

Candidate's Contact Information

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Grand Council Position Sought

I am running for Grand Sage or Director-at-Large.

Statement of Qualifications

During the current biennium, I serve as the Fraternity's Grand Second Counselor (GSC). As the GSC, I am involved in every strategic decision that the Fraternity makes. This involvement provided me with a new appreciation for the various levels of bureaucracy that are involved in administering and leading the Fraternity. I believe that I am the only candidate for Grand Sage who maintains daily interactions with our undergraduates. I always believed that one cannot fully, or even adequately, serve on the Council without a direct connection to the young men who represent the Fraternity each day on campuses across North America. I maintained that belief while GSC and intend to continue learning from our undergraduates while serving as Grand Sage.

Professionally, I bring more than 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and real estate finance to the Council as well as more than 10 years as an adjunct professor at the undergraduate and MBA levels, where I teach business ethics and corporate governance. In my day job, I work to improve educational facilities for students of all ages from pre-Kindergarten through college. Also, I administer a multimillion dollar federal grant program that provides loan and lease guaranties to nonprofit educational organizations. At a time when the Fraternity is engaging in discussions about its involvement in chapter housing, high-level expertise in real estate finance, loan and lease guaranties, and educational facilities is critically important.

More details about my qualifications may be found in my essay below and at JoePalazzolo.com.

Fraternity Resume

Sigma Pi Fraternity, International (January 2000 – Present)

Grand Council (July 2016 – Present)

Grand Second Counselor (July 2016 – Present)

Liaison to Communication Committee (July 2016 – Present)

Liaison to Board of Trustees Study Group (July 2016 – Present)

Liaison to Strategic Plan Study Group (July 2017 – Present)

Chapter Director, Delta-Beta (August 2003 – August 2006; August 2010 – August 2016)

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)

Monmouth CEF Committee, Chairman (December 2005 – Present)

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)

Though this page asks for our Fraternity resume, I encourage you to read the [full breadth of my volunteer leadership experience](#) which includes service to organizations ranging from non-fraternity educational foundations, groups focused on scholarships for college athletes, religious organizations, and the creative arts. My volunteer commitments span many years and provided me with a wealth of knowledge about how the nonprofit sector operates – a knowledge which was heightened during my doctoral studies at the University of Southern California. By the time we are at Convocation, I expect to have earned a doctorate in organizational change and leadership. These academic studies blend well with my volunteer and professional work to give me a distinct view on the nonprofit sector and what it means to be successful in this world.

I utilize these skills daily in my profession where my client base is primarily comprised of nonprofit educational organizations. For these nonprofits, I manage and administer more than \$90 million in loan funds and \$15 million in grant funds. Most of my nonprofit clients are much larger than the Fraternity in terms of membership, annual budget, and total assets. In my role, I analyze and oversee each client from both an organizational perspective and on a project-by-project basis (most projects are the creation or expansion of educational facilities).

Over the last 12 years, I have developed a national reputation as a leader in this work. In the last few years, I have been asked to present at local, state, and national conferences regarding

my company's successes. I was also asked to travel to Washington, DC on two separate occasions to provide instruction on how to best provide financial and guaranty services to nonprofits across the country. One of these visits was at the request of the United States Department of Education to lead a national webinar that they arranged. The second visit was to lead group discussions among other national leaders about their experiences in this work.

Essay

I bring a different mindset to my service to the Fraternity. For example, my greatest achievement in the Fraternity is not being elected to the Grand Council, though being respected and trusted enough to serve in this position is humbling and a great honor. I count my Fraternity achievements in measures of the personal and professional successes of the young men I work with in Sigma Pi. When a young alumnus calls me to tell me that he was just accepted to the police academy or when an undergraduate tells me about a major scholarship that he won due, in part, to his work as a member of the Fraternity – *that* is fraternal success! Watching a young man from a low-income family work his way through college, enter the financial industry, and eventually earn well into six figures by providing low-income families with affordable mortgages – that’s the type of fraternal success that drives my work for Sigma Pi. I count my Fraternity successes when I celebrate the graduations and weddings of my brothers and then join them for the christening and blessings of their new born children. Anyone running for the Council in the hopes of simply being one of the “bosses” of the Fraternity has completely missed the point about what the point of this whole thing is in the first place.

Sigma Pi Fraternity is in a much different place today than it was when I first ran for the Council. Our executive leadership is different, the Council is more outspoken in supporting our undergraduates against the contemporary wave of guilt-by-accusation that plagues college campuses, our communication channels are more upbeat and positive because they are highlighting all the outstanding efforts being made by our brothers across North America, and there is a fresh feeling of excitement in the Fraternity. And yet, there is much more work to do in the years ahead. The issues below are the ones that I plan to work on as Grand Sage.

First, our Fraternity needs to **better align its operations with best practices** across the nonprofit sector and within the fraternity industry. This adjustment may take several forms including improving and upgrading the structure of the Council itself. Research conducted by the Fraternity shows that the average number of board members for NIC fraternities is 11 and less than 20% of fraternities tie their number of board members to their private rituals. Sigma Pi is behind the times on our organizational structure and we need forward-thinking individuals who are not scared of positive change to bring us in line with best practices. This alignment may also include staggered terms for Council members, another best practice for nonprofit boards. Our current system operates like an undergraduate chapter by bringing the entire Council up for re-election every second year. Staggering terms is a best practice in the nonprofit sector because it provides for stability in vision and organizational focus while also allowing the membership to bring in new board members when they are dissatisfied.

Second and on the topic of vision and organizational focus, the Fraternity needs to **complete and implement a strategic plan** focusing on its goals over the next 5 to 7 years. Our current process of potential board-wide turnover every other year promotes instability by asking candidates to consider how they would recreate the entire system. Instead, our Fraternity – from the most recent initiate to our most senior alumni – should be thinking about what we will look like in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, etc. What will your chapter look like? What will your alumni club look like? What will your province look like? What will Mid-Year and Sigma Pi University and Convocation look like? And... how will we all get there together? This collective vision of our future will guide the strategic planning process to determine which issues the Fraternity focuses on in the near-term while it continues to look towards the long-term sustainability of our organization. With this type of strategic plan in place, Council elections

will no longer be contests in who can better recreate the wheel, but rather contests in who has the track record of success and professional acumen to guide our staff's implementation of the plan.

Third and of critical importance, the Fraternity must **sustain the financial prudence implemented during the current biennium**. Our international finances have seen dramatic improvements during this biennium and those improvements are due to the combined benefits of greater oversight provided by the Council and hiring staff leadership with a strong understanding of nonprofit finances. Part of this equation is the Grand Chapter voting to increase certain fees at the 2016 Convocation. The Grand Chapter put its faith in this Council to be better stewards of their funds than in the past and we have been successful in keeping that promise. The future must include a continued focus on managing the cost of membership for our undergraduates, inspiring our alumni to donate to build our future, and providing strong oversight of all staff expenditures to ensure they align with acceptable practices.

The final item I will bring up for consideration is continued **strong, vocal advocacy for fair and honest solutions** regarding undergraduate issues. While the Fraternity enjoys the many relationships that it has built with its host institutions across North America, this does not mean – and will never mean – that we are beholden to the whims of college administrators. Far too often our chapters are presented with sanctions that equate to a death sentence for activities that are alleged. Further, just a few short years ago these activities would have been resolved in a mutually beneficial fashion where the college and the Fraternity agreed to sanction the chapter by requiring some form of education, training, and a limited probation. Today, our chapters are being presented with multi-year restrictions on recruitment and hosting social events – the two lungs with which any social fraternity chapter breathes. Removing any one or the other of these social options for prolonged periods of time is unacceptable and an anathema to the spirit of education that should exist on our host campuses. In addition, removing the social aspect of social fraternities does not align to the expectations that our members have of the Fraternity. This widespread, campus-based rejection of education-based resolutions in favor of blanket condemnation is not standard procedure in the professional world that exists outside of our host institutions and the Fraternity should not stand for its chapters or our brothers being treated so unprofessionally. Reasonable, education-based sanctions for misbehavior should be the norm instead of sending every accused chapter to the guillotine.

Volunteer service to the Fraternity should never be about the volunteer – it should always be about the individuals and chapters that are being served. I am running for Grand Sage because my fierce dedication to our undergraduates and advocacy for their success cannot be matched. I am running for Grand Sage because my professional experience strategically aligns to the major conversations that are taking place in the Fraternity today. My many years of volunteering for the Fraternity and my constant communication and connection with our undergraduate members and alumni have provided me with a very real knowledge of where our organization both excels and needs improvement. Sigma Pi Fraternity is moving in the right direction and I believe that I am well-qualified to administer the position of Grand Sage for the coming biennium and to do so in a manner that keeps the focus on you – the brothers who make Sigma Pi the great organization that it is today.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I have no potential conflicts of interest and no financial interests that would prevent me from running for Grand Sage or the Grand Council (see attached Conflict of Interest form).



Joseph V. Palazzolo

Date Signed: January 3, 2018

Commitments

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



Joseph V. Palazzolo

Date Signed: January 3, 2018