Constitution and By-Laws

OF THE

ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY

(INCORPORATED)



GENERAL ORGANIZATION

++

1926

Constitution and By-Laws

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(INCORPORATED)



GENERAL ORGANIZATION

++

1925

PREAMBLE

We, the members of this organization, in order to promote a more perfect union among college men; to aid in and insist upon the personal progress of its members; to further brotherly love and a fraternal spirit within the organization; to discountenance evil; to destroy all prejudices; to preserve the sanctity of the home; the personification of virtue and the chastity of woman; do enact and establish this Constitution for the government of its members.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name and Symbol

Section 1. This Organization shall be known as The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Sec. 2. The Smybol shall be the Greek letters Alpha

Phi Alpha.

ARTICLE II

Organization

Section 1. The Organization shall consist of Under-

Graduate and Graduate Chapters.

Sec. 2. Under-Graduate Chapters shall be named after the letters of the Greek Alphabet in the order of their establishment, viz: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, etc. When the alphabet is exhausted the first Greek letter, Alpha, becomes a prefix, viz: Alpha Alpha, Alpha Beta, etc.

Sec. 3. Graduate Chapters shall be named after the Greek Alphabet with the suffix Lambda, viz: Alpha Lambda, etc.

ARTICLE III

Under-Graduate Chapters

Section 1. An Under-Graduate Chapter may be established at any College or University which is classified (as a Class A or B School by the U. S. Bureau of Education), and in addition which has an enrollment of ten or more Negro male students. Where there are two or more Colleges or Universities of said classification in the same state or vicinity with a total enrollment of ten or more Negro male students, the group may, through an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha, apply for an Under-Graduate Chapter, the Seat of the Chapter to be determined by the Executive Council.

SEC. 2. The jurisdiction of an Under-Graduate Chapter shall be limited to the Under-Graduate and resident instructors of the institution or institutions designated in the Chapter's charter, and graduates of schools whose

members are eligible for membership in Alpha Phi Alpha. Where an Under-Graduate Chapter and Graduate Chapter exist in the same city or vicinity, the Under-Graduate Chapter shall consult the Graduate Chapter before taking in graduate members. There shall be but one Under-Graduate Chapter in the institution designated by the charter.

- Sec. 3. A petition for the establishment of an Under-Graduate Chapter may be made by six or more Negro male students enrolled in any institution which shall measure up to standard of classification in Article III, Section 1, of this Constitution.
- Sec. 4. Petition for the establishment of Under-Graduate Chapters may come from any student of a recognized College or from an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. It must be referred to the General Secretary and approvel by the Executive Council and by three-fourths of the total Chapters, Graduate and Under-Graduate, when the convention is not in session. A three-fourths vote of the active members of a Chapter present at any meeting shall be necessary for approval.
- Sec. 5. The initiation of applicants and the installation of an Under-Graduate Chapter shall be under the supervision of the General Vice-President presiding over the district in which the Chapter is established or by a Deputy approved by him.
- Sec. 6. The Officers of an Under-Graduate Chapter shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Associate-Editor of the Sphinx, Treasurer and such other officers as may be necessary.
- Sec. 7. The Under-Graduate Chapter shall hold its annual election at the first regular meeting following the General Convention. Election shall be by ballot.
- SEC. 8. An Under-Graduate Chapter may initiate graduate with degrees from institutions of Alpha Phi Alpha standard or admit members on transfer from Graduate Chapters provided their residence is at the Seat of the Under-Graduate Chapter.
- SEC. 9. An Under-Graduate Chapter may adopt a Constitution and By-Laws for its government, the same to be submitted at the following General Convention for

its approval. The Chapter's Constitution and By-Laws must not conflict with this Constitution or any Statutes which may hereafter be enacted.

ARTICLE IV Graduate Chapter

Section 1. A Graduate Chapter may be established in any city or locality upon petition of six or more active resident members, fifty percent of the number being Graduates.

SEC. 2. Petition for the establishment of Graduate Chapters shall follow the same procedure as that prescribed for Under-Graduate Chapters in Article III, Section 3.

SEC. 3. The Officers of a Graduate Chapter shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Associatee Sphinx Editor and Treasurer, as a minimum.

Sec. 4. The jurisdiction of a Graduate Chapter shall be limited to the city or cities designated in its charter; and only one Graduate Chapter may be established in this territory.

SEC. 5. A Graduate Chapter may adopt a Constitution and By-Laws for its government, but such Constitution and By-Laws must be submitted at the following General Convention for its approval, and shall not conflict with this Constitution or any Statutes which may hereafter be enacted.

ARTICLE V Sphinx Club

Section 1. Where there are five or more pledges to an Under-Graduate Chapter, they may organize as a Social Organization; such Organization to be known as Sphinx Club.

SEC, 2. The Sphinx Club is subject to the ruling of the Under-Graduate Chapter, and the Under-Graduate Chapter is responsible for the conduct of the Sphinx Club.

ARTICLE VI

Memberships

- Section 1. Membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity shall consist of three grades Active Under-Graduate, Active Graduate, and Honorary.
- SEC. 2. Any Negro male student who has successfully completed one semester or one quarter's work in a college or professional department of any institution where there is an Under-Graduate Chapter of such college or university designated in the Chapter of the Under-Graduate Chapter and who is strictly honest, temperate in habits, of good character and undoubted ability as evinced by his scholarship, may be presented as an applicant by any active member of said Chapter. When the applicant has received the approval of all the members of the Chapter and has undergone the prescribed initiation, he is an active Under-Graduate member of that respective Chapter.
- SEC. 3. A Graduate member shall be one who possesses a Degree from an institution of Alpha Phi Alpha standing and who has never been pledged to or rejected by the Fraternity while a student. The applicant must be presented by a member of the Chapter, receive approval of all members and be initiated. An Active Under-Graduate member on graduation, is eligible to Active Graduate membership without initiation. An Active Under-Graduate member who has been out of college at least twelve months, may, if financial, be transferred from the Under-Graduate to the Graduate Chapter in whose jurisdiction he finds himself.
- Sec. 4. An applicant for Honorary Membership in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity must be presented by a Chapter at the Annual Convention or to the Executive Council after said applicant has received unanimous vote of that Chapter.
- (A) The applicant shall be a graduate of a College or University meeting the requirements of eligibility in this Fraternity or shall have matriculated in such College or University and passed the Sophomore Year.

- (B) He shall have attained prominence in educational activities, the sciences, or shall be an outstanding character that has achieved results that are particularly helpful to the Negro Race in the Nation at large.
- (C) He shall not be a member of any other Greek Letter Intercollegiate or College Fraternity.
- (D) Election shall be by majority vote at any annual convention or the majority vote of two-thirds of the Chapters after the applicant's name shall have been submitted by the Executive Council.
- (E) Should the applicant be elected as a Candidate, the Chapter proposing his name shall pay an initiation free of \$25.00 prior to the next Convention.
- (F) The successful Candidate shall be required to appear at the Convention succeeding his election for initiation by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.
- Sec. 5. Not more than three applicants for Honorary Membership may be elected at any General Convention.
- Sec. 6. Any Negro male student who is eligible to the Freshman Class of the College Department in any institution where there is an Under-Graduate Chapter or is eligible to the Freshman Class of such Colleges or Universities designated in the charter of the Under-Graduate Chapter and who measures up to the moral standard set in Article VI, Section 2, his name may be presented by any active member of the Under-Graduate Chapter, and when he has received the approval of all the members of said Chapter, is a pledge of that Chapter.

Sec. 7. All Honorary Members shall be exempt from

payment of Chapter dues and Grand Tax.

ARTICLE VII General Convention

Section 1. The General Convention shall consist of not more than two delegates from each Under-Graduate and Graduate Chapter, the Executive Council and Founders, sitting in regular session as hereinafter provided. Each member of the General Convention shall have a vote, the President voting only in case of a tie.

- Sec. 2. The meeting of the General Convention shall be held annually, the last week in December, at such place as shall have been chosen by the preceding General Convention.
- SEC, 3. The General Convention shall constitute the Supreme Legislative body, and as such shall have power to enact statutes for the regulation of all matters pertaining to the Organization as a whole, and not provided for in this Constitution.
- SEC. 4. The Officers of the General Convention shall be a General President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Third Vice-President, a Fourth Vice-President, a General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor-in-Chief of the Sphinx, who shall rank in the order named, except the Assistant General Secretary, and all of whom, except the Assistant General Secretary, shall be members of the General Convention.
- Sec. 5. Officers of the General Convention shall be active members of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.
- Sec. 6. The duties of these Officers shall be as follows:
- (A) The duties of the General President shall be to preside over the General Convention, to execute all of the laws of the Fraternity, to appoint all committees not herein provided for, except where objection is raised and sustained by a majority vote of the members. He shall interpret the Constitution. Appeal may be had from such interpretation of the Constitution upon objection being raised and sustained by a majority of the Convention. Such an appeal shall be made in the General Convention, and the decision shall be final. The General President shall be Chairman of the Executive Council. The General President shall be director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign.
- (B) The First Vice-President shall act as President when for any reason the chair becomes vacant; shall act as Chairman of the Advisory Committee. He shall visit the Chapters in his respective jurisdiction which are in need of his immediate official attention; shall revive and re-establish inactive Chapters in his jurisdiction; shall

investigate and correct all forms of delinquency, both financial and moral, in his Chapters; shall settle all controversies and misunderstandings within his jurisdiction. He shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign.

- (C) The duties of the Second Vice-President shall be to act as President when for any reason the chair is vacant due to the absence of officers of higher rank; he shall be chairman of the Committee on Delinquent and Unrepresented Chapters, he shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign. Otherwise, his duties in governing his jurisdiction are the same as those of the First Vice President in his jurisdiction.
- (D) The duties of the Third Vice-President shall be to govern his jurisdiction in the same manner in which the First and Second Vice-Presidents govern their respective jurisdictions. He shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign. He shall act as President when for any reason the chair may be vacant due to the absence of officers of higher rank.
- (E) The duties of the Fourth Vice-President shall be to govern his jurisdiction in the same manner in which the First, Second and Third Vice-Presidents govern their respective jurisdictions. He shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign." He shall act as President when for any reason the chair may be vacant due to the absence of officers of higher rank.
- (F) The General Secretary shall be in charge of records of the Fraternity. He shall carry on the correspondence of the General Organization as relates to the routine affairs of the Fraternity alone. He shall sign and distribute Shingles, Pass Cards, receive orders for Pins and Chapter Seals and Chapter stationery. He shall receive orders or subscriptions for the Sphnix. He shall receive all moneys and funds paid into the General Organization and shall keep record of same. He shall transmit all moneys and funds received to the General Treasurer immediately upon receipt. He shall notify

each Chapter at least two months prior to the General Convention of the meeting place of the same. Correspondence which he receives from outside this Fraternity and which deals with matters of vital importance to the progress and welfare of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity shall be referred by the General Secretary to the Chairman of the Executive Council, which council will act upon it immediately and instruct the General Secretary as to the nature of the reply to be made. He shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign, and shall operate the publicity department of same under the direction of the General President.

- (G) The General Treasurer shall have charge of all moneys and funds of the General Organization. He shall be required to deposit all funds of the General Organization coming into his hands within five days after receipt of same. He shall pay out same only on written order signed by the General President and the General Secretary. He shall be Chairman of the Finance Committee and an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign. He shall give an approved bond, which shall be fixed by statute.
- (H) The Assistant Secretary shall be selected by the General Secretary. His duties will be that of Assistant and Clerk. He shall not be empowered to sign or affix his signature to official papers, documents, Shingles, Pass Cards, correspondence; neither shall he be empowered to affix the official Seal of the Fraternity to any of the above. Exception is made in case death should occur to the General Secretary, when the Assistant Secretary must act as General Secretary until the Executive Council appoints the successor.
- (I) The Editor-in-Chief of the Sphinx shall edit the official organ of the Fraternity He shall be Chairman of the Printing Committee. He shall be an Associate Director of the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign, and shall have charge of compilation of literature pertaining to such under the direction of the General President.

Sec. 7. The designation of Vice-Presidents as to first, second, etc., shall be determined immediately after their election by vote of the Convention.

SEC. 8. The jurisdiction of the Vice-Presidents shall be known as the Eastern District, the Mid-Western District, the Pacific District, and the Southern District.

SEC. 9. The election shall be by ballot. The members receiving the majority of votes cast shall be declared elected to office.

Sec. 10. One-third of the registered members of the General Convention shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 11. The Officers of the General Organization shall be nominated, elected and installed at the last session of the General Convention, and shall hold office until their successors are elected at the next General Convention. This, however, does not apply to the General Secretary and Editor-in-Chief of the Sphinx, each of whom shall hold office two successive years.

Sec. 12. All vacancies occurring during the year shall be filled by appointments made by the General President and subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

Sec. 13. The General Organization, through its General Secretary, shall supply each Chapter on its establishment with a Charter and Seal, each member of said Chapter to receive a Pass Card, Shingle and copy of the Constitution and By-Laws.

Sec. 14. The General Convention by majority vote, may declare any Chapter inactive for good and sufficient reasons, viz: for example, when its membership is less than six or for refusing to pay grand tax or violating ritual or Constitution.

SEC, 15. A Chapter declared inactive may be reinstated upon application to the General President, whose decision upon the application shall be subject to ratification of the Executive Council.

ARTICLE VIII

Discipline

Section 1. Each Chapter shall have the power to discipline its members. The penalty shall be censure, fine, or suspension.

- Sec. 2. A member away from the seat of his Chapter may be reported to his Chapter for conduct unbecoming a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity by any active member of the Fraternity provided the charge be written and signed by the member reporting same.
- SEC. 3. A member of any Chapter of this Organization who is in school, or residing, at the seat of any Chapter and who fails to affiliate himself with said Chapter within a period of seven months after notification of the existence thereof, may be denied the right of participating in any of the Chapter's functions until he has so affiliated himself.
- Sec. 4. When for any reason a member is suspended from his Chapter, he must refrain from wearing the Alpha Phi Alpha Pin until the suspension has been lifted. Failure to do so, he may be referred to the General Convention for expulsion.
- Sec. 5. Controversies and misunderstandings arising in a Chapter shall be referred to the General Vice-President of that jurisdiction.
- Sec. 6. The Executive Council shall have the power to suspend the Charter of any Chapter for good and sufficient reason, but such suspension must be sustained or the action reversed by the next succeeding General Convention.
- SEC. 7. The power of expulsion shall be denied the individual Chapters. When the offense deserves the extreme punishment (expulsion), the Chapter has the right of indefinite suspension and may refer said member to the General Convention for expulsion. The right of appeal shall be extended to each suspended brother, and the action of the General Convention upon such appeal shall be final; it being further provided that a brother who has been expelled shall, after a lapse of three years, be permitted to make a personal application, through the General Secretary's office, to the General Convention to have his case reopened and reheard for reinstatement, such application to set forth good and sufficient reasons for such reinstatement, and upon approval of two-thirds of the members present at the particular session the member shall be considered reinstated to membership in the Fraternity.

ARTICLE IX

Fees and Dues

Section 1. The fee for the establishment of a Chapter shall be an amount sufficient to defray the expense of the General Officer or the Deputy sent by him to set up the Chapter, plus the grand tax.

Sec. 2. The initiation fee for initiates into an established Chapter shall be fixed by the Chapter, but it shall not be less than \$15.00

Sec. 3. Any Chapter may fix assessments, fees or dues by a majority vote of its members.

Sec. 4. The entire cost of the Official Fraternity Pin must accompany the applicant's initiation fee.

Sec. 5. The General Convention shall have power to fix and levy a per capita tax on each active member for the purpose of conducting the Fraternity.

SEC. 6. The founders of Alpha Phi Alpha shall be exempted from payment of all taxes of the General Organization or of the several Chapters.

ARTICLE X

Insignia

(Colors and Seal)

Section 1. The Colors of Alphia Phi Alpha Fraternity shall be black and gold.

SEC. 2. The Seal of the Fraternity shall bear the words "Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity" on the margin with the words "Founded" and the date "1906" in the center.

Sec. 3. The Insignia shall be a Pin bearing the three Greek Letters, Alpha Phi Alpha, with the letter "Phi" super-imposed on the letters "Alpha" and "Alpha."

Sec. 4. The Official Pin shall be the only Insignia worn for Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Sec. 5. The Pin shall contain seven jewels.

Sec. 6. The Insignia shall be worn by Fraternity members, the privilege of wearing the Insignia also being extended to the wives, mothers and fiancees of members of the Fraternity. Sec. 7. No guards shall be attached to the Official Insignia.

Sec. 8. Suspended members shall not wear the Fraternity Pin.

SEC. 9. The Executive Council shall designate the Official Jeweler, and he shall be instructed to make no Insignia of Alpha Phi Alpha without an order from the General Secretary. The Official Jeweler shall make no other Insignia of the Fraternity.

Sec. 10. No Chapter or member thereof shall order a Pin direct from the Jeweler.

SEC. 11. The General Secretary shall see to it that all Pins are registered and serially numbered before delivered.

Sec. 12. The title of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Pin shall be vested in the General Organization. Upon suspension of a member the Secretary of the Chapter with which this member was affiliated shall request the return of the Pin in writing. On return of the Pin, the Chapter shall reimburse the holder, and on the return of the Pin to the General Secretary the General Organization shall reimburse the Chapter. Due process of law may be taken to secure the Pin.

ARTICLE XI

Committees

Section 1. There shall be the following Standing Committees:

- (A) Executive Council, composed of all the Officers of the General Convention and three members-at-large.
- (B) Advisory Committee, composed of the Presidents of the various Chapters.
 - (C) Printing Committee.
- (D) Committee of Unrepresented and Delinquent Chapters, composed of the Vice-Presidents.
- (E) Finance and Investment Committee, composed of Treasurer and two members appointed by President.

SEC. 2. Duties:

(A) The Executive Council is charged with the ex-

the General Convention. The executive Council shall be vested with judiciary power in case of disputes and in the interpretation of the Constitution and By-Laws. The action of the Executive Council shall be subject to review by the General Convention, and an annual report shall be made to the General Convention.

- (B) The Advisory Committee shall pass upon all applicants for the formation of new Chapters when the Convention is not in session. It shall also decide upon all matters referred to it by the President or Executive Council.
- (C) The Printing Committee shall gather material for edit, publish and distribute the *Sphinx*. They shall attend to the official printing of the Fraternity. The Editor-in-Chief of the *Sphinx* shall act as Chairman of the Printing Committee.
- (D) The Committee on Unrepresented and Delinquent Chapters shall report the proceedings of the Convention to the Unrepresented Chapters in their several jurisdictions:
- (E) The Finance and Investment Committee shall study the financial needs of the Fraternity and offer suggestions for investment of the funds of the Organization. No investment shall be made without the consent of the General Convention.
- Sec. 3. At the opening of each General Convention the President shall appoint such other committees as he shall deem necessary.

ARTICLE XII

Sphnix

Section 1. The Official Organ of the Alpha Phi

Alpha Fraternity shall be known as the Sphinx.

Sec. 2. The Sphinx shall be published five times a year, on the following dates, and designated as here indicated:

October 1-Commencement Number and Directory,

December 1—Christmas Number. February 1—Convention Number.

April 1-Educational Number.

June 1-Pictorial Number.

- Sec. 3. The Sphnix shall contain such matter as is submitted by the Associate Sphinx Editors and such other matter as the Editor-in-Chief may deem beneficial to the membership.
- Sec. 4. The Editor-in-Chief may solicit high-class advertisements for the *Sphinx* to aid in defraying the expense of publication.
- Sec. 5. The Editor-in-Chief shall be responsible to the General Organization for any disclosure through the columns of the Sphinx of the ritualistic work of the Fraternity or any breach of Fraternity or Chapter ethics.

ARTICLE XIII

- Section 1. Amendments to this Constitution shall be submitted to and passed by a three-fourths vote of the General Convention and ratified by three-fourths of the active Chapters. A three-fourths vote of the active members of a Chapter shall be necessary to ratify.
- SEC. 2. (A) All proposed amendments shall be filed with the General Secretary sixty (60) days before the next succeeding General Convention.
- (B) The General Secretary shall send mimeographed copies of all proposed amendments to each Chapter thirty (30) days prior to next succeeding Convention. Only such proposed amendments shall be considered by the Convention.

BY-LAWS

- Each Chapter must submit a copy of its Constitution and By-Laws to the General Convention every two years.
- 2. Chapters shall use due diligence to determine that members are in good standing with their local Chapters before they may be admitted to meetings or to functions of their Chapter. This however, is not to be taken to mean that a member will be prevented from attending functions of the Chapter immediately, but only if he presents himself a number of times.
- 3. The exhibition of a pass card shall be required of a member before he is admitted into a meeting of any Chapter other than the Chapter with which he is affiliated.
- No member may come into the sessions of the General Convention or attend any of its functions without a Pass Card or satisfactory credentials from his Chapter.
- 5. Each Chapter shall be required to send the names and addresses of all its active members to the General Secretary at least two months before the General Convention and the names of its delegates to the General President and Vice-President of the jurisdiction at least two weeks before the General Convention.
- 6. Notice of action upon names of candidates for admission into the Fraternity shall be given at a meeting of the Chapter at least one week before such action is to occur. The Chapter Secretary shall give notice to all members al sent from such meeting at least five days before such action. This notice shall be in writing. Absence from such meetings after notification by the Secretary shall be deemed assent in each particular case.
- No member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity shall be a member of any other College or Intercollegiate Fraternity, except a purely Honorary or Professional Fraternity.

- 8. No person, a member of any other College or Intercollegiate Fraternity, except an Honorary or Professional Fraternity, shall be admitted into Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.
- 9. Every member who pays grand tax shall receive the Sphinx and the Minutes of the General Convention.
- 10. No member, Under-Graduate or Graduate shall receive a transfer from his Chapter so long as he is a student in the institution, the seat of the Chapter or a resident in the Chapter's jurisdiction.
- 11. Each member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity shall pay, through his Chapter Secretary, an annual Grand Tax of \$3.50; said tax to be paid on or before May 15th.
- 12. A Standard System of bookkeeping shall be followed by the General Secretary and the Treasurer.
- 13. When a member's financial obligation is equivalent to seven (7) months dues, he shall be declared an inactive member of his Chapter.
- 14. When a Chapter fails to pay Grand Tax for less than six members, it shall be declared an inactive Chapter by the General Convention.
- 15. Members of an inactive Chapter shall pay their Grand Tax direct to the General Secretary.
- 16. An inactive member may become reinstated upon payment of all back dues to his Chapter, plus \$3.50 Grand Tax for the current year, to the General Organization, and all of his financial obligations to his local Chapter.
- 17. The Treasurer of the General Organization shall be required to give an approved bond of \$5,000.00, the cost of such bond to be borne by the General Organization.
- 18. The funds of the General Organization shall be deposited, in the name of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in two or more banks to be approved by the Executive Council.

- 19. The General Secretary shall be required to give an approved bond of \$5,000.00, the cost of such bond to be borne by the General Organization.
- 20. The bonds of the General Treasurer and the General Secretary shall be deposited with the General President, the same to be kept in a safety deposit box, the expense being borne by the General Organization.
- 21. The General President shall issue annually a bulletin setting the date for the "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign.
- The method of amending these By-Laws shall be the same as for the amendment of the General Constitution.

Certified by:

General Secretary, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.