The Relevance of Fraternity New Member Education Programs

Christopher Miller
Western Michigan University, chris.g.miller@gmail.com

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Honors Thesis

Christopher George Miller

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**Prospectus**

College can be a difficult time of transition for young men, and done properly a fraternity can provide a strong tool for initial and continued success. My thesis will center on a curriculum I developed for the new members of my fraternity, the Michigan Beta chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon (SigEp). Under the auspices of SigEp’s nationally implemented Balanced Man Program, my program is aimed to help new members of college and SigEp understand collegiate life, fraternity, and how living a life centered around the principles of SigEp can help ensure success in college and in life after college. The aim of this program is to go far beyond the scope of other fraternities’ new member programs, as it is the first stage in a membership built on the experience of continuous development that spans the entirety of a SigEp’s collegiate career.

My thesis will examine the literature existing in the field of higher education student affairs. After providing a brief history of fraternities in the American educational system and a literature review of the field, I will look at how my program converges with the scholarship, and where it diverges. Based on the scholarship in the field of higher education student affairs and statistical data from the time periods when my program was implemented, I will then make recommendations for future revisions and implementations of the program.

**Introduction**

Going away to college is an exciting time in someone’s life. It is a chance to meet new friends, have new experiences, and begin to shape the trajectory of life past college. However, the transition to college can be difficult. For students entering higher education obstacles and
distractions wait to impede development and keep these students from achieving their full potential. Poor time management skills, inexperience with the workload of college classes, and substance abuse can quickly take the focus off academic and personal growth, and draw students down a dangerous path. It is for this reason that many higher education institutions have placed such an emphasis on developing their first-year students and equipping them for success. For example, Rentz writes about a trend in orientation programs away from a strictly academic view of students, to one that treats them as a whole person addressing developmental needs (244-245). The transitional period into collegiate life is one of much development. The Seven Vectors of Chickering and Reisser acknowledge this, and state that in this gap are present excellent opportunities for institutions to promote the development of its students. The scholarly work put into such theories of student development as well as the rise of student affairs professionals as a vital part of the collegiate community is a testament to the recognized importance of developing students as an integral part of the American college experience.

Every year, many students making the transition to college join a fraternity. For young men joining fraternities, the benefits of close friends, leadership opportunities, and values-based identity can further the development of the whole-person as elements of Chickering’s vectors state. Pascarella and Terenzini state that interactions with peer groups can have a major effect on the development of a student’s values, interpersonal skills, and self-identity (621). Fraternities present such a peer group to affect positive change in their members. A strong community, high standards, and relationships of accountability motivate young men to stay on track, contribute to their school and chapter, and leave college with a firm sense of self and direction. On the campus
of Western Michigan University, the positive impact had on the members of Greek life by their affiliation is evident. According to statistics published by the Western Michigan University Student Activities and Leadership Programs office (SALP), Greek Life has positive effects on the student body. Students in Greek life are retained at WMU at the rate of 84.8% compared to the 74.2% of the general student population; 63.3% graduate within six years as opposed to the 55.6% of the general population. According to the semester grade reports of WMU’s Greek community, several fraternities outpace the All-Male and even All-Campus GPA averages significantly on a consistent basis (see Appendix C). This means that at Western, Greeks are more likely to stay at WMU, graduate, and perform better academically. For many students, membership in a fraternity is a factor relevant to their education that allows them to more easily overcome the transitional gap to college, and to thrive once there.

However, the obstacles to this success are often amplified in the lives of Greeks. McKee writes of fraternities that they often create a “culture which has served as a breeding ground for thousands of fraternity-related incidents involving alcohol use and abuse, hazing injuries and deaths, sexual assault and rape incidents, issues related to cheating and academic integrity and much more” (30). The CAS Standards Contextual Statement for Greek life advising states that many come to school with a decidedly negative stereotype of Greek Life in their minds (253). The news, television, and websites like Total Frat Move (TFM) spin the fraternity experience in such a way that either completely repulses incoming students, or intrigues them. Because of these mentalities existing within the minds of fraternity men and those outside of the Greek
system, the fraternity experience can often become one that blocks the success of its students on various levels.

Young men with either of the aforementioned mentalities often join fraternities. The first group joins because a respected role model recruits them by demonstrating through their actions and those of their chapter that the stereotypes are not the whole story, and that the fraternity experience is relevant and enriching. The other group needs little recruiting, seeking out membership in an attempt to make their college experience mirror that which the media shows them. For both of these groups, a solid new member education program in their fraternity is key to getting their collegiate and fraternal career off on a correct and productive start. A new member education program functions as an orientation to the fraternity, and provides basic information and expectations of membership. Additionally it may provide tools and best practices for the success of the new members as they transition into collegiate life. A new member education program that is constructed on the basis of fraternal values is necessary to both enrich and empower the group that seeks to benefit from the chapter while challenging the stereotypes held by both groups. In the end, this program will be an onboarding process for those who agree with the mission of the chapter, and an off-boarding process for those who sought a more stereotypical experience. In addition to this component of assessing institutional fit, the new member education program is relevant to both the school and the chapter as it equips its participants with the skills necessary to be successful students, gives them a clear idea of what fraternity truly is, and prepares them to put the values of the fraternity into action both on and off campus and for the rest of their lives.
My program is, defined in terms of student affairs practice, an orientation. Audrey Rentz includes in her work the definition of orientation programs as “any effort on the part of the institution to help entering students make the transition from their previous environment to the college environment and to enhance success in college” (243). My program does exactly this. Understanding that the ‘previous environment’ of most of my chapter’s new members does not include college or fraternity life, it focuses on addressing gaps in the experiences of these young men through a guided group learning process. This process of orientation is necessary for a fraternity like it is necessary for almost any organization. From the perspective of the institution or fraternity, orientation programs are proven to increase retention (Rentz 238). As an orientation to the fraternity, this program assesses the congruence in fit between the member and organization (Rentz 242), helps them to learn the ins and outs of the organization’s resources and requirements, and equips students with tools to succeed in their new environment; all functions necessitated of orientation programs as defined by Rentz. While many models of orientation are under dispute (Rentz 240-241), my program and the larger framework of the Balanced Man Program provides an ideal experience as it encompasses the entirety of a student’s collegiate career. Nodding toward the research on the relevance of orientation programs by Rentz and the Seven Vectors of Chickering and Reisser stressing the importance of developing a student as a whole-person rather than simply a machine of academic output, my program provides a well-structured, intentional, and sustainable starting point for new students as they enter collegiate and fraternity life. With a self-conscious component of continuous revision and development built into the implementation of the program, it provides an excellent on-boarding
process for membership and an initiation on a pathway of continuous challenge and growth throughout college and beyond.

The Balanced Man Program

The Balanced Man Program is Sigma Phi Epsilon’s (SigEp) course in developing its members to lead both in and after college, and to encourage growth and excellence in all areas of their lives. Created in the 1990s as a response to a need for fraternities to return to the principles and lifestyles that inspired and governed their founders, the Balanced Man Program is the flagship of the fraternity world and a pioneer in blending the benefits of brotherhood with the skills and tools necessary for young men to succeed in college. In practice, the Balanced Man Program varies from campus to campus in terms of implementation. However, the core ideology remains the same and is based on five philosophical tenets: Equal Rights and Responsibilities, Continuous Development, Accountability, Living the Ritual, and Mentoring. The following description is my own based on the information I have received regarding the Balanced Man Program during my time as an undergraduate. For a complete and official description of the BMP, please consult the resources available on SigEp.org, or reach out to any of the fraternity’s full-time staff for assistance.

The first tenet is Equal Rights and Responsibilities. SigEp believes that true brotherhood cannot exist in a group of inequality. In its simplest and most practical real-world manifestation, this tenet means that there is no place for pledging or hazing in the chapter. A young man is a brother from the moment he accepts his invitation to join the chapter, and is immediately expected to join the other members in contributing to the chapter and upholding the values of the
fraternity. This creates an atmosphere and community of inclusion where members feel at once supported and challenged to grow. As members view themselves as equals, they feel comfortable holding their fellow brothers accountable, and being held accountable by others. As new members are immediately expected to share in the rights and responsibilities of even those who may have spent four years in the chapter, a new member education program is crucial. New members must be instructed in what exactly the rights of brotherhood are, and what the responsibilities are. Without such a program tiers in membership may form inadvertently even in groups of men with the best intentions as no clear outline in equality has been given.

Continuous Development is the next tenet. SigEp recognizes that as a young man progresses through his collegiate career, his experience changes as do the tools necessary for success. While pledge-model development often focuses solely on the pledge period, which usually lasts only a semester, the Balanced Man Program lasts the entirety of a student’s college career. This on-going process grows with the brother, offering him a useful and challenging experience for where he is on his collegiate and personal journey. As all members are expected to participate in these development programs throughout their college tenure, equality is maintained throughout the organization. Although new members may be learning things that have become irrelevant or a daily part of the older members’ lives, all are expected to challenge themselves and grow in their respective areas.

The byproduct of equality in membership and the membership development experience produces the next philosophical tenet: Accountability. This tenet acts as a cycle within the chapter: as equality breeds accountability, accountability is necessary to sustain continuous
development and encourage members to maintain equality. In order to promote the value-conscious lifestyle championed by the fraternal experience, the fraternity must be a community of mutual strength. Brothers must rely on each other for help, and push each other to stay true to their commitments. In order for this tenet to become a reality, all members must be on the same playing field so that a brand new member can expect not only to be held accountable by an older member, but to also be heeded and respected when he in turn holds that older member accountable. Again, to create this mentality in members, expectations and ideology must be presented up front so that members can approach the entirety of their time in the undergraduate chapter with these goals in mind. It is the job of the new member education program to start brothers off perceiving the chapter and the brotherhood as value-centric so that accountability is a standard practice throughout the membership.

Much has been said already about the values of a fraternity. To many, this may be puzzling as all they know about fraternities are the stereotypes presented to them. However, fraternities were designed to be so much more. The ideals of those men who founded any given fraternity are codified in the Ritual of that fraternity. Although each Greek organization has a different and often secret Ritual, the premise of each remains the same. It is a symbolic representation of the high moral standards and aspirations championed by a fraternity and its brothers. For that reason, many in Greek Life reference Living the Ritual, or more simply upholding the values of your group. As such, it has become the fourth philosophical tenet of SigEp’s Balanced Man Program. Our Ritual tells us how our founders envisioned the fraternity and day-to-day actions of its members. Although everybody falters from time to time, the
Balanced Man Program expects all members to pursue the ideals outlined in the Ritual every day, and to encourage and help their brothers to do the same.

The last component of the Balanced Man Program is Mentoring. This mutual relationship of learning from brothers at different stages in their journey is crucial to an enriched experience and chapter sustainability. The mentee benefits in learning from the experiences, good and bad, of an older member, while an older member is challenged to assume the burden of responsibility as a mentor, and learn from the experience and the perspective of the newer member. In addition to creating strong relationships that encourage accountability and living the Ritual, mentoring works to make chapter leaders as efficient as possible. As new leaders learn from those of the past, they can avoid retracing old, unfruitful ground and grow their area of oversight more than what was possible previously. As each new generation of leader cycles through the mentor-mentee relationship, the chapter is productive and achieves more than would be possible if each leader tried to reinvent the wheel. Whether it is in the pragmatic field of holding a leadership position or the moral realm of chasing lofty ideals, mentoring is the philosophical tenet that brings the process full circle and ensures the sustainability of the entirety of the Balanced Man Program.

**SigEp and General Greek Life terms defined**

For those who have had little to no experience with Greek letter organizations during their college or post-collegiate days, much of the terminology used frequently by those familiar with the Greek system is alien. In order to fully understand the material laid out in this study, it may be helpful to become acquainted with some terms.
The first area of needed clarity is the topic of pledging, and how that compares to a continuous development model of fraternity membership experience. For many, the term ‘pledging’ immediately conjures images of hazing, drunkenness, and violence. However, pledging, like the Balanced Man Program, is simply a method of member development. In pledging once a young man is invited to join a fraternity, he becomes known as a pledge, one who is seeking full membership, but has not yet been initiated. The justification behind such a process is that it protects both the pledge, who is testing the waters to see if a particular chapter is right for him, and the chapter as a whole, which is carefully determining whether or not a candidate for membership is worthy to represent the organization. While in its most ideal form, this method is a viable one for producing a quality membership experience and ensuring excellence and respect amongst the brothers, SigEp believes that all the benefits of pledging can be attained in other ways which also promote a sense of equality that pledging intrinsically removes. Just as pledges must earn their position in the chapter, all SigEps must earn theirs as well, striving everyday to uphold the Ritual and pushing themselves to continuously develop. Allowing brand new members an equal share in the chapter’s rights and responsibilities requires a heightened emphasis on values-based recruitment, but that is a topic of another thesis entirely. A model of continuous development over an entire collegiate career rather than a semester’s worth of pledging encourages all members to think of themselves as earning their place in the chapter constantly rather than simply for a semester. This mentality creates an atmosphere of equality and allows wholesome relationships to develop not out of forced, one sided respect, but desired mutual respect.
Another key term to understand is Challenge. In simple terms, the Challenge is a particular segment of the larger whole of the Balanced Man Program’s curriculum. While the philosophical tenets of the Balanced Man Program are the outline of the experience, the Challenges are how these ideological bases are made a reality. Although all members of the chapter are equal, they have different needs if they are to continue grow and improve. As the mission statement of the Balanced Man Program is to facilitate that experience, different programming is needed for the members as their collegiate experience changes. Thus, the Challenge. Broken up into four stages – the Sigma, Phi, Epsilon, and Brother Mentor Challenge – each seeks to provide members participating in them with relevant tools and information for success targeted for the demands of a given stage in a member’s collegiate career. For example, an incoming first year student does not necessarily need to think about skills like how to purchase health insurance, what to look for in an engagement ring, and searching for a graduate school as a senior may. Conversely, a graduating senior will benefit very little from activities like campus tours, learning the Greek alphabet, and getting tips on effective note taking that may greatly help ease a first year student’s transition into college and fraternity life.

In essence the Challenges are broken up as follows: the Sigma Challenge is designed to help members enter the chapter; the Phi Challenge is meant to help members grow into the rights and responsibilities of brotherhood, and into their roles as brothers, students, and individuals; the Epsilon Challenge requires brothers to step up and assume their role as leaders both in the chapter and on campus; and finally the Brother Mentor Challenge emphasizes giving back, preparing the next group of younger members to lead, and also focuses on transitioning out of
college and how to carry the principles of the fraternity with you professionally and personally. The program I developed for my chapter, upon which this thesis centers, is the Sigma Challenge. It is designed to help our newest members become acclimated to collegiate and fraternity life, all while instilling the values of SigEp in them so that they may lead fulfilling lives in and beyond college, bringing credit to themselves and their Fraternity.

Lastly, the terminology surrounding chapter leadership must be defined. The chapter is governed by an Executive Board (EBoard) of elected brothers who oversee a specific area of chapter operations. While a fraternity is a brotherhood of friendship designed for mutual benefit, it is also an organization that operates in the real world, accomplishing tangible things, and needing guidance and leadership. One of those positions is the Vice President of Member Development (VPMD). This brother is responsible for implementing the Balanced Man Program in his chapter by selecting brothers to help in the process and managing those brothers towards success. The VPMD is responsible for overseeing the Challenges, and ensuring that the chapter is providing the necessary program to facilitate growth of its members. It was in this role that I developed the Sigma Challenge curriculum examined in this study.

**Significance of the Study**

All the above problems and obstacles awaiting college men seem too broad to be dismantled by any one single effort; why try? According to Simon Sinek’s philosophy which he calls “Start with Why,” the best organizations, whether a multinational business or a fraternity chapter, start with a *why* for their existence. This mission statement of sorts is well-defined, well known to the people in the organization and the public, and is pervasive in all the actions and
decisions of the group. As a whole, SigEp’s *why* is doing its part to dismantle the obstacles faced by young college men, and provide a wholesome experience that will benefit men and the community during college and well past it. Despite being only a small piece of the puzzle, SigEp challenges itself and its members to take steps towards combating the pervasive negatives of fraternity culture both real and perceived.

That is all well and good as a national tagline, but I knew that my program would need a locally tailored *why* to be successful at Western. I would need a personal *why* to motivate myself to do the work of creating an improved process of new member development, and to get the members of my chapter on board, creating a shared vision. My *why* is the reinvigoration of commitment to ideals, providing useful and relevant information to help our members grow, and creating a culture of continuous self-reflection and improvement within the brothers on a personal level, and within the chapter on a leadership level. This contributes to the *why* I set for my chapter: to be the premier student community on the campus of Western Michigan University on the grounds of excellence in individual members’ success and the strong support network that fuels such success.

To do this, my program targets several key areas. Sessions teach relevant lessons, which align with the Seven Vectors of Chickering and Reisser, are presented in a model that is congruent with models for orientation programs laid out by Rentz, and encourage the building of a group dynamic deemed crucial for student adaptation to college by Pascarella and Terenzini. Distilled down to a thesis, my program argues that college men are faced with many obstacles and dangers as they transition to college. Useful information coupled with strong camaraderie
and an encouraging community can help men overcome the challenges of transition more successfully. In short, fraternity, if done correctly, is a powerful tool for success. Proper new member education is key to building this ideal fraternity experience. It provides a basis that clearly communicates the ideals of the fraternity – ideals which continue to guide members past their transition to the fraternity, thereby changing chapter culture, and into post-collegiate life.

In the fraternity world, the TFM frat culture has become too prevalent. Young men joining fraternities are fulfilling these stereotypes because their conceptions of Greek Life are not being challenged up front. As a consequence, the newest Greeks never grasp the true values of their fraternities, and never live their values as they grow in the chapter and eventually leave it. At Western Michigan University, much of the same culture exists. Few organizations truly represent values-based living, portraying WMU Greek life negatively, and reducing interest in it from the student body in general. My program attempts to counter this, so that the young men who join SigEp will find an experience contrary to the stereotype, and so that they may be agents of change within the WMU and national Greek community. The benefits of a true fraternal experience are numerous, and a proper new member education program will impart these benefits and attract other students to the Greek community who may have not given it consideration otherwise.

**Personal Anecdote**

When I came to college, I wanted nothing to do with Greek Life. While not particularly negative towards the topic, I knew the stereotype, and viewed it as something that would detract from my college experience. However, coerced by my friends, I decided to check out a pizza and
cards recruitment event for Sigma Phi Epsilon. As a fairly successful, yet under-involved student in high school, I recognized that I needed to step up my game in college, joining and leading organizations as well as building connections outside of the classroom, if I wanted to be successful. When I arrived at SigEp and began to talk to some of the brothers, I realized that this was exactly the organization in which I needed to be involved to maximize my college experience. The members recruited me on the values of the fraternity, how values-based living fit into life personally and professionally, and how the fraternity strives to develop its members into the best versions of themselves. I was sold. Although my fraternity experience, like everything else in the world, did not reach the ideal upon which I was sold during recruitment, it has been the growing process of chasing that ideal that has been so worthwhile. SigEp’s high standards and the support of my brothers have caused me to excel, growing not just academically or athletically, but spiritually, professionally, and interpersonally; in short as a whole person. The chapter did this by first providing me with a group identity and ideal to which I could adhere and pursue. Being surrounded by others affected in the same way created a network that challenged me to continue growing when my default was to become complacent, and supported me when I extended myself a bit too far. So established in my identity, the chapter gave me many opportunities to lead people and manage teams that I would not have gotten in the classroom. I attribute my success and outpacing of my peers to the supplemental experiences to academic studies that I received as a brother in Sigma Phi Epsilon. I am so passionate about the experience SigEp gave to me, and want to make sure others have a similar opportunity and experience. When my chapter needed a strong new member program to right some of the issues in the
organization, I saw a chance to serve my fraternity and leave a mark on it for years to come; I saw a chance to create a legacy. Largely through the drive imparted on me by SigEp, I have grown from an under-motivated, under-involved student, to a fraternity chapter president, member of Phi Beta Kappa, Presidential Scholar, committed volunteer, and passionate full-time professional working on Staff for my fraternity.

**History of the American College Fraternity**

In order to understand the current state of the American college fraternity and to better understand its impact, behavior, public perception, and attempts to reform it, a historical sketch must be given. In this, the original purpose of fraternities will be outlined, as will the process through which they deviated from this purpose, and were eventually called to reform. This is important to understanding from where the dominant, negative stereotype of Greek Life derives, and how such a stereotype runs contrary to the original *why* of fraternity. Learning about the history of fraternity as a whole is key to understanding its current position in society, and is crucial to helping new fraternity men learn about their past. History is an important component of new member education in helping to build a sense of connection to the past, and also to help our new members push back against traditions and own the SigEp *why* of being different. This information presented here is largely what I have gleaned from years learning from and teaching the members of my chapter about fraternity history.

While secret societies existed long before the early Republic of America, and for many different reasons, the progenitor of the American college fraternity is largely taken to be Phi Beta Kappa. Founded on December 5, 1776 at the College of William and Mary, the society was a...
secret organization of male students organized under a Greek-lettered name for the purpose of enhancing academic pursuits. The group was founded in direct reaction to the illiberal stances taken by the administration and faculty of many early American colleges. Contrary to today’s university, these schools were bastions of classical learning. In addition, many followed a strict model of top-down teaching in which the faculty was permitted by rule and custom to teach only certain topics such as religion, and the students were expected to receive knowledge only, never challenging or questioning what they were taught (Rudolph 136-144) The men of Phi Beta Kappa saw a need to supplement this classroom education with an environment of open inquiry, debate, and knowledge of a wide base of literature. The controversy of such an organization forced them to veil their proceedings in secrecy. However, as educational practices in America trended towards a more open and liberal model, embracing the inquiry sought by the men of Phi Beta Kappa and other literary societies styling themselves after its example, groups such as Phi Beta Kappa lost relevance. In their place rose organizations that were truly the first college fraternities as we know them today (Rudolph 145). These groups retained the focus on academic inquiry and pursuit championed by literary societies, but added to it a formalized component of friendship and camaraderie (Rudolph 146). Seeing companionship as necessary for a fulfilling college experience, fraternities became groups seeking to better a man as a student through creating a support network of others trying to do the same.

This early stage of fraternity development is relevant to the Greek organizations of today as many were founded and still exist for the reasons of promoting academic success and personal growth through a network of friendships. The importance of experiences had outside of the
classroom championed by the men of early fraternities is still why Greek organizations remain an active part of collegiate life. When the Balanced Man Program asserts that living the Ritual is necessary, or when other Greeks encourage each other to follow the example of their founders, this is the ideal they seek to emulate.

As is the case with any organization, the idealistic vision of fraternities held by their founders began to bend under the pressures of reality. By the early 20th century, many fraternities did not resemble their original purpose (Eskes 2). Many had become drinking clubs, violent, and very exclusionary. It was in reaction to this world of fraternities that Sigma Phi Epsilon was born. In 1900, Carter Ashton Jenkins, a student of Rutgers College transferred to Richmond College in Richmond, Virginia. Having become a member of the Chi Phi fraternity while at Rutgers, Jenkins missed his brotherhood, and desired to recreate it at Richmond (Eskes 2). When he petitioned the national office of Chi Phi for a chapter at Richmond, he was denied (Eskes 7). Seeing in the pre-existing fraternities of Richmond College only groups in decline, Jenkins set out to change the status quo, eliminating pledging and set ‘rush’ periods from the group’s operations, for example (Eskes 8). Together with eleven other men, Jenkins convinced the faculty of Richmond College to allow Sigma Phi Epsilon to be created under the stipulation that “this fraternity will be different.” Thus SigEp from the very start set out to impact the world of fraternities, returning them to a position of truly benefitting the students. This drive to reform and return to founding ideals is one that pushes SigEp to this day. It asks of its members to not judge themselves based on the actions of those around them, but rather based on their own moral
compass. This desire to make a fraternity experience relevant and positive contributed to the creation and implementation of the Balanced Man Program.

World War Two brought another significant shift in the history of fraternities. Men returning from the war were able to go to college on the GI Bill. For this reason, college campuses saw a huge influx of student-veterans. As these men settled into collegiate life, they found that the missed the camaraderie of the army. Joining a fraternity seemed a good way to regain that sense of group identity and purpose. On a more practical note, the colleges into which these men enrolled were often lacking the infrastructure to accommodate so many students at once. For this reason, housing was in high demand and low supply. While the schools were unable to house the veterans, fraternity houses welcomed them. For these reasons, Greek Life experienced a huge spike in membership post-war.

During this time period hazing became prevalent among fraternities. In his study of hazing within the Greek community, Wrongs of Passage, Hank Nuwer writes that hazing is an act which “usually involves an individual or individuals who hurt, harm, or terrorize another individual through actions forbidden by statute or by similar law governing a hazing situation” (165-166). According to the laws of the state of Michigan, hazing is violence connected with initiation or membership within a group. A boot camp mentality began to develop in fraternities. As subsequent groups of men came and went from college during the 50s through the 90s, the hazing got worse. What had originally been intended as a way for young men to prove their commitment to the fraternity had lost its significance, as the current undergraduates did not understand its purpose. With each passing year, men fell into the cycle of pledging, being hazed,
and hazing in turn. With each new group, a desire emerged to make it just a little bit harder for the new members, not for the benefit of edifying the new members or creating more of a strong brotherhood, but for the enjoyment of the current active members of the chapter. As the process turned its focus away from developing the new members and onto entertaining the older members, the system lost its effectiveness and took a turn for the dangerous.

Seeing an urgent need to end the dangerous practices of some fraternity chapters and with the public crying for reformation of fraternity culture, Sigma Phi Epsilon took a historical step to reverse the damage done to Greek Life. Many of the stereotypes that many people hold when considering Greek Life come from the 1980s and 90s. By this time, the practices of hazing, alcohol abuse and sexual assault had been pervasive for some time, but now people started to take a stand against these issues, and against fraternities in the process. To change the very culture of their fraternity, SigEp began to pioneer a system that would bring the fraternity back to its founding ideals, make it a tool of edification for its membership, and restore fraternity chapters to a place of relevance on college campuses across the nation. That system became the Balanced Man Program. Surveying the top performing chapters nation-wide to see what commonalities in membership experience existed, a committee of undergraduate members, alumni, and student affairs professionals developed the Balanced Man Program to provide a more wholesome and holistic fraternity experience. However, the program was merely theoretical, it needed to be tested. The first campus to make the radical switch from older methods to the Balanced Man Program was Dartmouth, a campus with a deep fraternity tradition and a culture of prevalent hazing. The program was a success there, proving it could work. From
then on, it spread to other chapters, and eventually went nation-wide. Today, the vast majority of SigEp chapters follow the philosophical tenets of the Balanced Man Program, with the few that still require pledging held to the same scrutiny, standards of membership edification, and zero tolerance of hazing as Balanced Man chapters. While negative practices still exist in the Greek community, and negative stereotypes remain largely dominant in public perception, Sigma Phi Epsilon has made significant strides towards the rebuilding of the Greek experience across the country.

**Fraternity Stereotypes**

The stereotypes of fraternities are prevalent in the perception of both the public and members of fraternities themselves. Propagated by the continued stereotypical actions of fraternity men, the pervasive image of Greek life is one of deadly hazing, substance abuse, sexual assault, and exclusion. Websites like Total Frat Move (TFM), which were originally designed to be comical satires and exaggerations of the truth, have now become the lens through which fraternities are perceived. Worse than the general public buying into this image of fraternity is the fact that young men entering college approach Greek life with the same ideas in mind. These potential new members are either turned off completely by what they perceive, reducing the chances they will even consider joining a fraternity, or they want what they see on TFM. Pressured to live up to what they consider to be a real fraternity experience, new members often try to imitate the TFM stereotype, mirroring their personal actions on its example and trying to influence their brothers and chapter to do the same.
Nuwer enumerates examples of negative behaviors within the Greek community resulting in negative and severe consequences. Nuwer writes of one example of a hazing culture within a chapter in which the members had convinced themselves that hazing was “ordinary,” and “tradition,” failing to see the negative effects it was having on their new members and chapter as a whole (164). Nuwer’s example is one of a group of people who have bought into the negative societal expectations placed on Greek Life, and who propagate the stereotype by playing into it. The pressure placed on college fraternity men to portray the stereotypes handed to them is a major factor in the continuation of such negative behaviors. For this reason, a new member education program must confront these preconceptions up front and challenge them. My program is designed to not only make our new members aware of the societal expectations placed on fraternity men, but also to build an image of the chapter as a safe haven of like minded men designed to counteract the stereotypes. By doing so, the goal is to create a safe environment for college men to take a stand against the negative fraternity stereotype, and live a life that is a testament to the positive impacts a fraternity experience can have on a young man’s life.

**Greek Life at WMU**

At the time of my program’s creation, Greek Life was in a state of decline at Western Michigan University. With only about five percent of the student body identifying as a member of the Greek community, it was clear that the general perception of the student body was that Greek Life was not for them (see Appendix C). Whether these students had an actively negative stance on Greek Life, or simply considered it irrelevant to their college experiences, it was clear that the state of fraternities at Western had much room to grow. While some chapters exceeded
the averages of the general student population at WMU, many groups fell significantly below the standings of their peers. An obvious disconnect exists here. While fraternities at WMU profess to build up their members into successful students, professionals, and people, the data tells a different story. Examining the numbers, it became clear that the status quo at WMU for Greeks was not impressive, and a new and innovative way of approaching new member education would be a great way to attempt to reverse the trend of poor performance.

**SigEp at WMU**

A good maxim for many things in life is to leave something better than you found it. When I first joined Western Michigan University’s chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon, it was not the great chapter it is today. This is not to say that the chapter was not a good one filled with many good members, but rather that it fell significantly short of the ideal fraternal experience which I had been sold during recruitment; it had the potential to be so much more. As I spent more time in the chapter, I began to sense that the limiting factor on the group’s success was a division in the mentalities among the membership. This division was not a stark one at all times, but one strong enough to cause push-back from certain members of the chapter on the ideas offered by men wanting to drive the chapter closer to the ideal. This chapter culture of division stemmed from two different visions of fraternity and progress possessed by the factions. One group followed the principles of the Balanced Man put forth by our Founders and Ritual, while the other sought to embody a more stereotypical version of a ‘frat boy.’ These differing visions pitted members against each other and blocked progress. Something needed to be done to create
a shared vision for the chapter and ensure that no such division existed in the minds of the newer generations of membership.

In order to understand the context of my program and its desired outcomes, it is necessary to know some of the more concrete details of the chapter pertaining to the performance of the membership such as grades, participation in chapter leadership and events, and adherence to the tenets of the Balanced Man Program. It was my desire to use a solid new member program to create good practices and mentalities within the newest members to improve these facets of the chapter as those new members assumed positions of involvement and leadership within the chapter. It is necessary to note that that following sketch of the chapter situation is my opinion, though it is one largely held by other members of the chapter either current or alumnus.

To understand the formative experience of new members that drove me to reform, consideration must be given to the recruitment practices of the chapter. As the first interaction a young man has with a fraternity, recruitment is a surefire way to start a new member off on his journey as a Greek. However, the methods used for recruitment can start members off in incredibly different ways. When I joined my chapter, a split existed between recruitment practices. One group made a point to recruit solely on the values of the organization and on the ideal chapter experience. This drew in men who were excited to participate in the Balanced Man Program and better their collegiate experience. In contrast, the other group recruited, albeit informally, selling a more stereotypical experience. Despite the best efforts of the values-based group, men were joining the chapter under the premise that the fraternity was simply a drinking club, a place to make wild college memories. I do not mean to disparage this aspect of the
fraternity. It is true that fun is a necessary part of a successful college experience. However, overselling the fun started new members off on a foot that ran contrary to the ideals of SigEp. In order to reconcile the split in new membership between those sold on joining essentially two different chapters, I saw a need for a new member curriculum that was open and honest about the experience and expectations of being a member of SigEp. By stressing the ideals of the Balanced Man, I hoped to provide the experience sold to members by value-based recruiting, while either persuading those recruited differently as to the value of the BMP or encouraging them to seek the stereotypical experience they desired elsewhere.

Another issue that necessitated a revamping of the new member education of the chapter was the old method of new member education itself. Prior to my revitalizing, the program was dull, repetitive, and did not feel much different from the introductory class in which many new members were already obligated by the school to spend most of their day. The meetings were weekly, half-an-hour sessions held in the same room of the chapter house, and focused on various topics. The topics themselves were important, but the method of delivery turned off the attention of many members, causing much relevant information to go un-retained and unimplemented. There was little continuity of the program from semester to semester. Each new term brought a new set of coordinators who felt as if they must reinvent the wheel as their predecessors had left them with no guidance written or otherwise. For this reason coordinators found themselves repeating the mistakes of previous semesters. As innovation was not possible, the groundwork of prior coordinators from which to build not having been laid, the programming took on a lowest common denominator state of dullness that did not get new members excited,
involved, or equipped to begin their journey as fraternity men. It became evident that a written work and formalized system of revision would be necessary if the program was to progress and get more effective each time it was implemented. For this reason, my program strives to take new members out of familiar environments, making the learning experiential, but also provides instruction for the coordinators on how to evaluate the program, revise it, and pass it down to their successors so that the next coordinators can try new things, remove aspects that did not work, and continue to refine the new member experience.

One of the easiest ways to assess the success of a group that claims to contribute to the academic success of its members is by examining that group’s grade point average. For this reason, the public often judges fraternities by their grades. In the fall semester of 2010, the chapter’s GPA had begun to plateau. Coming off a steady, albeit slow, increase from the years prior, the progress had become less noticeable from semester to semester. In an attempt to aid struggling brothers and keep the performance of the chapter optimal, high standards and academic rehabilitation programs were enforced in an academic probation system. If a brother fell below the minimum grade requirement after any given semester, he would be placed on academic probation. In this program, the brother would be required to study under supervision for a certain number of hours during the week, keep careful track of his own progress, and report that progress to the chapter’s Resident Scholar, a graduate student (often an alumnus of the fraternity) living in the chapter house exchanging time managing the chapter’s grades for room and board in the chapter facility. While on academic probation, members were not permitted to attend social events. Finally, if a member failed to make grades for two consecutive semesters,
he would be expelled from the chapter. This system was successful for many members who upheld their end of personal responsibility to correct their own poor grades. However, the system fell into decline. Exceptions to the rules regarding social events and even expulsion were often made. For this reason the dominant mentality among the brothers became that making grades was more of a guideline than an absolute rule. To counteract this inattention to the rules of the chapter, my new member program places an emphasis on the importance of maintaining good grades, not only for personal success, but also for the success of the chapter. A stress is placed on good study habits, a sense of duty to uphold the rules of the organization, and a thorough understanding of the rules as just that: rules.

When it came to participation and leadership within and outside of the chapter, the members were on very different levels. Knowing that positively impacting student organizations other than the chapter contributes greatly to public perception and success of the chapter, many members strove to involve themselves in various on-campus groups. Brothers were involved as Fall Welcome Ambassadors, Orientation Student Leaders, the Inter-fraternity Council (IFC), Hillel, and other service groups. Through involvement these brothers helped to challenge the stereotype of Greek Life while building their own resumes. Following the requirements of the Balanced Man Program, these men got involved and sought opportunities for personal growth. However, some brothers were less than motivated. These men were content to limit their own experiences to those within their comfort zone, and sought little personal development. This being in direct conflict with the tenet of continuous development included in the BMP’s philosophy, my program is designed to counteract this spirit of complacency early. From the
beginning expectations for involvement were laid out and opportunities to lead were provided. Early encouragement to be an ambassador for SigEp to the community through involvement was understood as key towards developing members who would be more apt to branch out beyond the chapter.

As is to be expected, this split between involved and under-involved members outside of the chapter carried into chapter leadership and involvement in chapter activities. Like many organizations, the membership makeup of involvement fell into a rough bell curve. A small portion of men comprising the front end of the curve were those extremely committed to the success of the chapter, and took it upon themselves to lead. However, at the other end of the curve were those men who actively opposed the directions and stances taken by the leadership. These members were equally motivated to change the chapter, but in a direction contrary to the principles of the Balanced Man ideal. Unwilling to participate in leading and managing the chapter, these men put strain on chapter leadership as they created slack in the duties of running the chapter and actively opposed progress. This deepened the split between the leaders and the under-involved members. Those bearing the brunt of the work harbored resentment for those not doing their share, and the general population of the chapter viewed the leadership as too immersed in leadership, paying more attention to managing the chapter towards success rather than towards promoting ‘brotherhood,’ a fancy word that is often misinterpreted and misused by many in the Greek community. The tension in this relationship was often focused on one group attempting to reform the other, leading to another problem: since the two ends of the curve encompassed a relatively small number of members, the vast majority of the membership,
comprising the middle of the bell curve, was left unattended. While leadership was so busy trying to figure out how to reform members who were working against them, they neglected to develop programming and opportunities for growth for the members that needed only a little bit of motivation to get involved and follow the tenets of the BMP.

Fixing this neglect is one of the main points of my new member program. While the program emphasizes the need for members to buy into and adhere to the tenets of the BMP thus off-boarding those early who would become the back end of the curve, my program also creates opportunities for the general population to get involved. Leadership within the new member group, encouraged participation with the cabinets of EBoard members, and coordination and execution of service events ensures that each new member has some experience with chapter involvement. Setting this precedent early, the bell curve of the chapter begins to shift towards the involved pole as these new members assume more active leadership roles in the chapter and fall into the cycle of influencing subsequent new members to do the same.

Another issue that my new member program seeks to remedy is alumni involvement and support. When I first joined my chapter, alumni were seldom involved. Previous years of bad membership had produced bad alumni, and had made the chapter leadership reluctant to trust any returning members in the training of new members and general interaction with the chapter. My program seeks to shift that trend. From the beginning, membership is taught as a lifetime commitment. We do not stop being Greeks once we graduate. On the contrary, that is when the real work begins as we establish our own lives in an attempt to position ourselves to give back to the organization that helped shape us. This lesson is incorporated in the new member program. A
trip to the University Archives helps to form a connection in the minds of the new members between the chapter of the present and the men of the past; attending a SigEp official new member camp (EDGE) places them in contact with alumni and undergraduate volunteers who are fulfilling their lifetime obligation to give back; a trip downtown and talk with the Resident Scholar, an active alumnus, about time management and study skills gives the new members a model early-on of what giving back looks like. As with all the other problems addressed by better new member education, the hope is that a solid precedent will carry through the undergraduate experience, and will eventually create out of the new members alumni who are excited to give back, in turn motivating the next generation of SigEps to do the same.

**Review of Relevant Literature**

In order to understand the elements included in my new member education program it is necessary to understand some of the scholarship and theories related to the development of students particularly in institutions of higher learning. While my program was not conceived with careful consulting of development theory as I went, it did stem from my background working with campus offices such as WMU’s First Year Experience Office and the Lee Honors College. Without actually studying the material first-hand, I had learned from student affairs professionals the framework of how to successfully develop a program geared toward student success. Reviewing the literature has allowed me to back up the elements of my program with the actual scholarship in the field of higher education student affairs. Although this is by no means an exhaustive list of the literature whose elements are present in my work, I have chosen a few that I believe to be core pieces, fundamental to my program and its goal of breaking down
stereotypes and developing the members of my chapter into successful students, professionals, people, and fraternity men during their time in college and beyond.

_Chickering and Reisser – The Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory_

Chickering and Reisser’s theory of the Seven Vectors examines the areas of a person’s life in which they develop, how those areas, or vectors, build off of one another, and how transitioning over significant gaps in experience generate opportunities for growth to occur. The gap targeted by the Vectors theory is the one experienced by students as they transition from a life of oversight, management by parents or parental figures, into one of relative autonomy: the transition into college. This transition being a difficult time in a person’s life, collegiate organizations must provide for the development of their members in the seven vectors to provide them with an enriched experience during and after college. In the introduction to the second edition of _Education and Identity_, Reisser states that “institutions that impart transferable skills and relevant knowledge, bolster confidence and creativity, and engender social responsibility and self-directed learning are needed more than ever” (44). Focus on development in these areas is necessary for addressing the “whole student.” Such programming treats a student as a person, not simply as a singular role such as student, athlete, leader, but rather as a composite of dynamic roles and responsibilities. Institutions that focus on developing the seven vectors provide an experience that does more than impart knowledge or prepare a person for a career. Reisser states that “without a developmental philosophy at the core of the college, it can become a dispensary of services, a training tank for jobs that may not exist, a holding tank for those not sure what to do next” (44). Reisser describes a collegiate experience that is devoid of actual higher learning,
and simply prepares a student to fill a specific professional role only rather than promote a civic, interpersonal, and self-aware lifestyle. In an effort to avoid such stagnate or singular experiences for their students, colleges and collegiate organizations must address the seven vectors in ways tailored specifically to their student-bodies and situations.

The first vector is Developing Competence. This vector is further broken down into three specific areas that must be addressed by programming, and provides the basis for the development of the whole person carried out by the remaining vectors. The first subcategory is Intellectual Competence. In this area, students must first master content. This is the nuts and bolts information pertaining to any stage in a person’s life whether it is college, fraternity, a job, or parenthood. After the content is mastered, it must be analyzed. The ability to take in preexisting knowledge and compare it with new data is a skill that is crucial for approaching new situations and revising actions and decisions. Included in this new data is diversity. This is not necessarily ethnic, racial, or cultural diversity, but rather new perspectives. Armed with these perspectives, students have new frames of reference from which to compare when making decisions.

The next area is Physical Competence. Here we have development in the areas of health and fitness. Along with the immediate benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle, adhering to a routine of healthy living helps produce self-discipline. Once the self has been addressed in the physical aspect, a group dynamic may be introduced. This element of competition allows for self-appraisal and evaluation by others to help students gauge their strengths and areas for improvement against those of their peers. In addition, the development of interest in a healthy
lifestyle and habits helps create lifelong patterns of living and contributes to the building of a sense of self-identity.

Finally, Interpersonal Competence must be developed. On a basic level, this includes learning how to transmit one’s own thoughts, feelings, and directions into effective communication. Also, a student must learn how to receive the communications of others, becoming a good listener. This give and take of communication constitutes the building of cooperative skills. Once these first level skills are developed, the more complex skills of empathy, group identity, and a shared vision can be developed. It is this development beyond oneself that allows the other vectors to come into play.

The next vector is Managing Emotions. As a student transitions over the gap into college, many emotions powerful enough to derail the education process are present (Reisser 46). The goal of development targeting this vector should not be the elimination of these emotions, but the management of them. The first step to managing emotions is identifying where you stand in regard to them. Some overly exhibit their emotions, and need to develop methods of reeling them in. For others, emotions are rarely shown, and a good first step is opening up to those around them in incremental ways. In either case, good student development should encourage introspection and evaluation of emotions by each student on an individual level, as well as equip them with basic methods for taking next steps in their emotional development. In the process of mitigating negative emotions, positive emotions should as well be identified and embraced. Feelings such as wonder, joy, and connection allow a student to assimilate into a group or community while still retaining a sense of individuality.
The next vector is Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence. This vector deals with the aspect of the transition to college life regarding the gap between previous reliance on the guidance and support of others to the relative freedom from outside opinions and direction. In this vector, students are separated from parental figures, and mitigate this separation by an increased reliance on peers and group identity. Development programs addressing this vector must equip students for self-assurance and motivated action. Once the self is solidified, a need is often recognized by a student to be an individual in connection with others. Development programs must encourage healthy assimilation into a group. That is, a method by which the student is able to rely on a peer support network without losing the ability to identify and act as an individual. Programs focusing on this vector should foster relationships that are well defined and mutually beneficial.

Logically following increased interdependence is the next vector, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships. The base of this vector is tolerance for others. On a broad level, this can mean intercultural; diversity in issues such as race, class, or gender. On a specific level, this means appreciating the differences existing between the personalities of individuals. In addition to widening the perspective base allowing for better and more informed decision making as outlined by the first vector, this appreciation for others as individuals and as members of a background different from the student’s own allows for a willingness to get close. This builds group unity and interdependence. Therefore, a program that wishes to build unity among a group must also stress tolerance to diversity so that members of the group may feel comfortable around one another first, and later around people existing outside of the group.
Once a student develops the ability to view different peoples with tolerance, they begin to establish personal identity in the context of the diversity around them. Therefore, Establishing Identity is the fifth vector. It involves the composite development of all the prior vectors. This vector is further subdivided into seven categories; all dealing with comfort with different aspects of one’s own self and ownership of these areas as making up individuality. The areas involve comfort with preexisting elements of self such as appearance, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The following areas involve comfort with one’s self in context with others. For example, sense of self in historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts must be encouraged by development programming if a student is to progress through this vector. Within the area of self in the context of others is clarification through group identity or other social roles, as well as feedback received from trusted people in a student’s life. This makes organizations on a college campus so crucial for giving students a sense of belonging and validation. Used as a formal tool of developing this sense of self, development programming in an organization can help build self-acceptance and eventual self-esteem. As a student gains this perspective of confidence, they are able to integrate their own stable sense of identity into society as a whole.

Once a clear understanding of self is created, a student may be able to define goals for the future more clearly. Thus, the sixth vector is Developing Purpose. Here, students learn how to direct energy and desire in order to move forward into actual action towards goals. Here, developmental programming may help by teaching methods of goal setting, seeking guidance and help moving towards goals, and ways to measure success or ways to improve once a goal has been met. However, goals must not be identified strictly in the sense of career aspirations.
Reisser states that, for many, college is merely a step in their vocational path, not a holistic experience designed to deepen perspectives on self or the world around them (50). In order to fully develop a student as a person and not just a professional, self-reflection should be encouraged by developmental programming. Once this introspection has been encouraged, students should be guided to integrate this self-knowledge into goal setting, identifying where they fit best as a person in the post-college world, and also by setting goals for further personal growth. Another skill that is learned in this vector is not only setting goals, but also the ability to be flexible as reality inevitably deviates from the plan. Compromise is important, but goals must always be kept in mind. Although the path may not always be the intended straight shot, steps must always be taken intentionally toward goals when challenges arise.

Finally, the seventh vector in Chickering and Reisser’s model is Developing Integrity. In this vector, students move beyond the hard lines of black and white in regards to their own values and sense of morality and purpose. In this vector, students are confronted with the value-systems of others, compare and contrast the two, find a balance between them, establish a respecting relationship, and in some cases revise personal values. Here, students are able to hold fast to beliefs and values not simply because they are absolute in their minds, but because they are tried and true. Also in this vector, students develop a sense of congruence; that is, putting the values held personally into practice. As students learn to let their developed values guide their lives, a firm sense of self becomes re-integrated into all the aspects of the previous vectors.
Rentz – Orientation Programs

In her chapter in *Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* dealing with the function and relevance of orientation programs on college campuses, Audrey Rentz lays out the historical context of orientation programs, their general structure, as well as goals and the effective achievement of those goals. She begins with collegiate orientation in its first incarnation. She points to Harvard of the 1840s which encouraged mentoring relationships between older students and newer to “counsel and befriend the young lads” (Rentz 238). With this early component of mentorship in mind, Rentz shows that throughout history, student affairs professionals have defined and redefined the official language of orientation, but the core tenets of genuine relationships, communication of best practices for success, and an emphasis on collegiate academics have existed throughout.

Rentz then treats the different models for orientation programs that may be adopted by an institution, and acknowledges the debate existing over which one is best. Whether it is a day-long summer program, a week-long program, or a for-credit course designed to equip new students for success, each program has its advantages and disadvantages. Rentz points out the viewpoint of some campus professionals that orientation should be a continuous-development process of the student as a whole person, lasting even beyond collegiate years. Others hold that the focus of college should be academics. Therefore, the shorter the time spent developing successful life-skills outside of the classroom in the new students, the better. In addition to these options for models, Rentz also discusses two differing “philosophical viewpoints” on the content of orientation programs. A “microcosmic” approach stresses education about the day-to-day
activities related to being a student at a specific institution. Whether it is navigating the school’s webpage, seeing an advisor, or the process of joining a student organization, this perspective believes that success in the daily actions of a college student will produce success. The “macrocosmic” viewpoint emphasizes communication of abstract ideas related to college and the pursuit of ideals within academia; teaching students about the goals of the institution, the benefits of mental and physical health and development, and the need for higher education in general. In short, one believes that success will come through being equipped to handle the daily life of a college student while the other seeks to inspire students to the point where they learn the minutia on their own. Rentz acknowledges that in the end, elements of both must be present to have a successful orientation program.

Finally, Rentz discusses the goals of orientation programs, characteristics of successful programs, and the need for such programs. Supported by evidence, the author argues that institutions that conduct an orientation show increased numbers of retention. Rentz also discusses the importance for the student. Orientation, Rentz says, is a way for the student to become acclimated to a new environment, learn new skills, and communicate the expectations and ideals of the institution, allowing the new student to feel comfortable in understanding their new role as college student. Rentz also stresses the importance of teaching emotional skills and self-awareness along with facilitating the creation of a social community among students. Peer relationships are stressed, specifically mentoring relationships. This is all in an attempt to help the new student feel comfortable in a new environment.
In his chapter within *Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*, Edward Whipple presents Greek Life in the context of its appearance to collegians outside of the Fraternity Sorority Life system, both students and faculty. Whipple opens his chapter by calling Greek Life “undoubtedly one of the most controversial student activities programs” (313). He draws attention to the fact that ever since the formation of Greek lettered organizations, debate has existed on their relevance to student life both within and outside the fraternity, and as to whether or not the risky behaviors often propagated by Greeks are worth the benefits they bring to their memberships and campuses.

Whipple outlines some of the issues people take with fraternities. He cites critics who call fraternities “exclusionary, sexist, … contrary to the values colleges and universities hope to convey to students” (313). These values, Whipple elaborates, are mainly academic ones. Fraternities run contrary to this academic mission, the author says, by “providing a ‘legitimate’ campus subculture for students to associate with other students who … place a higher priority on social life than academic pursuits” (Whipple 314). By ‘legitimate,’ Whipple seeks to draw attention to the fact that these groups often validate the actions of students who care little for academics. By ‘social life,’ Whipple means those interactions with others that are deemed frivolous, rather than those used to build interpersonal skills and effectiveness. To prove this subculture of “anti-intellectualism,” Whipple draws attention to the membership makeup of many chapters, stating: “while some chapters may have some of the most outstanding scholars on campus, they also may have some members in grave academic difficulty” (314). In addition
to the disparaging of academic life within fraternities, Whipple says that often Greeks are intolerant of diversity issues such as race, gender, and socioeconomic class. Finally, Whipple discusses hazing practices and the prevalence of alcohol in such practices. Whipple cites a study conducted by Arnold and Kuh, which concludes that alcohol is a major part of fraternity lifestyle, but moreover it is used heavily to introduce new members into that lifestyle (316).

Lastly, Whipple outlines some guidelines for university staff on educating Greeks on the importance of academics – thereby integrating them into the general collegiate culture – and on the importance of healthy membership practices thereby mitigating the damages done by hazing and substance abuse. He cites research which states that Greek Life advising should focus on six key areas: development of the students: academically, personally, and interpersonally; leadership and communication skills; involvement in campus and community life; fostering of brotherhood; promotion of the relevance of Greek life to those outside it; and increased tolerance to diversity (315). He also introduces research on how these goals may be effectively achieved. Among these guidelines are: effective communication; programming frontloaded with organizational expectations of membership; education for cultural change targeted at the newest members; and open channels into leadership roles (315). While Whipple concludes saying that Greek life can be a beneficial addition to campus life, it must be closely watched and relatively tightly controlled so that the institution can determine whether or not the Greek system is working with or against its institutional goals.
Analysis of New Member Curriculum

With the above literature in mind, and drawing from other student development theories and tested practices, I will analytically examine my program session by session. In this I will match components of my program with elements advocated or addressed by the literature, discuss practical issues of implementing this program, and suggest further revisions for future implementation or construction of similar programs. The complete coordinator and participant guides can be located in the appendices A and B respectively.

Session One

The goal of this meeting is to provide a first contact with new members to each other and to the older members of the chapter who will be guiding them through the process. The meeting model is broken up into two portions: the first is a section of intense physical activity such as Ultimate Frisbee at the intramural fields; the second is a brief content heavy section dealing with fraternity values and expectations. This portion serves to reiterate the experience sold to them during a values-based recruiting process. While most of the meetings of the Sigma Challenge were held on Monday nights during the first semester my program was implemented, this session was held on a Thursday night. This close proximity to the weekend is designed to link the activities to leisurely fun and development outside of the classroom. By playing a sport before delivering the information, the goal is to release some energy pent up from a week of sitting in classes, and to make the new members more receptive to information shared about their new organization after having developed some preliminary bonds through competitive sports. The topic of the content sections deals with elements of the Balanced Man ideal, with an emphasis on
Sound Body being linked to the activity just completed. The why of SigEp is discussed, and the coordinators share their own passion for what living a life striving after the ideals of SigEp can do, and what an incredible experience the brotherhood gained has been for them. In order for this portion to be successful, the coordinators must convey their own passion for SigEp. Personal anecdotes on their part are encouraged to make the discussion more lifelike and appealing to the new members. Once the coordinators have gotten the new members excited about their journey in SigEp, they hand out the participant’s guide, and ask that the new members review the materials located within before the next meeting, the time for which has already been determined and noted in the participant’s guide. By providing this information up front, new members can familiarize themselves with the schedule and materials covered for the entirety of the program. This transparency creates accountability on the part of the participants to have a grasp on the information included, and on the part of the coordinators to hold weekly meetings with predetermined and prepared content.

This layer of accountability also constitutes the first step of the onboarding or off-boarding process mentioned earlier. Here, the values of the Balanced Man are stressed with an emphasis on Sound Body so as to reassure men joining for the ideals of SigEp that they will be provided the experience sold to them in recruitment. At the same time men who joined seeking a traditional ‘frat’ experience are confronted with an organization that seeks to break down the stereotypes they seek, and are encouraged to seek that experience in a different organization.
In the coordinator’s guide, there is always a section dedicated to notes on the session. These notes are designed so that coordinators can jot down their thoughts on the session’s effectiveness and ideas for improvement in real time as the session is happening. This falls directly in line with the Continuous Development component of the Balanced Man Program philosophy. It also provides a forum for the coordinators to write down notes pertaining to their own experience as a facilitator. Like the philosophical tenet of the BMP that stresses the importance of mentoring relationships dictates, opportunities are given for the undergraduate men implementing this program to step into the role of mentor, possibly for the first time. The implementation of this program is designed to be just as much a growing experience for the coordinators as it is the participants. Constant self-reflection is encouraged so that the coordinators may evaluate and improve the program and themselves in the process.

The biggest component of this session is experiential learning. The goal of this session is to learn about the value of a life lived by the principles of the Balanced Man by participating in such activities as are consistent with those principles. As the new members engage in Sound Body activities, they grow accustomed to pursuing the ideals of SigEp, and draw close to the community of men seeking the same ideals. This objective is consistent with Chickering and Reisser’s first of the Seven Vectors: Developing Competency. Here, new members develop the physical competence, which Reisser describes as “athletic achievement … fitness, and self-discipline” (46). This is important because it puts the ideals of the Balanced Man at the forefront, the base off of which all other development in SigEp must be built. In addition, the goal of establishing bond between these men from day one is consistent with Chickering and
Reisser’s idea of interpersonal competency, described as the move to “align personal agendas with the goals of the group” (Reisser 46). Just as Chickering and Reisser place the establishment of core competencies for physical activity and group cohesion at the base of their development philosophy, so too is my program based on an emphasis placed on a healthy mind in a healthy body, and a strong bond among the members of the fraternity chapter.

Looking back at the coordinator’s guide, one change I would make immediately and throughout the program is in the terminology. Instead of referring to the new members as “Sigmas,” I would use more inclusive terminology such as “members in the Sigma Challenge.” In the past, divisions have become visible between men who join during different semesters, known often as “classes” (for example, Fall 2010 class). By using language such as this to refer to one group as a whole, these divisions and subsequent hierarchy are encouraged. As these ‘Sigmas’ progress through the following rites of passage, they will see no problem with referring to themselves in terms of their challenge: ‘Phis’ or ‘Epsilons.’ This class distinction can be used maliciously thereby making the terms pledge and Sigma nearly interchangeable in connoted meaning. Eliminating this terminology will set a precedent of equality in the minds of the newest members, a mindset that they will carry with them throughout their time as an undergrad and into positions of chapter leadership. This is consistent with the tenet of the BMP of Equal Rights and Responsibilities.

Session Two

Session Two constitutes the first meeting to be held at the normal weekly time established for the remainder of the program. The goal of this program is to convey in-depth the
why of SigEp, the benefits of adhering to a lifestyle governed by the Balanced Man Ideal, and the expectations of membership within the chapter. This is a more solidified process of on or off-boarding that was started in the previous session. Once a more formal introduction of the coordinators has been made, the session turns toward discussing elements of the Balanced Man Ideal and the structure of the Balanced Man Program. As these topics are discussed in conjunction with how they relate to breaking down the frat stereotype, members are subtly encouraged to remain in the chapter, or seek a more stereotypical experience elsewhere. In addition, key events in the Sigma Challenge such as selecting a Big Brother and taking a culminating test of requisite knowledge is iterated up front so that the new members are accountable for planning accordingly to participate in such events. Throughout all this, the coordinators should link each facet of the program back to the why of SigEp: building balanced men. Each aspect of the program should be justified to the new members as being a key component in furthering their development into successful men and college students. In addition to the idealistic expectations of new members regarding such things as personal conduct and the idea of transitioning into a role representative of the fraternity, pragmatic expectations such as dues payment and minimum GPA for good standing within the chapter are also discussed. These are topics that should have been already communicated during recruitment, but must be reiterated. After all, the weeks leading up to these men joining the chapter are often ones of huge transition as most of the chapter’s newest members are incoming first-year students. They are being inundated daily with much new information, and a good portion of that information is likely to go un-retained.
Coordinators must be careful to avoid a lecture style. The new members will spend the majority of their time in class or doing course work as they transition into college. The goal here is to avoid linking the development done in the fraternity so closely with classroom work that it becomes a chore in the minds of the new members. While the gravity of membership and the benefits therein must be stressed, the fraternity experience should be presented as a choice made to develop one’s self alongside their schoolwork, not simply as another requirement of college. The coordinators can avoid presenting this weighty and lengthy information in lecture format by breaking it up with group discussion and answering questions.

The on-boarding/off-boarding process described here is one that is reminiscent of Rentz’s description of orientation programs being for both parties, in this case the chapter and the new members, to assess the “congruence between student and institutional ‘fit’” (242). Because young men come to college with preconceived notions of fraternity and join with a distinct desire for a particular experience in mind, this session and the program as a whole provide the new member with a chance to decide whether the SigEp experience is the one he desires, and for the chapter to decide whether the new member will be a beneficial asset to the chapter or a liability that needs to be removed early. Furthermore, this session is linked to Rentz’s definition of orientation as it provides information early on about the expectation for new members (245-246). This is important because research has linked orientation programs to increases in retention (Rentz 242). Just as these programs are necessary for a healthy college or university, they are necessary for a healthy fraternity experience and the sustainability of the chapter.
In addition to the benefits of sharing information and expectations up front being linked to the successes of orientation programs, they are also consistent with Chickering and Reisser’s first vector of developing intellectual competence. As this information in presented to the new members, it is constantly backed up and justified with the why of SigEp and of the Sigma Challenge, which is to help new members overcome the transitional gap to college and fraternity while setting them up on a path for enriching continuous development. The cognitive leap between activity and purpose, program and philosophy is one that asks new members to analyze data, making it consistent with the development constituting the base of the seven vectors (Reisser 45).

The biggest revision of this session in hindsight comes in the concept of the Sigma Leadership Board. The idea for this concept was to have an upfront opportunity for a few of the members in the Challenge to have an experience in formal positions of chapter leadership in the hopes that this would provide motivation for them to continue their involvement in the chapter. These members were to be elected by the other members of the Challenge, and were designed to coordinate events for the new members specifically such as a service day, and carry important information back to the new members, thereby solving some communications issues that existed in the chapter, and ultimately solve accountability problems by communicating information and expectations.

The idea was sound in theory, but flawed in practice. In the semester I implemented the program, the members of the Challenge elected to the positions were not the most qualified, but rather the most charismatic. As was mentioned above in the chapter sketch, the trend in my
chapter is that the members with misconceptions about what directions the chapter should take are often the ones with the most outgoing and loudest voices. The same was true of the members elected to the presidency and vice-presidency of the Sigma Challenge. Both these members were not bought into the process of continuous development and SigEp’s stance against the hierarchical membership that results from pledging. These members wanted a more traditional pledging experience and sought to use their influential position to make their experience such. This specific example brings a fundamental flaw with the Sigma Leadership Board concept to light. While the intentions to build leadership skills behind its inception are sound, it is simply too much like the experience offered in a pledge model chapter. Often, pledge classes have elected officials that function in the same way and with the same backing philosophy as the Sigma Leadership Board. Trying to reconcile having elected positions so early on with members that may or may not fully understand the philosophical tenets of the BMP is too dangerous. The authority given to inexperienced members before they understand the base of equal rights and responsibilities can be misused, and too closely linked in the minds of the new members and the chapter at large to pledge model systems.

As with the problem with the first session regarding the use of exclusive language, another issue with this session in general is the focus on creating unity within the ‘class.’ Similar to the Sigma Leadership Board, the ideology behind the inception of this idea was well-intending, but in practice emphasizing the bond between members that join during the same semester leads to exclusion of subsequent newer members. If member class unity is stressed during the first few weeks of a member’s experience, he will be more likely to amplify the class
divisions as he gets older and takes on more leadership roles within the chapter. Although this emphasis did not cause problems during the first semester I implemented the program, it is a potential gateway for misguided members to devolve the program into a pledging process, and therefore must be removed as the program is revised. In its place, chapter unity should be emphasized and propagated. This is consistent with the ideology of equal rights and responsibilities that is put into practice via a single tiered membership model. In order to accomplish this goal, I would suggest that the revised program put an emphasis on newer members seeking out and developing a mentoring relationship with an older member. This is, however, not a one-way street with the burden of responsibility placed on the new member. Development curricula for the older members must in turn encourage them to seek out a newer member to take under their wing and help overcome the transitional gap to college and the chapter. Thus, both the new member and older member benefit as they grow into their role as mentor or mentee. Additionally, the precedent is set for the new member that he will continue his developmental process throughout his time in college, and will eventually be expected to step into a role as a mentor, maintaining the sustainability of the program.

Session Three

This session is designed to teach the new members about the national history of SigEp, such as the names of the twelve founders and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the fraternity in 1901, and the local history of the Michigan Beta chapter. Additionally, this program teaches the structure of chapter operations. During this session, the coordinators lead the group of new members to the University Archives where they are able to access a special collection of
SigEp historical information as a teaching tool. During my employment at the Archives I created this collection, and have included some materials regarding it in the appendices. The purpose of the history presented in this session is to link present day membership to a sense of the values held by the founders when they first created the fraternity. Additionally, it covers the periods of fraternity history that gave rise to pledging and hazing to show members that these practices were never a part of the original intention for fraternities, and do not align with the founding ideology of SigEp. This is done to provide yet another opportunity to break down preconceived notions of fraternity and traditions that may exist in the minds of the new members. Additionally, a visual representation in the form of juxtaposing a chapter composite from 2001 with a very small one from 2005 offers a concrete image of our chapter’s purging of bad members in 2005. This is meant to show that we hold our members accountable and will not stand to include men who do not attempt to follow our values among our ranks. Feeling a sense of connection to the past is meant to convey the gravity of membership within SigEp, and provide the new members with a concrete example of how their lives and actions represent so many more men than just themselves. Finally, the new members are asked to reflect on the legacies of their past brothers and think about how each of their time and work within and beyond the chapter has placed the chapter in the position of success currently enjoyed today. Then, new members are encouraged to dwell on how their own time in college will leave another legacy and piece of this puzzle.

The latter half of this session centers on the content heavy subject of fraternity operations. Knowing practical things such as to whom to give dues, and the duties of the Vice President of Member Development are crucial for new members to understand the support
network existing within the chapter, and to prepare them for holding such positions in the future as they grow in the chapter. I decided to include this material during this session despite a lack of thematic link to the history portion because the history is so interactive. Involving a trip to the Archives and hands on learning, the historical section is interactive enough to warrant a pairing with more information-based material. After spending time looking at old composites, yearbooks, and event flyers, the new members are more sedentary and willing to absorb some information lecture-style. Two key take-aways from the chapter operations section are that each member of the Executive Board has a committee on which new members are encouraged to serve, and that the chapter has an Academic Probation policy that holds its members accountable to achieve the minimum standards for GPA. This is meant to get the new members involved early in order to increase their stake in the chapter, and therefore their retention in it, as well as to share information about formal rules and expectations up front so that members can hold themselves and each other accountable.

The biggest link between this session and student affairs literature comes in the vector of identifying with a group in its historical context. According to Reisser, this is a major part of development in two vectors. First, the link drawn in the mind of a student between himself and a group identity is an integral part of vector three, moving through autonomy toward interdependence. As Reisser says, the separation from parents experienced by many when they transition into college is compensated for by a reliance on “institutional reference points” (47). As a student loses constant contact with his parents, a vacuum is created in the place where a familial unit and identity used to exist. An institution, the fraternity in this case, can be a system
of support and reliance in place of such a familial unit, and indeed must be so if its members are expected to develop per the guidelines of the seven vectors theory. By strongly linking the individual to the group through a sense of long-standing lineage and tradition of relevant impact on the host college and community, these young men can begin to closely link their identity to that of the group, creating a support network in place of their families.

After this strong sense of identity in the context of the group is established, development of the student can now progress into another vector: development of identity. Here, Reisser says that key to this development is a strong “sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context” (49). If a student is to develop an identity that is freestanding and not directly taken from the group identity, elements of the group, such as the group’s historical impact, must be integrated. The goal of this development program is to push the student into establishment of identity within the whole of the group, and then through it, integrating elements of the shared group identity taught through history into the eventual creation of a self-sufficient and unique personal identity.

This session is solid as it is. Instead of looking for points of revision, I would include some notes geared toward the sustainable recurrence of this session in years to come. For example, I would add a section encouraging the Sigma Challenge coordinator to update the chapter’s collection in the Archives. Bringing new photos, newsletters, and composites will all help ensure that future generations of SigEps in Michigan Beta will be able to trace the progress of the chapter through time. In addition to this, I would include a note earlier on in the packet that makes the coordinator aware that it is their responsibility to contact the staff of the Archives in order to arrange a time for the chapter members to come in as a group. This was easy during
my time in college as all I had to do was mention to my manager that my fraternity was wanting to come in on a certain day. I took for granted the ease with which I communicated this information to my manager, and left out key written instructions for future generations as to arranging such a meeting. A few written notes pertaining to these subjects would ensure that members of my chapter will be able to reach out to the Archives long after I as a point of contact am gone.

*Session Four*

Session four centers on a physical exercise activity designed to demonstrate and teach the importance of the Sound Body aspect of the Balanced Man Ideal. In this session, members of the Sigma Challenge, the coordinators, and other members of the chapter who desire to join engage in mildly strenuous exercise as a group. This activity is designed to build camaraderie as new members see older brothers of the chapter participating in the same activities as them. For this reason, coordinator participation is crucial so that this activity does not become hazing. As was outlined in the philosophy of the Balanced Man Program, equal rights and responsibilities as well as a single tiered membership is the expectation for all member development programming. Thus, this section could be considered hazing if older members of the chapter simply told the new members to complete physical exercise without partaking it in themselves. As new members see older members participating, it sets a precedent that they too will continue their development throughout their years of college, and will be involved in the lives of subsequent new members as they one day take one a role as mentor. This emphasis on continued education and involvement is stressed in this program to begin a phase of cultural change in the chapter. The
hope is that new members who have an overwhelmingly positive and instructive experience will continue to propel the chapter closer to the ideal as they hold positions of leadership in later years.

Aside from demonstrating and discussing the Sound Mind and Sound Body aspects of the Balanced Man, this session also serves immediate tangible benefit for the new members. As the older members lead them on a light jog around campus, the older members are able to point out important features of the campus such as classroom buildings, dining halls, and the library. As a refresher since the multiple tours taken during New Student Orientation and Fall Welcome, this session functions as a campus tour to familiarize new members of the chapter with the resources of campus.

This session positions the member development experience as a “continuous and dynamic” model of student orientation discussed by Rentz in her chapter on that subject. Rentz points out that, while many dispute the ideal length of time that should be appropriated to orientation, some believe that the students benefit most from a continuous development process extended from the time of transition into college, until graduation and transition into post-collegiate life (240-241). This session acts as a case study in the continuous development model. After students have taken time during Summer Orientation and Fall Welcome to tour campus and learn about resources, here is yet another iteration of that material. Taking place weeks after Fall Welcome, this serves as a refresher for the new students to learn the layout of campus and as a chance to hear about its resources. This information communicated by fraternity brothers trusted by a new student as members of a strong peer group, the information is more
likely to be well received and retained compared to that being shared by a stranger. Additionally, the entirety of SigEp’s member development program, which extends beyond the first weeks of a member’s career and into the entirety of their college experience, functions as a continuous development model of orientation, constantly iterating information that is relevant to the student for their particular stage of development. This model follows Rentz’s example treating orientation as “a developmental process,” with the “goals of self-direction and interdependence” (241). While SigEp’s model provides the a retelling of the same information provided orientation to equip students for self-directed success, it also builds group cohesion, and therefore promotes interdependence.

To improve this session, I would include a note to the coordinators to reach out to older members of the chapter to get them involved with the physical activity. As was mentioned above, a strong show of support from other members of the chapter will set a precedent in the minds of the new members for them to do the same. In addition, these older members can add valuable insight during the portion of this session that involves open discussion about the Balanced Man Ideal. This would provide a forum for the mentor-mentee relationship stressed by the BMP. Finally, if our chapter truly is demanding equal rights and responsibilities of members in all stages of development, this session provides an excellent opportunity for the older members to put to practice what they preach and engage in a little fine-tuning of their Sound Bodies.
**Session Five**

This session is designed to introduce the new members to the downtown area of Kalamazoo, and to equip them with techniques for studying, setting goals, and managing time that will help them make the transition to college a more fluid one. During the walking tour part of this session, older members of the chapter lead groups of the new members around downtown Kalamazoo pointing out fun things like movie theaters, good restaurants for dates, and the museum. In addition, these tours include showing the new members useful landmarks such as the hospital and police station. This functions like the tours of campus given during orientation, but, going beyond the campus, it acclimates the new members to the community that supports WMU. This helps to link the identities of Western student and Kalamazoo resident in the minds of the new members, making them more likely to support the community through service and by patronizing local businesses in the future. Also, this session provides an excellent opportunity for an older member to step into the role of mentor, as more members than the Sigma Challenge coordinator alone are required to lead smaller, more intimate groups of the new members rather than a single large group.

The tour concludes in the park in the center of downtown Kalamazoo. In this peaceful setting, the session moves into its next phase: tools for success. During this portion, an alumnus or campus professional working with the chapter is invited to speak to the new members on things such as effective time management, goal setting practices, and other general techniques for personal success both in and outside of the classroom. The person delivering this talk is preferably not a fellow undergraduate. This is to add a sense of legitimacy to the techniques
discussed as the understanding is that the tools and resources being shared by the speaker are tried and true having helped him or her succeed in college and beyond. After the speaker is done with this section, the coordinator discusses the Residential Learning Community, a designation given to SigEp chapters that promote academic success by equipping their chapter facilities with things such as classroom space, implementing quiet hours, and engaging with faculty members as fellows of the chapter adding an additional resource for members of the chapter. Here, the coordinator discusses how RLC accreditation is an aspiration of Michigan Beta. This is done to introduce the concept of pursuing RLC status early in the minds of the new members in the hope that they will one day contribute to making this goal a reality.

This session functions like an orientation, but rather than acting strictly as an overview of academic resources and a campus, it provides a social orientation. Rentz acknowledges that orientation dicta of the 1950s focuses heavily on social issues such as individual “receptivity,” behavioral and communication skills to assimilate into the campus environment,” and “the development of a peer group” (244). While many of the other sessions included in my curriculum stress utilitarian information needed for success, this session takes an approach called “developmental” (Rentz 244) to use Sagaria’s terminology cited by Rentz. This approach emphasizes the student as a person, seeking to develop identity. This session attempts to link the institutional identities of WMU and Kalamazoo together in the mind of the student so as to further deepen their understanding of their own self-identity within the entire context of the campus and city communities. Adding yet another component of social context will help a
student move through the developing identity vector with a richer sense of their social, historical and cultural positionality (Reisser 49).

To improve this section, I would make a note earlier on in the program that encourages the Sigma Challenge coordinator to reach out to a campus professional or chapter alumnus ahead of time to ask them to participate in this session. When I implemented this program, we had the good fortune of having an alumnus of the chapter living in the chapter facilities functioning as a Resident Scholar as he took courses. However, in following semesters, lack of planning forced the coordinator or another undergraduate brother to conduct this talk, removing one element of impact. Reaching out to a campus professional would be beneficial as the new members would have a more established person giving them tips, and as interactions between the chapter and said volunteer would begin to solidify a relationship between the two that may carry over into other future roles and requests.

Session Six

This session deals with the extremely important subject of the Ritual. Ritual is important for any fraternity as it provides a physical display of the values of the organization, and provides a common bond between all members of the fraternity past, present, or future. Since the Sigma Rite of Passage (ROP) is the first of SigEp’s four different Rites of Passage, it is important that the new members understand its significance as a base for all subsequent ROPs. My program approaches Ritual study in a way that is interactive, going far beyond a simple discussion of the elements of the Ritual. Here, new members, guided by older members of the chapter, are asked to perform the Ritual through which they have recently gone, filling the roles of both inductors
and inductee. By actually placing the Ritual book in the hands of a new member and having him
read from it, a new sense of ownership is imparted. The words become more than ink on a page,
the actions of the Ritual become more than pomp, the experience becomes a real representation
of what SigEp is and what it demands of all its members. Often times Rites of Passage (ROPs)
go by in a blur. Excitement and inexperience cause many of the subtle nuances of the Ritual to
go unnoticed. Therefore, a slow, step-by-step conducting of the Sigma Rite of Passage by the
new members guided by the older members is a way to carefully unpack and internalize the rich
detail of the Ritual. I have included more notes to the coordinators here than for any other
session because of the gravity of this session. Ritual is the single most important element of a
fraternity, and is the factor distinguishing a Greek organization from any other student
organization or simply from a group of friends living and spending time together. For this
reason, the session must have a sense of decorum and regularity from one semester to the next if
all the new members are to be exposed to the Ritual in an equally powerful way. Additionally,
for as powerful a force for good as the Ritual can be in the lives of SigEp’s members,
misconceptions about it formed early on in a member’s experience can lead to a diminished
connection to the fraternity, and the chance to use the Ritual as a tool to differentiate members
thereby eliminating a single tiered membership.

Living the Ritual is a huge component in combatting the negative stereotype of the
college fraternity. In his chapter on Greek life, Whipple outlines some of the problems
propagated by fraternities, and the stereotypes that arise as a result. Hazing, substance abuse, and
exclusivity are cited as examples of the negative practices of some fraternities (Whipple 316).
The Ritual teaches respect for one’s self and others, that brotherly love is a principle to be established in the fraternity and then extended to all of the community surrounding a SigEp; that perfection is not demanded, but the pursuit of it is. The ideals communicated through Ritual directly contradict the stereotypical actions of many fraternity men. If these actions are to be reversed, a thorough knowledge of and reverence for the Ritual must be imparted early on, and stressed as a guiding light for a SigEp throughout his college years and beyond.

This session introduces elements of Chickering and Reisser’s final vector, developing integrity. Reisser says that the final stage of this vector is “developing congruence – matching personal values with socially responsible behavior” (51). The Ritual teaches the values of the organization, and demands that these values be incorporated in everyday life. By breaking down the Ritual and examining it piece by piece, new members are more clearly able to see what the Ritual asks of them in regards to their behavior. So understood, the teachings of the Ritual become more easily acted upon. This creates congruence between professed values and actions. In the process of drawing this congruence together, this session facilitates development through the final vector, and encourages lifestyles in the new members that will combat the negative fraternity stereotype through their example.

As a point of revision, I would stress via a note to the coordinator the importance of getting older members involved in this process. As the Sigma Rite of Passage (ROP) only has a finite number of roles, the new members must be divided into small group each of which requires guidance from an older member. In addition to benefitting the new members, conducting a ROP will help the older members by renewing their knowledge of the Ritual and
reaffirming their commitment to the values of SigEp. This interaction between older and newer members of the chapter establishes the Ritual as a connection between all brothers both in a given chapter and across the nation reinforcing the mutual respect of a single tiered membership.

*Session Seven*

This session includes a discussion that needs to be a part of any young man’s life when he transitions into college: awareness of substance abuse. As was mentioned earlier, these topics affect all college students in one way or another, but the risks become amplified for members of a fraternity. In order for our members to live fulfilled lives during and after college, and in order to mitigate the potentially negative consequences for the chapter these topics must be discussed with our chapter’s new members. In addition to discussing the realities of substance presence and use on college campuses, this session also outlines the policies of the chapter regarding zero tolerance of drug use on chapter premises as well as the state laws regarding alcohol use such as the minimum age, possession, and consequences of driving under the influence. Due to the weighty subject material presented here, my coordinator’s guide suggests that an alumnus or other respected figure in the chapter deliver this session. By simply changing up the person presenting the information from coordinator to someone else, the new members will be more engaged and apt to internalize the information here presented.

This session draws on the challenges for Greek life presented by Whipple, chief among them substance abuse (316). Whipple acknowledges that substance use and abuse among fraternity men is a huge risk management issue. He says that alcohol “often [serves] as a precursor to hazing incidents” (316). Since the ultimate goal of this program is sustainability for
the chapter through positive changes in culture, any threat to the chapter that may result in its closing down such as hazing or alcohol related injury or assault need to be heavily mitigated. The best way to do this is through education. Whipple says that a challenge for Greek life focused student affairs professionals is that when they try to iterate the point regarding the negative effects of substance abuse, many Greek tune them out; they are “tired of hearing about it” (316). By presenting this information to members of a fraternity by members of that fraternity, a sense of credibility is added. A trusted peer communicating the knowledge, the new members are more likely to internalize the information and incorporate it into their lives. This makes the session effective in terms of the goals of Greek life affairs professionals outlined by Whipple (316), and combats issues of risk management before they come to fruition.

The point of revision I would give to this session is one of expansion. Since writing this program, I have learned that topics of sexual health, safety, and assault go hand-in-hand with a discussion about substance use and abuse, and are just as important. In future revision, I would make sure that these topics are discussed in tandem with one another, so that the new members understand the connection that often follows between alcohol and sexual assault in particular. To further get this point across, I would add a note earlier in the program about seeking out a professional from the campus or community who is both knowledgeable about this topic, and who can command the respect of the new members, which is warranted when discussing a topic of this gravity.
Session Eight

This is the final session of my program. It involves the culminating test of the basic fraternity information that the new members learned over the course of the semester, as well as a chance for the new members to reflect on their experiences during the Sigma Challenge and their plans for the future. The goal here is to ensure that members of the Sigma Challenge have been learning information crucial to being members of the Greek community such as the Greek alphabet, as well as information crucial to being a SigEp such as the founding date and original members. The reflection is meant as a way to solidify the growing experiences had during the Sigma Challenge. The goal throughout is to energize the new members so that they do not simply progress through the Challenge passively, but actively. Asking them to reflect also asks them to project into the future as they anticipate the next stage in their continuous development and plan how they will impact the chapter and future new members.

This session involves two of the seven vectors, the most basic and most complex. On its most basic level, the Sigma Challenge test asks that participants demonstrate their mastery of the content information relevant to being a good fraternity member such that they prove a development of competence (Reisser 45). On the other end of the spectrum, the reflection and synthesis of experiences develops the new members in the area of the seventh vector, developing integrity. Here students are asked to reflect on the personalization of values, which Reisser attributes to necessity for progression through this final vector. New members reflect on the lessons taught during the Sigma Challenge, and think critically about the values that they have taken away and incorporated into their daily lives. Although each member of SigEp experiences
the same Ritual and roughly the same member development process, the interactions with each
with vary depending on the complexities of the individual. For this reason, all SigEps will have
different ideas and variations on what the values mean to them personally. While the basics are
the same, reflection on experiences had allows the new members to begin identifying what their
personal understanding and implementation of the SigEp values is.

My only revision for this portion is geared toward the Sigma Challenge test. It occurred
to me that while we place such a big emphasis on the new members learning things such as the
Greek alphabet and the names of our founders, we never again require our older members to
know that information. Maybe it is just a given that older members will retain everything they
learned during their first few weeks in the chapter. Speaking from personal experience, however,
I can say that this is not true. Once I was done with my Sigma test I forgot much of the important
information as I had simply crammed it into my short-term memory for the exam. Instead of
asking only our new members to know the names of our founders for example, would it not
make more sense for our older, more established members to do the same. After all, we all have
equal rights and responsibilities, and that goes for the information we all know about our
fraternity. In revisions, I would make the Sigma Challenge test a chapter wide experience. It
would be understood that at the end of each semester, each member would be required to know
the basic information about SigEp. Failure to do so would not result in any consequence, but
rather would be an opportunity for all members, new or old, to see the areas in which they need
improvement. This method would ensure that the information learned during the Sigma
Challenge is retained for a longer period than simply eight weeks. Putting a chapter-wide test of
knowledge would be a culminating example for the newest members that SigEp is committed to a single-tiered membership with equal rights and responsibilities. This philosophical tenet of the BMP having been so clearly demonstrated to them as a new member, brothers growing in the new chapter would become advocates for and propagators of equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of chapter life.

**Conclusion**

College is a time of great transition for new students. Leaving home and adapting to a new role as a student, professional, and young adult creates much potential for growth in this time period. My new member education program is designed to help the young men who join my fraternity make that transition as smoothly as possible. My program builds off the core philosophical tenets of SigEp’s Balanced Man Program, and provides an outlet for new college students and fraternity men to learn about the advantages and challenges of being a student and a member of a fraternity. Through the sharing of best practices and honest conversation between older members and new, our new members are more equipped to handle the academic pressures of the classroom and the social pressures of the ‘frat boy’ stereotype. The end result is better retention of our new members, a higher GPA amongst new members and the chapter as a whole, and the creation of a culture of involvement and accountability. Creating this program has allowed me to grow personally and leave a mark on my chapter that will persist long after I have left. When I was recruited to the chapter in the fall of 2010, one of the older members pointed out that it should be every member’s goal to leave the chapter better than he found it. I am proud
to look back on my collegiate experience within and outside the fraternity and say that I have indeed left Michigan Beta changed for the better.
Bibliography


*SALP by the Numbers*. Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 2013. Print.


Appendix A: Participant’s Guide to the Sigma Challenge*

*The format of this guide is derived from a template created by the Michigan Theta chapter (Lawrence Technological Institute) with some description of national events deriving from the SigEp national website. Myself and others from the WMU chapter are responsible for the actual content populating the challenge.
SIGMA Challenge

~The Foundation for Brotherhood~

Virtue, Diligence & Brotherly Love

Expectations of Sigma Challengers:

- Participate in the Sigma Rite of Passage and Interpretation
- Receive your Balanced Man pin
- Receive your copy of *Lifetime Responsibility of Brotherhood* and *The Quest*
- Attend Sigma Challenge meetings on a weekly basis
- Meet with your Sigma Challenge mentor on a weekly basis
- Read the selected readings from your *Lifetime Responsibility of Brotherhood*
Welcome to the MI Beta Chapter of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity!

You have made a commitment to live with Virtue, Diligence, and Brotherly Love while traveling down life’s road. Your individual values and morals are added to the collective body of values embraced by this Fraternity. They will assist you during your pursuit of lofty goals and aspirations. You are joining a brotherhood that will treat you as one of their own, and help you learn knowledge that can’t be taught in textbooks. Above all, you are a member of the greatest Fraternity that will teach and guide you on how we are constantly “Building Balanced Leaders.”
In the spirit of the ancient Greeks, you will be educated and encouraged to live the ideals of a Sound Mind and a Sound Body through the Balanced Man Program. You are a full member with full rights and responsibilities, joining almost 300,000 Brothers nationwide. The journey to become the Balanced Man begins here and now, but will remain part of you wherever life takes you. Welcome, Brothers, and enjoy the best times of your life.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Sigma Challenge Coordinators:
- Charles “Moose” Nestor email phone
- Peter Carpenter email phone

Contact the Coordinators if you’re going to be late/absent for a Sigma meeting

Vice President of Communications:
- Nick Hayes email phone

Contact Nick if you’re going to be late or absent for a Chapter Meeting or if you have a message for the entire chapter.

Vice President of Finance:

Contact to pay chapter dues.

Vice President of Member Development
Contact Chris with questions or concerns regarding the Balanced Man Program.

Chapter Counselor:

- Lauren Campbell  

Contact Campbell with questions dealing with membership, University Relations, or SigEp Grand Chapter policy.

**PROCEDURAL WORKINGS**

**Chapter Meetings:**

Chapter meetings are weekly meetings where we discuss chapter business and issues.

- Sundays at 5:00pm in the Formal Room (Chapter Facility)

**Executive Board Meetings:**

Our Executive Board meets weekly to discuss issues that arise and to prepare for the upcoming chapter meeting.

- Sundays at 4:00pm in the Formal Room (Chapter Facility)

**Sigma Meetings:**

Sigma meetings are required weekly meetings which are designed to educate new members about the Fraternity, develop the Balanced Man ideal within new members, discuss current issues pertaining to our campus and the community, and promote brotherhood.

- Mondays at 9:00pm in the Formal Room (Chapter Facility)

Sigma Challenge Game Plan

Here's what you will accomplish this Semester during the Sigma Challenge

Self
- Develop 3 personal goals

- Reflect on Personal Experiences

- Understand the Sound Mind ideal & develop a mental edge over your peers

- Understand the Sound Body ideal & discover ways to take your fitness to the next level

- Choose a “Big Brother” mentor within the chapter

**Chapter**

- Learn your responsibilities as a member of SigEp

- Learn Chapter and National Fraternity History

- Understand the structure of the chapter

  - Elect a Sigma Class Leadership Team

  - Attend EDGE new member retreat

  - Learn about the Ritual and the Sigma Rite of Passage
- Coordinate a class gift to present to the chapter

Community

- Participate in a community service event with the chapter
- Get to know the city of Kalamazoo

Schedule

Week One (Intro)

- Coordinators: Charles “Moose” Nestor, Peter Carpenter
- What is the Balanced Man?
- The Sigma Challenge
- Paperwork

Assignments for Next Week
- First 6 Letters of the Greek Alphabet
- First 3 Founding Fathers
- First 2 Michigan Chapters
- First 2 Housing Locations
- LROB Reading: Intro pg. V-VIII (The Creed of Sigma Phi Epsilon)
  Self Esteem pg. 1-7 (Overwhelming Stress)
  History: pg. 61-87 (Phi Beta Kappa, 61)

- As you read, think of some interesting points in the LROB, be ready to discuss
- Begin thinking about who you would want as a Big Brother
- Think about the Sigma Leadership Board positions
  - Running for one?
  - Who would you vote for?

- Next week's Sigma Meeting will be held at the University Archives
  - Located on WMU's East Hall (East Campus)
  - Ask your Coordinators for further instructions / a ride

Activity: Getting to Know Where Brothers Live & Learning about our home: Participate in a
  guided tour of the Chapter House to learn about the brothers and where they live.

Week Two (SigEp History and Structure)
- LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz

- National History

- Local History

- Fraternal Roots

- Transitioning to the Balanced Man Program

- Chapter Structure

- Service Learning

- Nominate Sigma Leadership Board

**Assignments for Next Week**

- Next 6 Letters of the Greek Alphabet
- Founding Fathers 4 through 6
- Learn Michigan Chapter 3 through 4
- Housing Locations 3 through 4
- "Views" 1 through 2
- LROB Reading

  Sound Mind: pg. 9-21
  Sound Body: pg. 23-28
- Founding Dates (November 19, 1955 & November 1, 1901)
- Colors
- Find each member of the Executive board, fill out Committee Meeting Sheet
- **Begin thinking about who you want as a Big Brother**

- **Next Week's Sigma Meeting will involve physical activity. Meet at the WMU rocks by the Valley Ponds. Bring workout clothes and running shoes. Ask your Coordinators for more details.**

**Week Three (Balanced Man Ideals)**

- Sound Body jog

- LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz

- Balanced Man Ideals

  - “Sound Mind in a Sound Body”
- Sigma Leadership Board Speeches and Voting

**Assignment for Next Week**

- Next 6 Letters of the Greek Alphabet
- Founding Fathers 7 through 9
- Learn Michigan Chapter 5 through 7
- Housing Locations 5 through 6
- “Views” 3 through 4
- E-Board (Names and Positions)
- Flowers
- LROB Reading

  National Chapter: pg. 89 -100
  Local Chapter: pg. 105-115

- Complete Milestones and Goals Section
- Think about who you want as a Big Brother

**Week Four (Kalamazoo Orientation / Time Management)**

- Walking tour of Kalamazoo
- LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz
- Goal Setting and Time Management
- What is an RLC?

- Make Big Brother List

- Announce Sigma Leadership Board

Assignment for Next Week

- Final 6 Letters of the Greek Alphabet
- Founding Fathers 10 through 12
- Learn Michigan Chapters 8 through 9
- Housing Location 7
- “Views” 5 through 6

Week Five (What Makes a SigEp?)

- LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz

- The Ritual

- What makes a brother?
- Brotherhood Week

**Assignment for Next Week**

- LROB Reading
  - Alcohol & Drugs: pg. 29-31
  - Sexuality: pg. 47-51
- Michigan Chapters 10 through 11
- “Views” 7 through 8
- Read **SIGMA PHI EPSILON FRATERNITY STATEMENT ON CHAPTER & INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY** located in the back of this packet

- Submit any changes to the Big Brother List ASAP
- Review all studied material up to now

**Week Six (Responsibility)**

- LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz
- Alcohol Awareness
- Drug Use
- Etiquette
Assignment for Next Week

- Write a one page personal reflection about your Sigma Challenge
  - What you got out of it, a favorite memory, advice for future Sigmas, etc.
  - Bring to next week's Sigma Meeting
- “Views” 9 through 10
- Submit any changes to the Big Brother ASAP
- Review all studied material
  - Can be found on next page

Week Seven (Conclusion)

- Collect Sigma Challenge Reflections

- Take Sigma Test

- Coordinators' Final Remarks

*** ON WEEK 7 WE WILL BE UTILIZING ALL OF THE INFORMATION LEARNED IN AN ACTIVITY. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND ALL OF THIS MATERIAL BY NEXT WEEK.

Goals

List and Describe 3 SMART Goals
Goal #1 – (Sound Mind)

For the Fall 2012 semester, I will earn a _________ GPA.

These steps will help me complete my goal:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Goal #2 – (Sound Body)

By ___________ 2012, I will ____________________________

____________________________________________________________

1. 
Goal #3

By ____________, I will ____________________________________________.

______________________________________________________________

1.

2.

3. Milestones

Please describe 3 important events in your life that has led you to becoming the person you are today.

1.

2.
3.

**Ritual Discussion Questions**

What does Virtue mean to you?

How can you apply Diligence to your life?

What is your definition of true brotherhood?

**COMMITTEE MEETING SHEET**

*Use this sheet to figure out the meeting times and places of every committee*

**President**

Executive Board:  When: _________ Where: _________ Initial: _________

**VP of Recruitment**

Recruitment Cabinet:  When: _________ Where: _________ Initial: _________

**VP of Member Development**

Development Cabinet:  When: _________ Where: _________ Initial: _________

**VP of Programming**

Programming Cabinet:  When: _________ Where: _________ Initial: _________

**VP of Finance**
Sigma Phi Epsilon Cheat Sheet

Selected Readings

These are the assigned readings from your Lifetime Responsibility of Brotherhood.

- Intro & Creed: pg. V-VIII
- Self-Esteem: pg. 1-7
- Sound Mind: pg. 9-21 (Time Management is Self Management, 10)
  (Setting your Academic Goals, 13)
- Sound Body: pg. 23-28 (Playing it Safe, 26)
- History: pg. 61-87 (Phi Beta Kappa, 61)
(Jenken’s Lesson, 68)

(Leadership Continuum, 87)

□ National: pg. 89 -100

□ Local: pg. 105-115

□ Alcohol & Drugs: pg. 29-31

□ Sexuality: pg. 47-51

From Appendix A,C & F in LROB

ALPHABET

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FOUNDING FATHERS

Carter Ashton Jenkens
Benjamin Donald Gaw
William Hugh Carter
William Andrew Wallace
Thomas Temple Wright
William Lazell Phillips
Lucian Baum Cox
Richard Spurgeon Owens
Edgar Lee Allen
Robert Alfred McFarland
Franklin Webb Kerfoot
Thomas Vaden McCaul

MICHIGAN CHAPTERS

Alpha University of Michigan
Beta Western Michigan University
Gamma Central Michigan University*
Delta University of Detroit*
Epsilon Michigan State University*
Zeta Ferris State University
Eta Michigan Technological Uni.
Theta Lawrence Technological Uni.
Iota Northwood University*
Kappa Grand Valley State University
Lambda Eastern Michigan University*

*No longer in existence

LEADERSHIP CONTINUUM

1) EDGE
2) Carlson Leadership Academy (CLA)
3) Ruck Leadership Institute
4) Grand Chapter Conclave
5) Tragos Quest to Greece

FOUNDING DATES

National: November 1, 1901
Michigan Beta: November 15, 1955

COLORS

Purple & Red

FLOWERS

Dark Red Rose & Violet

LETTERS

Σ (Purple) Φ (Red) E (Gold)

CHARTER

Located at the chapter facility

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Paul Misiuda
VP of Finance:
VP of Programming: Mike Carli
VP of Recruitment: Billy Balsamo
VP of Member Development: Chris Miller
Chaplain: Sean Buckley
VP of Communications: Nick Hayes

**Michigan Beta Housing Locations**

1. Site of Bernhard Center
2. Stuart Avenue, 300 block
3. Apartment Complex, Fraternity Village (currently ATO) – built for us
4. 3031 West Michigan Avenue (single lot)
5. Douglas St, 700 block
6. 219 Woodward
7. 3031 West Michigan Avenue (current)
Sigma Phi Epsilon Symbols

**Purple**  
**Star of Hope**  
**Ducal Crown**  
**Red**  
**SIGMA PHI**  
**Sword of Virtue**  
**Escusian Scroll**

**Greek Orthodox Cross**  
*Sigma Phi Epsilon Anthem*

**Text: Sigma Phi Epsilon**

I'll love and cherish the mem'ry of you  
Should harm betide me,  
Thou e'er will guide me,  
Sigma, Dear Sigma Phi Epsilon true.  
(hum 1x)

Sigma, Dear Sigma Phi Epsilon true

**Wonderful SigEp Girl (Sweetheart Song)**

Greek text:

Of all
There's one that I've loved long,  
For me she wears a golden heart,  
You set my heart in a whirl.  
Violets and roses  
My love

Pattern Surrounding Text =

Infinite Continuum of Learning

discloses,  
Say that you love me too.  
My Sigma Phi Epsilon sweetheart,  
Wonderful SigEp girl!
Rum Rum

Rum Rum the footsteps coming
Beats like the sounds of drumming
Beats for the voices humming
SigEps are we!
We march the road together
And we will sing forever
This bond will never sever
SigEps are we!
Mighty we'll always be a brotherhood of unity
Glory to the golden heart of our fraternity
Sigma our hearts are clinging
Phi through the air goes ringing
Epsilon will keep us singing
SigEps are we!

The Toast

Here’s to the Brothers of Sigma
And here’s to the fellows of Phi
An Epsilon stein or a beaker of wine
Means more than the mud in your eye
So here’s to the sword in the heart
And here’s to the pledge that we said
Let never dissever
This friendship forever
Let's drink to the Purple and Red!

Bamboo Bungalow

I met a girl one day
She stole my heart away
I made sweet love to her
And gave her my pin
She said she'd marry me
Now she's my S P E
Say boys thats how the chapter grows
I'll build a bamboo bungalow for you
Big enough for one but room enough for two
Then we'll be married and happy as can be
Down in our bamboo bungalow
For 1, or 2, or 3, or 4 or maybe more
Let your conscience be your guide.

SigEp Feeling

You never close your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips
And there's no tenderness like before in your finger tips
You're trying hard not to show it
But baby, baby You know it
You've lost that Sig Ep feeling
Ohh that Sig Ep feeling
You've lost that Sig Ep feeling
Now its gone, gone, gone, ohhh ohh oh
Baby, Baby, I get down on my knees for you
If you could only love me like you used to dooooo, yeah
We had a love, a love, a love you dont find everyday
So dont, dont, dont let it slip away
Baby, BABY, Baby, BABY
Bring back that Sig Ep feeling
Ohh that Sig Ep feeling
Bring back that Sig Ep feeling
'Cause its gone, gone, gone, ohhh ohh oh.
THE LEADERSHIP CONTINUUM

EDGE

Sigma Phi Epsilon offers its own innovative program for first-year members. EDGE is about making healthy choices that match your personal values and those of Sigma Phi Epsilon. Participants build greater self-awareness about the consequences of their actions and those around them through interactive discussions and reflective activities. They have fun through experiences ranging from ropes courses to physical challenges. Participants choose the lifestyle they wish to lead and receive training on overcoming obstacles with regard to alcohol and drug abuse, personal wellness, and goal achievement. The program involves a highly regarded faculty of senior undergraduates, distinguished alumni, and renowned guest speakers.

EDGE is partially funded through a grant from the Sigma Phi Epsilon Educational Foundation. There is no cost to attend EDGE, however no-shows will be paid at the chapter's expense.

CARLSON LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The intent of the Carlson Leadership Academy (CLA) is to deliver high caliber officer training through five regional programs during the month of February. Emphasis is placed on utilizing each officer's individual strengths to build a complete team. Through chapter analysis, large and small group sessions, and informal interactions, participants will enhance their skill sets and be able to manage both the intangibles and the tangibles of leadership. Chapter officers will leave with a better understanding of their position, as well as a holistic strategy for moving their chapter forward. CLA also affords the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the achievements of our chapters, volunteers and brothers.

RUCK LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Ruck Leadership Institute is SigEp's "Top Gun" leadership program. Here the Fraternity’s best and brightest gather in Virginia, for a five-day program focused on personal leadership and the Balanced Man Ideal. Prominent SigEp alumni serve as mentors and guide participants through competitive challenges and lessons in leadership.

Ruck is for adventurous leaders (juniors and seniors) committed to being Balanced Men of Sound Mind and Sound Body. Participants must have taken part in other SigEp leadership programs such as the EDGE or the Carlson Leadership Academy.

TRAGOS QUEST TO GREECE

The Tragos Quest to Greece is an intense, ten-day journey through ancient Greece in search of SigEp's foundation. During the Quest, participants discuss the Socratic method of teaching in the Agora where Socrates taught, compete in the original Olympic stadium, and study the ritual in Delphi after learning about the Mysteries of Eleusis.

Although chapter leadership positions are important to the application, no specific SigEp, campus or community involvement is required.
The Tragos Quest to Greece Ambassadors are announced in February at their respective regional Carlson Leadership Academy.

**GRAND CHAPTER CONCLAVE**

Conclave is the bi-annual meeting of the Fraternity where alumni and undergraduates vote on legislation that the Fraternity will follow for at least the next two years.

**Executive Board & Chair Positions**

**President (Paul Misiuda):** Leader of the Fraternity and E-Board. He is the representative symbol of SigEp when dealing with SigEp delegates, other organizations and/or administrators.
- Inter Fraternal Council & Student Government Representative: Attend IFC & WSA meetings each week and inform the chapter of what’s up.

**VP of Finance:** Monitors the budget and financial issues of the chapter.

**VP of Programming (Mike Carlì):** Organizes all the events that go on during the year.
- Social Chair: Plans mixers and betters relationships with other campus organizations
- Philanthropy Chair: Plans and coordinates chapter philanthropic efforts.
- Safe Ride Chair: Organizes the Safe Ride system

**VP of Recruitment (Billy Balsamo):** Plans recruitment strategies for the Fall & Spring recruitment. He plans events that pertain to our recruiting goals.
- Balanced Man Scholarship (BMS) Chair: Organizes the Balanced Man Scholarship applications and its finalists. He also coordinates with the VP of Recruitment during summer recruitment.
- Recruitment Committee: A group of hand selected brothers that work closely with the VP of Recruitment to help him interact with Potential New Members (PNMs) and to eventually decide who will be extended a bid.

**VP of Member Development (Chris Miller):** Facilitates your Fraternity learning experience and growth.
- Sound Mind: Enriches the academic and cultural side of your life.
- Sound Body: Enriches the health and wellness side of your life.
- Sigma Coordinator: Guides the Sigma group through developmental exercises, philanthropy, and overall fraternal growth, with a focus on the Fraternity’s history
- Phi Coordinator: Guides the Phi group through the same with a focus on yourself
- Epsilon Coordinator: Guides the Epsilon group through the same with a focus on the community
- RLC Chairman: Helps the chapter move itself towards coveted RLC status.

**Chaplain (Sean Buckley):** He leads the Ritual Team and monitors members’ academic and social standards through the Standards Board.
- Ritual Team/Standards Board: Those involved with the execution of Rituals. Also functions as the Standards Board which is the Council that determines if a Brother violates the chapter’s bylaws and/or integrity and recognizes Brothers for positive efforts. The VP of Member Development serves on the Board
in the case of academic matters.

- Risk Manager: An expert in the conditions of SigEp Risk Management. Oversees that policies are implemented and followed during social events.

**VP of Communications (Nick Hayes):** The person that keeps us, the alumni, Headquarters, and any “press” informed and up to date about chapter operations.

- *Beta Bulletin* Undergraduate Editor: Writes articles and manages our alumni newsletter.
- Historian: Keeps records of all events and puts together the scrapbook.
- Webmaster: Manages the MI Beta website

**Alumni Volunteer Council (AVC):** A group of alumni members that monitors its undergraduate chapter. They also keep connections with MI Beta alumni that may have moved away.

- Red Door: A journey that is representative of a SigEp house being open to all brothers. The Red Door symbolizes the unity of our Fraternity.
- Renaissance Brother: An honorary initiated SigEp

**Chapter Counselor (Lauren Campbell):** Advises brothers on general SigEp topics. Acts as a liaison between Michigan Beta, the Administration of WMU, and SigEp National Headquarters. Her husband, “Sarge,” a State Trooper, helps the chapter by giving us the law's perspective on many things. He also does much to maintain the chapter facilities and is a Renaissance Brother.
SIGMA PHI EPSILON HEADQUARTERS

Located in Richmond, Virginia, site of the Fraternity’s founding, Headquarters is the administrative office for the Fraternity, where all support activities and services are developed and coordinated. The Grand Chapter, through legislation at Conclave, determines the scope of Headquarters’ operation. Sigma Phi Epsilon Headquarters is fully funded through the membership and provides a high level of service to undergraduate chapters and alumni. Your Headquarters (with the largest regional director staff of any fraternity) is recognized nationally as an innovative, energetic, highly professional operation which serves the Fraternity’s needs.

The Headquarters staff is a team effort. You will see the Regional Director most often during your undergraduate experience. These young alumni travel throughout the year, visiting chapters and volunteers to consult on operations. The Headquarters support staff in Richmond is available as a resource to you in person as well by phone and through email.

Regional Directors (educational and leadership consultants) conduct chapter visits, work with District Governors, chapter counselors and alumni boards, and help with on-site implementation of Carlson Leadership Academies and Conclaves.

Undergraduate fees provide the major funding for Headquarters services. Thus, when a staff member visits the chapter, particularly a Regional Director, you should take full advantage of his expertise.

What the Regional Director can do for a chapter:

● Facilitate goal setting program and evaluation
● Assist in planning for all areas of chapter operations
● Advise financial operations
● Work with the chapter counselor and alumni board members in providing chapter guidance and recruiting new volunteers
● Assist with recruitment training

The Regional Director is a chapter’s most effective Fraternity resource. Regional Directors undergo a comprehensive summer development program at Headquarters in preparation for their chapter visits during the year.

The personal growth and development that can be achieved as a Regional Director are unmatched anywhere. Interviews for the Regional Director positions are held each winter and spring by the Headquarters staff, and any Brother may apply. Early application is encouraged. For more information, contact your Regional Director.
THE SIGMA PHI EPSILON JOURNAL

The Journal was launched as a quarterly publication in 1904 when the Fraternity was three years old and serves in many areas. As an illustrated news publication, it covers chapter activities as reported by undergraduate correspondents. It also reports the programs of organized alumni groups, individual achievement of alumni Brothers, and the highlights of national and district activities, including Educational Foundation projects. As an educational publication, it carries features which have a basis in brotherhood generally, and in Sigma Phi Epsilon in particular.

As an Undergraduate, the SigEp Journal is mailed to your home address, as reported on your new member registration form. After graduation, it is important that you send Headquarters your new address, so you may continue receiving the Journal bi-annually.

Inside the SigEp Journal:

- Alumni News
- Sound Mind and Sound Body
- Housing Campaign
- Chapter News
- In Memoriam
- SigEp Champions
- Our Very Own Frat Boys (news about chapter closures)
- Conclave (every other Fall)

More information can be found at sigep.org/journal.

SIGMA PHI EPSILON UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Below are select awards given out by Sigma Phi Epsilon Headquarters. More awards for undergraduates, alumni, and chapters can be found in the Lifetime Responsibility of Brotherhood.

Clifford B. Scott Key:

Awarded annually to the brother in each chapter who has the highest academic average for the year. The award honors former Journal Editor and Order of the Golden Heart recipient Clifford B. Scott, who wrote the words and music to the Sigma Phi Epsilon Anthem. Nominations are made by the undergraduate chapter through Headquarters.

J. Edward Zollinger Outstanding Senior Award:

Presented each year at Carlson Leadership Academies to the outstanding senior in each district of the Fraternity.
Each District Governor makes a selection, based on nominations from the chapters, Chapter Counselors, and Alumni and Volunteer Corporations. The award is named for the late J. Edward Zollinger, Past Grand President, Order of the Golden Heart recipient, and longtime President of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Educational Foundation.

Zollinger Seniors are balanced men and role models of excellence. The award is based on outstanding scholastic achievement, campus leadership, and community involvement.

Zollinger Scholar:

Cash awards of $500 for the junior year, and providing they maintain a 2.5 G.P.A. and stay active in fraternity and campus life, a $500 scholarship in the senior year from the Educational Foundation’s Zollinger Leadership Fund, presented to each Zollinger Outstanding Senior’s chapter. The award is presented to a sophomore brother who, in the chapter’s judgment, shows outstanding leadership potential.

Recruitment Excellence Award:

Awarded to the brother in the chapter showing hard work and dedication to recruiting men who meet the high standards worthy of Sigma Phi Epsilon. Nominations are made by the undergraduate chapter through Headquarters.

Ulysses Grant Dubach Scroll:

Awarded to the brother in each chapter showing the greatest academic improvement between quarters/semesters. The award is in memory of Order of the Golden Heart recipient Dr. U.G. Dubach, who served as National Scholarship Chairman in the 1950s and 1960s. Nominations are made by the undergraduate chapter through Headquarters.

SIGMA PHI EPSILON CHAPTER AWARDS

Buchanan Cup:

Every two years, at the Grand Chapter Conclave, the Fraternity recognizes its outstanding chapters with the Buchanan Cup. This Revere bowl mounted on a base is given in honor of Edwin Buchanan, who served as Sigma Phi Epsilon’s Grand Treasurer for 34 years. The award is given to chapters displaying excellence in all areas of operation over a two-year period.

Excelsior Award:

Chapters showing significant improvement in chapter operations receive the Excelsior Award. This Revere bowl is
presented at Carlson Leadership Academies each year. The award may be presented for overall chapter improvement or for improvement in one specific area of chapter operations in accord with the strategic plan. The award bears the name Excelsior—“Ever Onward—Ever Upward.”

**Honor of Philias:**

Established in 1989 by Past Grand President and Order of the Golden Heart recipient Jack D. Wheeler. Chapters and/or individuals may receive the Honor of Philias as recognition of their special expression of the Fraternity’s cardinal principle of Brotherly Love. The recognition presented at the Grand Chapter Conclave to the recipient(s) is a replica of the Honor of Philias permanently displayed at Sigma Phi Epsilon Headquarters. Selection is made jointly by the Trustees of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Educational Foundation and the Fraternity’s National Board of Directors. A grant in support of the recipient’s special expression is available from the Educational Foundation.

**Manpower Excellence Award:**

An engraved plaque awarded to chapters whose manpower is number one on campus. This award is presented at Carlson Leadership Academies.

**SIGMA PHI EPSILON ALUMNI AWARDS**

**Order of the Golden Heart:**

The Fraternity’s highest honor, awarded to alumni who, with great personal sacrifice, have given exceptional service to Sigma Phi Epsilon. The award is a medallion accompanied by a scroll. This award is presented at Conclave.

**Sigma Phi Epsilon Citation:**

The Fraternity’s recognition of a brother who has excelled in his career field. The Citation, an embossed scroll, is awarded to a select few alumni at each Grand Chapter Conclave.

**SIGMA PHI EPSILON FRATERNITY STATEMENT ON CHAPTER & INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY**

This statement embodies the values and expectations of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity for all fraternity entities and membership categories, including alumni and volunteers.
Respect & Care for Self & Others

The Fraternity will operate in such a manner as to exhibit respect, care, and concern. The Fraternity abhors any form of sexually abusive behavior collectively or by an individual, be it physical, mental, or emotional in nature. Neither a Sigma Phi Epsilon Chapter nor any member thereof should encourage, support, or participate in any action which in any manner demeans, belittles, or damages another person.

Alcohol & Drugs

1. The possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages while participating in any fraternity event, or in any situation sponsored or endorsed by the chapter, will be consistent with all campus, city, county, state laws, and all the policies of the Fraternity. Every chapter event must ensure that no alcohol can be consumed by minors.

2. The direct or indirect purchase of alcoholic beverages by the chapter using chapter funds or by any member on behalf of the chapter or through any type of fund is against Sigma Phi Epsilon’s risk management policies. The purchase and/or use of a bulk quantity of alcoholic beverages (i.e., kegs or case(s) of beer/wine) is prohibited.

3. There will be no possession, use, and/or sale of illegal drugs or controlled substances at any chapter facility, fraternity event, or any event which would be associated with the Fraternity.

4. No chapter should associate the Fraternity’s name with any event sponsored by an alcohol distributor, charitable organization, or tavern (tavern defined as an establishment generating more than half of annual
gross sales from alcohol) where alcohol is given away, sold, or otherwise provided to those present.

5. No chapter should co-sponsor or co-finance a function where alcohol is purchased by any of the host chapters, groups, or organizations.

6. There should never be any alcohol available during membership recruitment activities.

7. Open parties, meaning those with unrestricted access by non-members, are not in the best interest of the chapter or the Fraternity and should not occur.

8. No brother or new member should condone, tolerate, encourage, or participate in the abuse of alcohol (i.e., drinking games are not allowed).

9. There should never be any alcohol available during and membership education program/event. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in disciplinary action including revocation of the chapter’s charter. Additionally, failure to follow these guidelines could jeopardize a chapter’s (or individual member’s) general liability insurance coverage.

**Member Development**

The principles of Sigma Phi Epsilon and those of a chapter and its members are based on high ethical and moral behavior, and the expression of respect and care for self and others. Therefore, hazing has no place in Sigma Phi Epsilon. Hazing is a criminal act in most states. Hazing activities are defined as:
"Any action taken or situation created, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, the following: use of alcohol; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; late work sessions which interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law or ritual, the regulations and policies of the educational institution or applicable local, state, or federal law."

**Fire, Health & Safety**

To better ensure the safety of its members and guests, each chapter should strive to meet the following expectations:

1. Comply with all local fire and health codes.

2. Post emergency numbers for fire, police, and ambulance beside all common phones.
   
   Also post evacuation routes from chapter facilities in the common areas and on the back of each sleeping room door.

3. Comply with engineering recommendations as reported by the insurance company.
4. Keep a neat and orderly house. Good housekeeping is essential.

5. The possession and/or use of firearms or explosive devices of any kind within the confines and premises of the chapter house is expressly forbidden.

Education

Each student member, as part of his regular fraternity education experience, shall be educated about, and reminded of, his responsibilities as a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon and the Fraternity’s risk management policy

HAZING ACTIVITIES

This list is by no means all inclusive in describing hazing activities. It is an attempt to address a few of the activities and abuses which have generally been described in publications distributed by a number of Fraternity headquarters staffs.

1. Calisthenics such as sit-ups and pushups done individually as a group, especially as a “punishment.”
2. Nudity at any time
3. The wearing or carrying of items for the purpose of punishment or ridicule: coconuts, helmets, burlap bags, paddles, rocks, or clothing which has been altered to produce ridicule (e.g. painting on T-shirts, etc.).
4. Dropping food (egg, grapes, liver, etc.) into mouths of new members.
5. Paddle swats in any form (even if agreed to or “optional”).
6. Throwing whipped cream, shaving cream, water, paint on new members.
7. The playing of extremely loud music or many repetitions of the same music played at any time.
8. Pushing, shoving, or tackling new members.
9. New members being denied a minimum of seven undisturbed hours of sleep.
10. Rat court, kangaroo court, hot seat, or other individual interrogations.
11. Forcing alcoholic beverages on an individual who does not wish to drink or who has no wish to drink the quantity provided (i.e. “Finish this pitcher of beer in one shot!”).
12. Lineups of the new members which lead to any form of physical or mental harassment.

13. The memorization of stories, songs, poems, etc., which are not related to the life or history of the Fraternity. This includes any information demanded by any individual purely for his own exercise of power over new members.

14. The securing of signatures in a notebook, manual, or on a name list purely as a technique to haze new members.

15. The required eating of raw onions, colored or spoiled food, or the drinking of any liquids not normally used (e.g. sauerkraut juice).

INTERVIEWS

~Use these interviews as a tool for Brother familiarization~

To be completed before entering the Phi Challenge

Interviews should be completed as follows:

☐ Interviews may be done in groups and is strongly encouraged

☐ Each interview should be longer than 10 minutes

☐ Be sure to receive each Brother’s signature after an interview

☐ Instruct each Brother to sign inside the box beside his name

You are not required to complete any task in order to get a brother's signature. Demanding that you do so is hazing. If such a situation arises, tell your Coordinator immediately
Sample questions:

☐ Why did you choose WMU?

☐ Why did you join SigEp?

☐ What is your favorite brotherhood event?

☐ What chair positions and/or E-Board positions have you held?

1) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: _________________________
   Major: ____________________________
   Residence: _______________________

2) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: _________________________
   Major: ____________________________
   Residence: _______________________

3) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________  
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: _______________________  

4) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________  
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: _______________________  

5) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________  
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: _______________________  

6) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: ______________________

7) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: ______________________

8) Brother __________________________
   Join Date: ______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: ________________________
   Major: __________________________
   Residence: ______________________
9) Brother _________________________
   Join Date: _______________________
   Big Brother: ______________________
   Hometown: _________________________
   Major: ___________________________
   Residence: _____________________

10) Brother _________________________
    Join Date: _______________________
    Big Brother: ______________________
    Hometown: _________________________
    Major: ___________________________
    Residence: _____________________
Coordinator's Guide:

Sigma Challenge

Fall 2012

-Session 1
  -Tell the Sigmas that they will be playing a game of flag football at the IM Fields
    -play a game of flag football/ultimate/etc
  
  -Briefly explain the Balanced Man Ideal
    -emphasis on Sound Body
      -relate it to the sport they just played
  -Talk about the “why” of SigEp
    -Becoming better, more well-rounded men to be highly successful in all aspects of their lives
    -Develop relationships with their brothers that will last a lifetime
  
  -Hand out the packets and tell them to give them a look over and to get excited

  -Tell them about their first official Sigma Meeting on Monday, September 10th

Notes (from here on out, I have included a section for notes. Jot some down about what worked, didn't work, or could be changed here. I would welcome some personal notes from you as a Coordinator as well. Remember, coordinating a Challenge is just as much a learning experience
for you as it is for your Sigmas. Enjoy the ride, and watch yourself grow along with our newest class):

**Note: This subject matter does tend to drag on. You as coordinators NEED to be really engaged. That means you yourselves need to be really invested and excited about the subject material. The Sigmas will not respond positively to the BMP and SigEp basics in general if you are not responding positively.

- Try to make this interactive so as to avoid a lecture atmosphere. Let the Sigmas know that they can ask questions. Answer questions at an appropriate time.

  - Sigma Coordinators: Charles “Mike” “Moose” Nestor, Peter Carpenter

  - Brief BMP intro

    - What is the BMP?
      - Phases: Sigma, Phi, Epsilon, Brother Mentor, Fellow
- Progression through Challenges: Introducing Ritual concept
  - Ritual: an initiation into each Challenge. Each Ritual will teach you something new and in-depth about our great fraternity and what it means to be a brother.
  - the continual mentor-mentee process
    - Constantly learning from those in more advanced challenges, and then becoming the mentor to newer brothers as you too progress.

- Discuss the importance of a continuous development program and how it compares to pledging
  - Anti-hazing, no second-class-citizenship
  - Although you are currently a member, membership must be continuously earned like it is earned in a pledge term

- Leadership Continuum
  - This is one major thing that separates us from every other fraternity.
  - More than leadership in college
    - Stress the incredible life skills learned in SigEp
      - working together in a group with diverse opinions and outlooks.
      - Living your life by a moral compass that will help you succeed in everything you do
  - EDGE, Carlson Leadership Academy, Ruck Leadership Institute, Tragos Quest to Greece, Conclave

- The difference between “frat” and “fraternity”
  - “This fraternity will be different”
  - The power of words and perception
    - If we say one thing, and do another, we lose all credibility.

- What is the Sigma Challenge?
  - Transition to college and SigEp life

- Talk about some of the cool things that will be done in the Sigma Challenge
  - Getting settled into college and fraternity life
  - Learning about what it is to be a SigEp, and what being a SigEp can do for your life
  - Getting to know your fellow brothers and having the most challenging, most rewarding, overall best years of your life
-point out big upcoming events in Sigma
- Picking a Big Brother
  - Briefly explain what a Big is:
    - A mentor, someone you connect especially with, someone who will show you the ropes of SigEp and hold you accountable
    - Point out that spending time at the house other than for meetings is important to picking the right person.
    - Get to know your brothers!
- Brotherhood Week – November 5-9 (you will be encouraged to stay at the house that week)
- Sigma Trip (in the works...)
- Sigma Test – October 22
- EDGE – October 27 – 28 @Sherman Lake YMCA
- Sigma Leadership Board Elections

-Sigma Leadership Board
- The Sigma Leadership Board will include a Sigma President and Vice President only.
  - We can look at adding more as the concept evolves. For now we have to keep it simple so the idea sticks
- The duties of the Sigma Leadership Board will be:
  - Be the official voice of the Sigma Class to the Executive Board
    - This is not to say that the Sigmas themselves do not have a voice, only that the Pres and VP will act as Eboard liaisons and …
  - Attend weekly Executive Board Meetings
    - Give status updates about the Sigma Class to Eboard
    - Act as a relay between Eboard and Sigmas, carrying important news to the class
  - Coordinate a Sigma Community Service Event
    - The Sigma Coordinators will assist the Leadership Board in putting this into action. However, it will be the responsibility of the Leadership Board itself to make sure the event come to fruition.
    - The Service Event must be something planned, executed, and completed by the Sigma Class.
      - i.e. Separate from general chapter services events
  - Coordinate a Sigma gift
-a traditional gift given to the chapter from the Sigma Class.

-May be hand crafted: the sign behind our house for example.

-Or bought. **Not to exceed $10 contribution per Sigma.**

**Lead by example …**

-Election process:

-We will be accepting nominations next week (Sept 17th)

-Those nominated will give speeches the week after, we will then vote (Sept 24th)

-President will be the brother with the highest amount of votes, VP the runner-up.

-President and Vice President will be announced during Week 4 (Oct 1st)

**Paperwork**

- **New member registration forms and phone numbers**
  - Have someone come in and sign them up on ChapterSpot.

**VP Communications?**

- make a list of numbers, make sure that all the Sigmas have each other's phone numbers (numbers are on ChapterSpot, but making them physically put the numbers in their phone will help increase retention

- Maybe do this for Week 2... Compile a complete list of names and numbers, write them on a giant Sticky Note and post it somewhere. Then have the Sigmas take down all the numbers

**Dues**

- Chapter ($275)

- Headquarters ($125) – explain the difference
  - Headquarters are a one time only charge. From here on out, your $400 dollar dues will go exclusively to the chapter and will be used in chapter business

Assignment for Next Week:

- First 6 letters of the Greek alphabet
- First 3 Founding Fathers
- First 2 Michigan Chapters
-First 2 Housing Locations
-LROB Reading: Into pg. V-VIII (The Creed of Sigma Phi Epsilon)
  Self Esteem pg. 1-7 (Overwhelming Stress)
  History pg. 61-87 (Phi Beta Kappa, 61)
-Think about some interesting points brought up in the LROB reading, be ready to
discuss
  -Think about who you want as a Big Brother
  -Think about the Sigma Leadership Board positions
    -personally holding one?
    -who would you vote for?

Let them know that next week's meeting will be held at the University Archives located on
East Campus. Tell them to talk to you in order to set up rides or get directions

Activity: to help introduce the guys to the brothers, give A GUIDED tour of the house
  -Take Sigmas around room to room and introduce them to the guys in there. Tell the
    Sigmas a brief something about the brother being introduced (he's a Criminal Justice
    major, captain of our flag football team, position on Eboard, etc.)
    -Don't forget to mention the guys who live off campus

-Note to Coordinators: Brush up on this material! I know that we all as brothers could use a
refresher on the basics. It will look very good to the Sigmas if their Coordinators know the info
frontwards and back. Also, it will legitimize the need for them to commit the info to memory as
well.

-Also, for every week, read (or realistically, skim) the LROB reading. Before every Challenge
meeting, you will be conducting a brief LROB discussion and oral fact quiz. You will ask
the Sigmas what they found interesting about the reading and discuss. If the conversation is dead,
you will need to spur it along by offering what you found interesting. The fact check can be as
simple as asking, “Can anyone tell me the names of the first three Founding Fathers?” for
example.

***For Week Four's session (Kzoo Orientation / Time Management) schedule a guest speaker on
the subject of time management, goal setting, how to be an effective student, etc. This speaker
should be someone of note. Maybe a professor or local expert. If this does not work, get the
Resident Scholar or another alumnus to do it.

Notes:
Session Three: SigEp History and Structure (AT ARCHIVES – 9pm, September 17th) See Lesson Plan

**Remember to make this interactive. Pause now and again (especially after really important material and facilitate a discussion**

-Weekly Quiz and LROB discussion

-National history
  -Sigma Phi
    -Carter Ashton Jenkins (Chi Phi)
  -Ryland Hall
  -November 1, 1901/This Fraternity Will Be Different
    -Stress the fact that we were a latecomer, almost a hundred years behind
    -What caused us to succeed?

-Local History
  -Sigma Epsilon
  -Discrimination controversy
    -1955 Conclave
  -November 19, 1955
  -Bob Kent (AVC President)
-Charles N. White – “The White House”

-Fraternal Roots
-How did pledging/hazing get its start?
-Pledge Model/Balanced Man Model Chapters
  -both are viable ways of instilling values
  -reinforce the values of BMP, again touch on anti-hazing
-Regardless, both models instill VDBL
  -Jenken's Dream

-Transitioning to BMP
-The public perception of fraternities
  -The BMP as a counter to this point
-BMP history
  -look into the details
  -A Fraternity of Firsts
    -anti discrimination before the nat'l gov't of US
    -BMP
      -Many have since followed: SAE's “True Gentleman,” PIKE's “Student Leader Athlete Gentleman”
-Michigan Beta's transition
  -Michigan Beta is one of the chapters with the longest history uninterrupted by closure in the nation, and yet...
  -Membership Review
    -we came close...
    -use 2001 and 2005 composites as visual
  -Rebuild/Implementation of the BMP
  -The future of the chapter...
    -hopefully, the Sigmas feel the weight of nearly 60 years of tradition, and take its continuation as a personal burden

-Chapter Structure
-Executive Board
  -A group of Vice Presidents, each with a specific aspect of the fraternity to oversee
  -coordinated by the Chapter President

-Each Eboard position has a cabinet. If any of the Sigmas want to get involved with a position they find interesting, all they have to do is talk to the Eboard member about getting appointed to a cabinet
-VP of Programming
  - sets up social, philanthropic, and community service events
  - oversees a committee to help organize events

-Chaplain
  - oversees the Standards Board
  - Coordinates Rituals
  - Acts as the moral leader and example of the Chapter

-VP Member Development
  - oversees the Balanced Man Program
    - each Challenge's Coordinators are on his cabinet
  - Works with Programming and his cabinet to set up Sound Mind and Sound Body events

-VP Finance
  - deals with chapter finances
    - dues
    - rent for the chapter house
    - various fines
  - All of which can be paid using a card on ChapterSpot

-House Manager
  - Assigns and keeps track of cleaning duties
  - purchases stock of cleaning supplies

-VP Communications
  - Takes role at all chapter events
  - Manages mass texting communications
  - Maintains Chapter website
  - Alumni relations

-President
  - Oversees the Executive Board
  - Runs Chapter Meetings
  - Interacts with the Inter Fraternity Council

-Chapter Counselor (Lauren Campbell)
  - advises the chapter on executive actions
  - University and public relations
  - acts as a liaison between Michigan Beta, the Alumni Volunteer Corporation, and National Headquarters
-The Alumni Volunteer Corporation (AVC)
  -A group of past Michigan Beta alumni and other volunteers
  -Advise the chapter and keep it on the right track
  -Mentor the Executive Board
  -Own the Chapter House

-National Headquarters
  - Coordinates SigEp on a country-wide level.
  - Funds educational programs such as the Leadership Continuum

-Mention AP here, what it entails
  -Talk about Service Learning
    -Tell them it needs to be coordinated and done as a group at some
during the Challenge period
    -As facilitators, you must have options available for the Sigmas and
must be able to put the Sigmas in contact with those organizations
      -some degree of hand holding may be required for this

-Nominate Sigma Leadership Board

Assignment for next week:
  -Next 6 letters of the Greek Alphabet
  -Founding Fathers 4 – 6
  -Michigan Chapters 3 – 4
  -Housing Locations 3 – 4
  - “Views” 1 – 2 (of 10. We will stick to a small number this first time around and
continue to grow the system as we get better at implementing it)
  -Explain what views are
  -LROB Reading
    Sound Mind: pg. 9-21
    Sound Body: pg. 23-28
  -Founding Dates
    (November 19, 1955 & November 1, 1901)
  -Colors
  -Begin thinking about who you might want as a Big Brother
  -Find each member of the Executive Board. Find out when and where their
Cabinet meetings take place
  -Fill out Committee Meeting Sheet in Sigma Packet
Next week is the Sound Body jog/lesson. Sigmas should wear gym clothes and meet by the Valley Pond Rocks. Ask the Coordinators for more details

Notes:
Session 4 – Balanced Man Ideal (Sound Body Specific)

-Brotherhood Activity: Sound Body jog

-Run campus (start at Goldsworth)

-Stop at some predetermined point on campus (well lit) start lesson (Dunbar/Friedman/Knauss Amphitheater)

-BRIEF LROB DISCUSSION/FACT QUIZ

-Introduce Balanced Man Ideal (Sound Mind/Body)

-Sound Body:

- Strength: physical resistance
- Endurance: repetition and time
- Flexibility: range of motion and movement around a joint

-Diet: nutrition and moderation
- Balance: Where are your strengths and weaknesses?

-Importance of the Sound Body:
  The Balanced Man Ideal begins with a Sound Body. A Balanced Man must maintain his body as it is the seat of the Sound Mind. Without the body as a base, a Sound Mind cannot be attained and balance is lost

REMEMBER TO INCLUDE DISCUSSION

-Sound Mind:

-As college students, our first priority is to get a degree. As SigEps, this is still true, but we seek to develop our minds in much broader ways
-Culture: experiencing new things and respecting diversity
-Time Management: make your day as efficient as possible
-Academics: juggling work with play
-many, even in our chapter, will try to define a Balanced Man as one who is simply able to get good grades during the week, and rage his face off on the weekends. There are, however, so many more facets to the Balanced Man than how well he excels in the classroom and in the parties

-Brief Speeches / Voting for L Board

Assignment for next week:
-Next 6 letters of the Greek alphabet
-Founding Fathers 7 through 9
-Michigan Chapters 5 through 7
-Housing Locations 5 – 6
-“Views” 3 – 4
-E-Board (Names and positions)
-Flowers
-LROB Reading  National Chapter: pg. 89 -100
Local Chapter: pg. 105-115

-Complete Milestones and Goals sections
-Review previous weeks' information
-Thinking about who you would want as a Big Brother

Notes:
Session 5 – Kalamazoo Orientation/Time Management

- Take Sigmas downtown to get them acclimated with Kalamazoo

- Walking tour/things to point out
  - Hospitals
  - Good restaurants / places with good deals and when
  - Train station
  - Court house
  - Entertainment: The Rave, cool bars, places to bring dates

- End in the Kalamazoo Park / Have a discussion:

  - Have a brief LROB Discussion / Fact Quiz

  - Goal setting (w/ Outside Resource: Faculty, Community Leader, Alumnus, Resident Scholar):
    - Have each Sigma share an example of his goals
    - Discuss goal setting methods
      - SMART goals
      - Making plans to overcome obstacles to goals rather than achieving the goals themselves
      - Productive procrastination

  - What is an RLC?
    - Residential Learning Community
-given grants by Educational Fund
-a community to better experience the Balanced Man Ideal
  -examples of what an RLC does
  -hosts a for-credit, college class
  -has close relationships with faculty
  -better environment for academics
-Our chapter is striving to attain this status

-Make Big Bro list

-Announce Sigma Leadership Board
  -After the meeting, take them aside and explain in greater detail what their responsibilities are
  -Help them Coordinate a time for the Leadership Board to meet. This should be done with the Pres, VP, and both Coordinators

Assignment for next week
- Final 6 letters of the Greek alphabet
- Founding Fathers 10 – 12
- Michigan Chapters 8 – 9
- Housing Location 7
- “Views” 5 – 6

Notes:
Session 6 – Ritual Study

-Ritual Study

- NOTE TO COORDINATORS: Make sure to thoroughly read and understand the Sigma Rite of Passage before this meeting. The Sigmas will have many questions. You will need to know not only how to answer these questions, but also which ones you are able to answer. As always try to convey this material with the excitement that we want our Sigmas to show.

Remember, we are trying to change a culture in the chapter; one that treats Ritual like a necessary production, only put on a few times a semester, and not a guide by which to live their lives. The goal here is not only to convey the information about Ritual, but also the love and passion for the Ritual that all SigEps should have.

- This is the most important lesson in Sigma as it instructs them in an essential part of SigEp and also speaks to how every SigEp is expected to conduct themselves per the binding power of the Ritual

- The mood should be one of intensity, excitement, curiosity, and wonder

- The Sigma Coordinators, VP Mem D, and Chaplain will be helping, along with any additional brothers as necessary

- Tie it into a lesson on Greek life overall
   - Every fraternity and sorority has Principles that their members are to live by
   - Ours are
     - Virtue: Honesty
     - Diligence: Hard Work
     - Brotherly Love: Compassion
   - The difference between a “frat boy” and a fraternity man is that one ignores his fraternity's core Principles and the other exercises them in every situation; one performs the Ritual when it is required of him, the other LIVES the Ritual.

- As you have the Sigmas perform the Ritual, each playing a role (President, Chaplain, Neophyte, etc) have them focus on the words of the Ritual and how they insist a SigEp must conduct himself

- Have the Sigmas set up the formal room for Ritual
-Have them perform it slowly in stages, having a discussion after crucial moments
  -Go through the Sigma Ritual yourself and take note of passages that hold the most meaning to you, or that you see as the most important. Places like this are where you should take pause and have a discussion

-Have all 30 of the guys split into teams to do this, we may need to recruit some additional brothers to help us with this

-Have them read the Sigma Opening, pg 14.
  -Includes a pause and reflection on the meaning of Sigma Phi Epsilon
   -If they ask, tell them it will be revealed in Epsilon, this should build curiosity

-In closing, have a discussion about Sigma Ritual
  -pg 88 Ritual Booklet questions pertaining to Sigma

-Ask them to fill out the section of their Sigma Packet entitled Ritual Discussion

Side Note: I would like some input on good experiential learning activities to do that relate to each week's topic...

-Leadership Board Note: help them begin setting up Sigma Gift

Assignments for next week:

- LROB Reading  Alcohol & Drugs: pg. 29-31
  Sexuality: pg. 47-51
  - Michigan Chapters 10 through 11
  - “Views” 7 – 8
  - Read SIGMA PHI EPSILON FRATERNITY STATEMENT ON CHAPTER & INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY located in the back of this packet
  - Submit any changes to the Big Brother List ASAP
  - Review all studied material up to now

Side Notes (the original notes for Ritual Study, use this info to augment the Ritual Study outlined above)

  Here's my words for defining the Ritual. Look it over, decide what you like, what you don't, and make it your own. It is important for the Sigmas to sense that this is heartfelt. Mine seems a little corny, but it's only because I am passionate about SigEp and truly believe everything I say. Try to come up with some way of putting this that you feel
equally as passionate about. It's easy, just speak from the heart about what you truly feel about of great brotherhood.

After you are done with this introduction, use the bullet points beyond this block of text to further define (in less lofty language) the principles of the Ritual, and the responsibility of all SigEps not only to each other, but to the rest of the world.

-Sigma Phi Epsilon is more than just a group of friends, more even than a group of brothers. It is a group of men bound together by the principles taught in the Ritual. While each Challenge has its own ritual, which contains secrets only to be learned once you have completed that Challenge, the core principles are on display for the whole world to see: Virtue, Diligence, and Brotherly Love. Even though you do not know the symbols, passages, or actions of the Ritual, which has been a common bond between SigEps since our founding over one hundred years ago, you do know its lesson; you understand what it is to be not only a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon, but to actually BE a Sigma Phi Epsilon.

Throughout the years, many people have tried to define what it is to be a man. Many will say that success in the professional world makes a man, others influence, others popularity. Sigma Phi Epsilon, however, teaches that pure morals and up-standing character defines a man; that openness and caring towards others is what makes men great; that striving for knowledge must be coupled with good health; that a true Balanced Man sees it as his responsibility to not only better himself, but also in the process to raise everyone around him up as well. A Sigma Phi Epsilon extends his helping hand not only to his brothers, but to all people regardless of their station or situation. This is true Brotherly Love.

What do Virtue, Diligence and Brotherly Love mean to you? Take some time, and write it down. Think about all you hope to be; think about all Sigma Phi Epsilon expects you to be. This is the responsibility of every one of our brothers. Those truly living the Principles of our great fraternity are those who live their lives with the Principles of the Ritual displayed firmly in their actions. While all brothers can expect that, when they set so lofty a standard they are bound to fail now and again, it is those men that pursue such goals of pure character that the world stands up and calls great; that we are proud to call a true brother.

-Have them write down their own definitions for Virtue, Diligence, and Brotherly Love separately. Then, ask them to dwell upon what a life operating with all three Principles in harmony looks like. Tell them that this ideal life is the goal for which all true SigEps must strive.

-Discuss Ritual as a common bond between brothers
-It is something that all SigEps, reaching back to our founding over 100 years ago, have in common.
-When the Balanced Man Program was created, new rituals were developed for entry into the Sigma, Phi, and Brother Mentor Challenges. Epsilon is the original Ritual.
-With each new Challenge that you progress through, you will be further enlightened with secrets of our fraternity.

-What makes a brother?
  -Accountability
    -holding each other to the standards set in the Ritual
  -A fine line between use and abuse
    -Always help a brother when he's down, don't let him walk all over you; not a true brother

-What makes a brother different from a friend?

-Discuss the meaning of Brotherhood Week
  -All the daily activities, a chance to feel the inclusion of the brotherhood
  -Sigmas strongly encouraged to stay at the house that week
  -Talk about Brotherhood Night and its ritualistic properties

Side Note: I would like some input on good experiential learning activities to do that relate to each week's topic...

-Leadership Board Note: help them begin setting up Sigma Gift

Assignments for next week:

- LROB Reading   Alcohol & Drugs: pg. 29-31
  Sexuality: pg. 47-51
  - Michigan Chapters 10 through 11
  - “Views” 7 – 8
- Read SIGMA PHI EPSILON FRATERNITY STATEMENT ON CHAPTER & INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY located in the back of this packet
- Submit any changes to the Big Brother List ASAP
- Review all studied material up to now

Notes:
Session Seven – Alcohol Talk

-LROB Discussion / FINAL Fact Quiz

-Have Adam Schiff give a talk about responsible alcohol use

-He will also touch on the zero-tolerance policy for drugs
  -Weed for example: you may not use it on chapter properties, or be on chapter property while high
    -A huge liability, looks bad for the chapter

-Also have a discussion about etiquette, focusing on how to act around women

Assignment for next week:

-Write your reflection
  -what Sigma meant to you
  -a fun experience
  -etc
  -bring it in for Test Day

- “Views” 9 – 10
-Submit any changes to the Big Brother List ASAP
-Review ALL studied material
-Sigma Test is next week!

Notes:
Session Eight – Sigma Test
- Collect Reflections
  - collect them in an envelop, seal them until they go through Epsilon

- Take Sigma Test
  - A one on one, oral test with the Coordinators or other brothers recruited to help with this process

- Your Final Remarks

CONGRATUALTIONS!!!

Final Notes:
Appendix C: Facts and Figures

This information regarding the academic performance and size of each Greek organization is made public after the close of every semester by Western Michigan University’s Student Activities and Leadership Programs (SALP) office. This data has been included in this study with the consent of WMU’s Human Subjects Institutional Research Board (HSIRB).
### WMU Fraternity/Sorority Life

#### Community Grade Report: Fall 2011

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| **Interfraternity Council** |              |      |                        |                   |                    |
| Zeta Beta Tau (colony)* | 1            | 10   | 3.34                   | 10                | 3.34               |
| Sigma Phi Epsilon*   | 2            | 62   | 3.09                   | 22                | 3.21               |
| Tau Kappa Epsilon    | 3            | 27   | 2.75                   | 6                 | 2.24               |
| Pi Kappa Alpha (colony) | 4            | 31   | 2.74                   | 31                | 2.74               |
| Delta Chi           | 5            | 28   | 2.73                   | 9                 | 2.3                |
| Alpha Tau Omega     | 6            | 43   | 2.69                   | 10                | 2.39               |
| Delta Sigma Phi     | 6            | 50   | 2.69                   | 8                 | 2.41               |
| Sigma Chi           | 8            | 40   | 2.68                   | 11                | 2.93               |
| Sigma Pi            | 9            | 35   | 2.59                   | 5                 | 2.5                |
| Pi Kappa Phi        | 10           | 39   | 2.5                    | 10                | 2.35               |
| Lambda Chi Alpha    | 11           | 24   | 2.48                   | 8                 | 2.65               |
| Phi Sigma Kappa     | 12           | 18   | 2.25                   | 5                 | 1.72               |
| **TOTAL**           | --           | 407  | 2.70                   | 135               | 2.68               |

|                  |              |      |                        |                   |                    |
| **Multicultural Greek Council** |              |      |                        |                   |                    |
| Sigma Lambda Gamma | 1            | 11   | 2.71                   | 0                 | N/A                |
| Sigma Lambda Beta  | 2            | 4    | 2.32                   | 0                 | N/A                |
| **TOTAL**          | --           | 15   | 2.61                   | 0                 | N/A                |

|                  |              |      |                        |                   |                    |
| **National Pan-Hellenic Council** |              |      |                        |                   |                    |
| Alpha Kappa Alpha | 1            | 18   | 2.67                   | 12                | 2.36               |
| Phi Beta Sigma    | 2            | 14   | 2.41                   | 0                 | N/A                |
| Kappa Alpha Psi   | 3            | 11   | 2.15                   | 0                 | N/A                |
| Alpha Phi Alpha   | 4            | 8    | 1.69                   | 0                 | N/A                |
| **TOTAL**         | --           | 51   | 2.33                   | 12                | 2.36               |

### All Community

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*Organizations marked with an asterisk (*) achieved above WMU’s respective all men’s or all women’s grade point averages.
## WMU Fraternity and Sorority Life
### Community Report: Fall 2012

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## WMU Fraternity and Sorority Life

### Community Grade Report: Fall 2013

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|                  |              |              |                        |                        |                             |
| **Interfraternity Council** |          |              |                        |                        |                             |
| Sigma Phi Epsilon* | 1          | 73           | 3.03                   | 22                     | 2.95                        |
| Alpha Tau Omega*  | 2          | 40           | 2.96                   | 23                     | 2.98                        |
| Phi Gamma Delta/FIU (colony)* | 3      | 43           | 2.90                   | 16                     | 3.04                        |
| Pi Kappa Phi      | 4          | 46           | 2.74                   | 12                     | 2.96                        |
| Lambda Chi Alpha  | 5          | 31           | 2.56                   | 16                     | 2.85                        |
| Pi Kappa Alpha (colony) | 6  | 42           | 2.53                   | 12                     | 2.15                        |
| Tau Kappa Epsilon | 7          | 17           | 2.36                   | 0                      | N/A                         |
| Phi Sigma Kappa   | 8          | 15           | 2.31                   | 5                      | 1.74                        |
| Beta Sigma Psi    | 9          | 8            | 2.22                   | 1                      | N/A                         |
| Sigma Chi         | 10         | 30           | 2.20                   | 9                      | 1.93                        |
| Delta Sigma Phi   | 11         | 24           | 2.10                   | 11                     | 1.88                        |
| **Council Averages:** | --       | 34           | **2.67**               | --                     | **2.65**                    |

|                  |              |              |                        |                        |                             |
| **Multicultural Greek Council** |          |              |                        |                        |                             |
| Phi Iota Alpha (colony) | 1          | 8            | 2.82                   | 0                      | N/A                         |
| Sigma Lambda Beta  | 2          | 6            | 2.59                   | 1                      | N/A                         |
| Sigma Lambda Gamma | 3          | 6            | 2.45                   | 0                      | N/A                         |
| **Council Averages:** | --       | 7            | **2.64**               | --                     | **N/A**                     |

|                  |              |              |                        |                        |                             |
| **National Pan-Hellenic Council** |          |              |                        |                        |                             |
| Phi Beta Sigma    | 1          | 11           | 2.49                   | 4                      | 2.17                        |
| Alpha Kappa Alpha | 2          | 18           | 2.46                   | 16                     | 2.37                        |
| Alpha Phi Alpha   | 3          | 9            | 2.24                   | 0                      | N/A                         |
| Kappa Alpha Psi   | 4          | 5            | 1.88                   | 0                      | N/A                         |
| **Council Averages:** | --       | 11           | **2.35**               | --                     | **2.33**                    |

|                  |              |              |                        |                        |                             |
| **Fraternity/Sorority Community** | 5.54%     | 982          | 2.89                   | 313                    | 2.81                        |
| All Undergraduate Males | 8952      |              | 2.85                   |                        |                             |
| All Undergraduate Females | 8763     |              | 3.10                   |                        |                             |
| All Undergraduates | 17715      |              | 2.98                   |                        |                             |

*Organizations marked with an asterisk (*) achieved above WMU's respective all men's or all women's grade point averages.
### WMU Fraternity and Sorority Life

#### Community Grade Report: Spring 2014

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**Fraternity/Sorority Community**: 6.27% 1,015 291 156 2.85

*Organizations marked with an asterisk (*) achieved above WMU's respective all men's or all women's grade point averages.