

Candidate's Contact Information

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Grand Council Position Sought

I am running for one of the Grand Council's five director-at-large positions.

Statement of Qualifications

I bring a decade of experience in the nonprofit sector to the Grand Council. This experience is financial and focused on improving educational experiences for students from pre-Kindergarten through post-doctorate studies. Also, I bring a 13-year history as an award-winning alumni volunteer for Sigma Pi. My motivation for volunteering is helping my undergraduates and alumni on their individual paths to success.

Fundamentally, I bring a different mindset to the Grand Council. My greatest achievement in Sigma Pi will *not* be getting elected to the Grand Council. Being elected to serve on the Grand Council would be a great *honor*. However, my greatest achievements will always be the successes of my undergraduates and alumni that I work with every day. Anyone running for the Grand Council who does not have a meaningful connection to our undergraduate brothers does not have the right perspective to lead us.

I am running because I believe my unwavering commitment to promoting undergraduate success blends well with my professional and nonprofit experience. Further, I am running because after 13 years of volunteering I have experienced many areas where the fraternity must improve to provide a higher level of service. I believe in a Sigma Pi that aggregates the wisdom of its members to blaze a path forward. I believe in a Sigma Pi with an undergraduate experience that is second to none and provides a strong, vocal advocate for our brothers. I am running for the Grand Council to serve YOU – my brothers of Sigma Pi.

Fraternity Resume

Sigma Pi Fraternity, International (January 2000 – Present)

Chapter Director, Delta-Beta (August 2003 – August 2006; August 2010 – Present)
Monmouth CEF Committee, Chairman (December 2005 – Present)
New Jersey Province Archon (August 2006 – January 2009)
Chapter Director, Theta-Tau (January 2006 – August 2006)
48th Biennial Convocation, Nominating Committee (2006)
Founding Member, Jersey Shore Alumni Club (July 2004)
46th Biennial Convocation, Alternate (2002)
Sage, Delta-Beta Chapter (December 2000 – January 2003)

Sigma Pi Educational Foundation, Board of Trustees (August 2008 – August 2012)

Board Treasurer (August 2010 – August 2012)
Delta Society Committee on Young Donors, Chairman (February 2012 – August 2012)
Operations Committee (October 2009 – August 2012)
Strategic Plan Study Group, Chairman (August 2010 – July 2011)
Alumni Communications/Marketing Committee, Chairman (August 2008 – July 2011)
Nominating Committee (May 2010 – August 2010)

Awards Received from Sigma Pi Fraternity and the Sigma Pi Educational Foundation

Curtis G. Shake Award for Most Outstanding Province Archon (2006 – 2008)
Lyle H. Smith Award for Most Outstanding Chapter Director (2002 – 2006)
Lothar I. Iverson Graduate Student Fellowship (2004 & 2005)

My professional and volunteer experiences bring three core skill sets to the Grand Council: nonprofit financial management, nonprofit leadership, and a strong application of leadership in the nonprofit market. In my profession, I manage an \$80 million loan pool comprised of primarily nonprofit borrowers. Most of these borrowers are larger than Sigma Pi in terms of membership, revenue, programming, and total assets. My analysis and oversight of each borrower includes researching and fully understanding how each organization's revenues are generated, where their expenses are centralized, whether or not they are adhering to state and local nonprofit laws, and whether or not they are operating in a fiscally responsible manner.

Over the last 10 years I have grown a national following for my expertise in socially responsible investing and nonprofit financial knowledge. Growing and expanding this skill set has allowed me to become an adjunct professor at two local universities. In fact, at one university I have spent the last 6 years as the primary instructor for courses in nonprofit leadership, nonprofit board development, nonprofit oversight, and foundations of leadership.

I have spent many years honing my leadership skills outside of my profession through a variety of volunteer roles at a diverse set of nonprofit organizations. For example, I have served on the board of trustees for community development groups, environmental coalitions, religious organizations, and local educational foundations. At some of these nonprofit organizations, I served as Chairman of the board of trustees while for others I held positions including board treasurer. For *all* of these organizations, I provided critical financial oversight which is desperately needed in Sigma Pi today. Each of these organizations had their own unique set of challenges that needed to be researched, understood, and ultimately overcome – much like the many chapters, colonies, and alumni clubs within Sigma Pi Fraternity.

Essay

To adequately discuss the challenges facing the fraternity, one needs more than a single piece of paper. This is not to suggest that Sigma Pi's challenges are so large that they could fill a short novel. Rather, any honest and open discussion of the fraternity's challenges is more deserving of a single piece of paper because the Sigma Pi experience is comprised of much more than a single piece of paper. Therefore, I encourage the delegates to speak individually with the candidates to learn more about our views on the challenges facing Sigma Pi today and tomorrow.

For me, there are **three** areas where the fraternity needs to address its challenges: the undergraduate experience, the alumni experience, and the contributions of staff, volunteers, and the educational foundation. While each of these categories is uniquely important in their own way, my primary focus in this single page response will be on the undergraduate experience. Without a strong undergraduate experience, a fraternity will not generate the type of high quality, engaged alumni that have an interest in becoming tomorrow's volunteers. And without a strong undergraduate experience, the fraternity will be limited in the number and scope of applicants for staff positions as well as donors to the foundation. Each of these three areas are interconnected and codependent on the other's success in order to flourish. *Everything* that makes Sigma Pi successful relies on the strength and balance of the undergraduate experience. Everything.

Sigma Pi needs to provide meaningful programming at the national, province, and chapter levels. I have a history of success in this area as I've organized more than 20 province workshops in New Jersey since 2003 with record-breaking attendance of more than 200 Sigma Pi brothers at our Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 events. We've achieved this level of success because our programming is relevant to our undergraduates; this is an area where our national conferences need to improve. For example, we should not spend time at our national conferences instructing our young men on how to host general meetings. Instead, we should instruct our leaders on how to operate efficient and successful *Sigma Pi* meetings. There is a difference! Our national conference programming has willfully pulled back on the level of precision provided in how to operate an outstanding Sigma Pi chapter. We need to get back to hosting national conferences with the sole purpose of making every single chapter of Sigma Pi the best and strongest version of itself. To accomplish that goal, we need to highlight undergraduate success stories.

In fact, we need to highlight those undergraduates who are setting the standard. Since my first Convocation in 2002, I've lobbied Sigma Pi to use the success stories of our most accomplished undergraduates and young alumni as learning experiences for the Grand Chapter. As a member of the Grand Council, I will work diligently to have the greatest examples of Sigma Pi success promoted at our national events. I would rather have undergraduates instructing each other on how to build a great fundraising program, on which recruitment strategies work best, on how to overhaul a chapter's community service program, etc. than filling a conference agenda with adult speakers from organizations other than Sigma Pi. Sure, there will always be a place for non-members to teach Sigma Pi brothers something new. However, recent programming efforts have held *no* place for undergraduate brothers to share best practices with each other.

Reforming our national conference programming is just one example of the challenges that we face in building a superior undergraduate experience. Further improvements must include a better, more consistent relationship between chapters and the Executive Office. Our Executive Office must not default to prioritizing its own relationship with our host institutions at the expense of supporting and strengthening our chapters. That is unacceptable. Our Grand Council needs to be sure that we have a staff that puts Sigma Pi brothers and the rule of law first in their decision-making; not the momentary whims of our host institutions.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I have no potential conflicts of interest and no financial interests that would prevent me from running for the Grand Council.



Joseph V. Palazzolo

Date Signed: January 15, 2016

Commitments

I understand and agree to meet the minimum time commitments required of the Grand Council as indicated in the January 4, 2016 application package.



Joseph V. Palazzolo

Date Signed: January 15, 2016