of the Alumni Advisory Board
- Maintain contact with the General Fraternity with updates on any successes or troubles the chapter or Alumni Advisory Board experiences
- Recruit and appoint new Board members to ensure sustainability of the Alumni Advisory Board
- Complete the annual Alumni Advisory Board Assessment survey

Chapter Advisor

- Train and advise the Commander, Lt. Commander and Executive Committee
- Advise the chapter's Honor/Judicial Board
- Assist the Executive Committee in creating a chapter strategic plan for each academic term
- Serve as the liaison between the Alumni Advisory Board and the chapter, college/university administration, and the General Fraternity
- Maintain weekly contact with the Chapter Commander and Lt. Commander
- Maintain regular communication with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Maintain regular communication with the campus-based fraternity/sorority advisor and the Fraternity/Sorority Life Office
- Maintain regular communication with the Division Commander and General Fraternity staff
- Train new Alumni Advisory Board members to ensure sustainability of the board
- Meet with the Leadership Consultant during his consultation visit with the chapter
- Attend regional Sigma Nu Institutes

Financial Advisor

- Train and advise the Treasurer and Finance Committee to make sure that each new Treasurer is familiar with the chapter's accounting system
- Maintain weekly contact with the chapter Treasurer
- Assist the Finance Committee with annual budgeting and financial goal setting
- Assist in the review of financial contracts
- General oversight of chapter finance with chapter Treasurer
- Regular review of the process used by the chapter for collecting payments
- Regular review of the chapter's financial obligations to the House Corporation and vendors and assistance in establishing payment plan(s) to vendor(s) when necessary
- Confirmation with the Treasurer that current dues and fees are paid to the General Fraternity
- Regular communication with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Present financial best practices to the chapter

LEAD Advisor

- Train and advise the LEAD Chairman and LEAD Committee to ensure all are familiar with the chapter's LEAD program
- Maintain weekly contact with the LEAD Chairman
- Assist the LEAD Chairman with active recruitment of guest facilitators
- Assist the LEAD Chairman with scheduling and facilitator assignments
- Assist the Marshal with Candidate Education Program (scheduling, format, etc.)
- Work to ensure that Candidate education is in accordance with anti-hazing policies of Sigma Nu Fraternity, Inc., college/university policies, as well as state and federal policies
- Regularly communicate with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Present LEAD best practices to the chapter

Recruitment Advisor

- Train and advise the Recruitment Chairman and Recruitment Committee to make sure that all are familiar with the chapter's recruitment program
- Maintain weekly contact with the Recruitment Chairman
- Promote year-round recruitment plan and Values-Based Recruitment philosophy
- Regular communication with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Present recruitment programming best practices to the chapter

Alumni Relations Advisor

- Train and advise the Alumni Relations Chairman and Alumni Relations Committee to ensure all are familiar with the chapter's Alumni Relations program
- Maintain weekly contact with the Alumni Relations Chairman
- Assist the Alumni Relations Chairman with a written alumni relations plan that includes alumni events, newsletters, awards, and participation in chapter activities
- Assist the Alumni Relations Chairman in establishing an alumni calendar of events
- Conduct active recruitment of alumni involvement at chapter events
- Conduct final review of alumni newsletter
- Regularly communicate with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Present Alumni Relations best practices to the chapter

Social & Risk Reduction Advisor

- Train and advise the Social and Risk Reduction Chairmen and their committees to ensure all members are familiar with the chapter's social and risk reduction programs
- Maintain weekly contact with the Social and Risk Reduction Chairmen
- Assist the Social and Risk Reduction Chairmen with developing, updating, and executing written social and risk reduction plans
- Assist the Social Chairman in establishing a well-balanced social calendar
- Help to ensure that chapter social events are conducted in accordance with college/university policies, as well as the *Risk Reduction Policy*
- Assist the Risk Reduction Chairman in establishing a member education plan of all pertinent risk management policies affecting chapter
- Regularly review the chapter's crisis management plan with the chapter officers
- Regularly communicate with the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman
- Present social and risk reduction best practices to the chapter

Additional Alumni Advisory Board Roles

Any chapter officer or chairman could benefit from an advisor depending on how many members and volunteers you have available. Additionally, if you have a House Corporation or Alumni Chapter, it is very effective to have a person from each of those entities participate.

Members-at-Large

Assist Chapter as a general advisor and specifically where needed

Examples

- Marshal/Candidate Education Program Advisor
- Pursuit of Excellence (PEP) Advisor
- Scholarship/Academic Advisor
- Community Service/Philanthropy Advisor
- Faculty Advisor
- Campus Leadership Advisor
- Governance and Accountability Advisor
- Communications/Public Relations Advisor
- House Corporation liaison
- Alumni Chapter liaison
- Specific Event Advisors (anniversaries, homecoming, etc.)



Alumni Advisory Board Best Practices

Mentoring and Advising

Advising is truly a two-way communication experience. Some helpful points to remember when advising collegiate chapter operations follow.

1. **Be a role model.** This should go without saying, but it is important to realize that being an Advisor is a living illustration of the fact that fraternity affiliation continues after graduation.
2. **Hold the chapter to high standards.** Help the chapter to develop high standards and advise the officers on holding everyone accountable.
3. **Clearly establish your role with the chapter.** The chapter and the officers need to know and agree upon the roles of the Alumni Advisory Board members within the structure of the chapter.
4. **Ask for the chapter's input whenever presented with a new idea or opinion.** Presentation, approach, and delivery are important any time something new is discussed with the chapter. When presenting something new at meetings, end with the question, "What do you think?" You will help free yourself from being accused of being pushy or a know-it-all.
5. **Give the chapter and individual chapter officers and members the same respect you expect from them.** If the executive officers are given your respect, they will be enthused and want to learn. The average chapter member will also want to learn.
6. **Work most closely with the chapter officers.** Open dialogue between executive officers and the Alumni Advisory Board members will enhance the relationship with the chapter and will also result in more business being accomplished.
7. **Be cautious about talking about the chapter's, or the college/university's, past.** Chapter members rarely like to hear about "the way it used to be." Glorifying the past or reminiscing about difficulties is usually a quick, sure way to lose your audience.
8. **Allow mistakes to be made.** Easier said than done. But what distinguishes an adequate advisor from a good advisor is the ability to gauge the impact of the resulting disaster and determine what intervention is not only desirable, but necessary.
9. **Build on an officer's strengths.** A collegian's personality is largely developed by the time he reaches college, but what can be developed are manners, behaviors, skills, and knowledge. Look at performance, not at promise, and focus on strengths and not weaknesses.
10. **Function as a liaison.** There will be many times when an officer will need assistance in contacting the appropriate school official, another alumnus, or a resource person in the community.

It is important for the Chapter and Board Members to remember that when RESPECT and COURTESY are shared, responsibilities to each other are easily fulfilled.

Alumni Advisory Board Meetings

Efficient Board meetings are a sure way to improve operations. While some meetings may serve a social need, they are primarily designed to disseminate information regarding the Alumni Advisory Board's work and the chapter's operations. To ensure a properly functioning meeting that produces results, the following standards are necessary:

Consistency

It is key that you remain consistent – in your approach and interaction with both the chapter and the Alumni Advisory Board. You should continuously improve but remain consistent.

Regularity

The Alumni Advisory Board should meet monthly or quarterly at a minimum. A group cannot be effective with less regular meetings. Conference calls should not be used to take the place of face-to-face meetings, unless they cannot be avoided.

Attendance

This should be required of all Board members. Exceptions should be limited to professional obligations or illness. Plan your meeting calendar well in advance.

Include Chapter Officers

All meetings should be held at the chapter facility (if applicable) or another appropriate location on campus. Collegiate officers should be included in all meetings. Having the meeting at the chapter house or on campus will help to increase the Board's visibility with the chapter members. Including the chapter officers in your meeting will help to maintain an active, positive partnership between the Board and the chapter. Meeting at the chapter house will also give the Board an opportunity to regularly inspect the facility.

Rules of Order

While Alumni Advisory Board members need not have a thorough knowledge of parliamentary procedures, a few simple rules of parliamentary procedure should be used to allow the meetings to remain constructive.

Agenda

Meeting agendas have many benefits and it is well worth the time to plan and circulate an agenda ahead of time. Have a member of the board take and publish minutes following each board meeting.

Meeting efficiency functions:

- The agenda lets both collegiate members and Board members know what has been accomplished and what remains to be accomplished
- It permits adequate consideration of all agenda items
- It keeps discussion on track, preventing introduction of extraneous items

Communication functions:

- The agenda helps maintain the organization by planning to meet the needs of all members
- If circulated between meetings, the agenda helps maintain communication
- It helps everyone understand what needs to be addressed and what action is to be taken
- If circulated before the meeting, the agenda allows members time to prepare and participate more effectively at the meeting
- It allows a carefully planned climate to occur

Alumni Advisory Board Communication

- The Alumni Advisory Board needs a recorder or someone willing to take minutes and notes at each meeting, so they can be published to members, and there will be a record of what has been accomplished and what is left to be done. This can easily be the most important and underappreciated role. Choose someone other than the Alumni Advisory Board Chairman.
- The Alumni Advisory Board must stay in constant communication with each other. It is very important that each advisor is informed about chapter specifics so that they will make informed decisions when attending Alumni Advisory Board and chapter meetings.
- The chapter recorder should send to each advisor a copy of the minutes from each chapter meeting. This can be done via email, Google docs, or another electronic medium.
- Another good communication tool is an Alumni Advisory Board notebook. This notebook can be kept by the chapter Commander and given to the advisor attending each chapter meeting. The advisor in attendance takes notes of important events and issues that should be followed up on at the next Alumni Advisory Board meeting.

Recruiting Additional Alumni Advisors

A top priority of the Alumni Advisory Board is to continually identify, recruit, and train new Board members to ensure the sustainability of the Board. As with our collegiate chapters, recruitment of alumni volunteers must be a 365-day continuous process – it is alumni rush, but your best situation is to have a ready, willing, and able pool of volunteers to draw from. The following is a recruitment actions checklist that will produce results.

- Identify your needs, then look for alumni or other volunteers in your area to fill your needs.
- Contact your [Division Commander](#), if you have not already, to discuss a pool of potential volunteers who could serve on the Board.
- Obtain contact information from the General Fraternity for all your alumni. Break it down by pledge class and location. Evaluate the list. Look for former chapter Commanders and other past officers living in the region whose contact power can be leveraged into the membership building effort.
- Recruit a Membership/Recruitment Chairman who is well networked with your alumni.
- Create a website that is structured to respond well to search engines, so that if, for example, someone enters their locale and the name “Sigma Nu” into a Google search, your local Sigma Nu website shows up at the head of the list. Use it as a communications and recruitment tool. Research the best Sigma Nu alumni websites and utilize their best ideas. Allow the website to be interactive, if possible. Additionally, establish Facebook and LinkedIn groups.
- Plan events which can be advertised on the website. Every chapter event should be seen as a recruitment opportunity.
- Use the Fraternity’s [Director of Alumni Advisory Programs](#) as a resource. Solicit ideas about what other chapters are doing that have impressed him in the recruitment area.

Resources

[Alumni Best Practices Library](#)

Have you ever wondered what the best Sigma Nu chapters do to achieve and maintain excellence in alumni support and development and how they do it? The Sigma Nu Best Practices Library for Alumni is an essential resource for all Sigma Nu volunteers.

The Alumni Best Practices Library is designed to give specific examples of how other Sigma Nu Alumni Advisory Boards have achieved excellence in alumni programming and helps provide a roadmap for other Boards to follow in achieving their own excellence. The Alumni Best Practices Library includes examples from some of our best Chapter Advisors, Alumni Advisory Board members, Alumni Chapter and House Corporation officers from around the country.

All protected pages/documents use the passcode – **4242**.

[Chapter Officer Descriptions & Manuals](#)

Chapter Officer Manuals serve as a "how to" guide for chapter officers. Each chapter officer has a manual. **Each officer and respective Advisory Board member should have a copy of the appropriate officer manual.**

[Pursuit of Excellence Program](#)

The Pursuit of Excellence Program (PEP) is Sigma Nu Fraternity's chapter assessment, standards, and improvement program. Unlike traditional "minimum standards" programs, the Pursuit of Excellence Program is designed to be a year-round planning, evaluation, and improvement program. The website documentation provides a full overview and details of the program's structure, as well as resources designed to help chapters excel in pursuit of our mission.

- The Pursuit of Excellence Program should set a standard that drives our undergraduate chapters and the entire organization toward the realization of the Fraternity's vision "Excelling with Honor."
- Standards should be set to assess our chapters in their alignment with the mission of the Fraternity.
- It is vital that the program includes a viable feedback mechanism whereby chapters can utilize information from the assessment to drive the organization towards excellence.
- The Pursuit of Excellence Program should align with the Rock Chapter criteria and work in support of the Fraternity's strategic initiatives under the Strategic Plan.

[LEAD](#)

LEAD is Sigma Nu's award-winning ethical leadership development program. In alignment with Sigma Nu's continuing efforts "To develop ethical leaders..." we offer the LEAD Program as a tool to assist our membership in both gaining the knowledge and developing the skills and abilities needed to be an effective and ethical leader for life.

The LEAD Program is a comprehensive *ethical leadership* development program designed to ensure participants "learn by doing." We encourage all our collegiate chapters to utilize our LEAD Program to the fullest extent.

[LEAD Manuals](#): All protected pages/documents use the passcode – **4242**.

Numbered phases are designed for different stages of membership evolution as a Sigma Nu and an All Chapter set of sessions brings all collegians together for important conversations related to personal development, chapter development, risk reduction, and mental health.

LEAD Chairman and LEAD Advisor should have and use the [Facilitator Manuals](#) provided by the General Fraternity.

Division Commanders

Chapters of the Fraternity are grouped geographically into Divisions. The High Council, upon recommendation of the Office of the Executive Director, appoints a Division Commander, who is an alumnus Brother, for each Division. The Division Commander represents an important link between the various alumni entities (Alumni Advisory Board, Alumni Clubs, Alumni Chapters, and House Corporations) and the General Fraternity. Like other Grand Officers, the Division Commander is a volunteer who receives no financial compensation other than reimbursement for reasonable cost of official Fraternity business travel. His role is primarily advisory, although he may be appointed by the High Council to represent them in specific times of need.

Leadership Consultants

The leadership consultant program is managed by the General Fraternity's Directors of Leadership Development and Chapter Services and its primary role is to educate, train, and assist chapters in providing a positive Fraternity experience for the members. Additionally, the focus of the program and direct communication and service to the chapters extends far beyond the two to three days a consultant is on-site.

Leadership Consultants are the "frontline" of the General Fraternity. Every day they work with our collegiate chapters and colonies by assisting with various issues from risk management to recruitment to social programming and scholarship. As go the Leadership Consultants, so goes the ability of the General Fraternity to properly service its constituents (collegiate chapters, alumni, volunteers, and college/university officials).

General Fraternity Staff

Many other staff are responsible for the daily tasks that enable the General Fraternity to serve its collegiate chapters and alumni constituents. Specialized in various areas of operation, the General Fraternity staff can be of great resource to student leaders and alumni volunteers alike.

Campus and community resources

Other resources that can be found in your area:

- Fraternity/Sorority Life professional
- Other Faculty/Staff
- Parents of members
- Community experts

Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Program

Program Overview

The Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Program is Sigma Nu Fraternity's assessment and improvement program designed to gather data about Alumni Advisory Boards and offer feedback based on a set of ideal performance practices. The program is designed as a year-round planning and improvement program for our volunteers.

The goal of the Alumni Advisory Board Assessment is not to penalize chapters with absentee or under-performing Alumni Advisory Boards, but rather direct resources towards improvement. The General Fraternity staff and Division Commanders will be able to use this feedback in addressing individual Alumni Advisory Board development throughout the year.

Alumni Advisory Boards will be benchmarked to each Ideal Performance Practice. Annual assessments take the form of an Alumni Advisory Board self-assessment, an assessment by the chapter officers (included in the Pursuit of Excellence Program), a Division Commander assessment of Alumni Advisory Boards in his Division, and a General Fraternity staff review.

Ideal Performance Practices

The annual Assessment will utilize Assessment Guidelines which define the Ideal Performance Practices for each achievement level from primary to excellence. This will create consistency across assessments. This also ensures a focus on reviewing Alumni Advisory Boards individually rather than to one another. A rationale for each rating is communicated back to the Alumni Advisory Board along with recommendations for improvement.

The Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Program rating scale is:

Primary Good Very Good Excellence

Ideal Performance Practices are divided into three (3) operational areas which will serve as a guide to define excellence for Alumni Advisory Boards.

Form and Function – The make-up of the Alumni Advisory Board and its functions

Chapter Advisement – How the Alumni Advisory Board is involved in an advisory capacity to the collegiate chapter

Chapter Development – How the Alumni Advisory Board is involved in the continued development of the collegiate chapter

Program Goal

The goal of the Alumni Advisory Board Assessment is not to penalize chapters with absentee or under-performing Alumni Advisory Boards, but rather direct resources towards improvement. The General Fraternity staff and Division Commanders will be able to use this feedback in addressing individual Alumni Advisory Board development throughout the year.

Program Benefits

The Assessment Program presents various benefits including increased involvement from volunteers and a better understanding of Alumni Advisory Board strengths and challenges. The information gathered from the assessment will be communicated back to alumni and student leaders along with recommendations for improvement. General Fraternity staff and local Division Commanders will be able to use this feedback for planning and development purposes and assist local Alumni Advisory Boards to create their own action plan for improvement.

Resources for the Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Program

[Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Program History and Overview](#)

[Assessment Program Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Ideal Performance Practices for Alumni Advisory Boards](#)

[Alumni Advisory Board Assessment Guidelines](#)

[Resources for Alumni Advisory Boards](#)