

FarmHouse International Fraternity

Historian Resource



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**FarmHouse International Fraternity
Historian Resource**

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THE CHAPTER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The FarmHouse International Fraternity has established the Chapter Award of Excellence as our minimum standards program. It is designed to recognize Chapters that are operating at the performance level outlined in our By-Laws, policies, and handbooks. The criteria for the Chapter Award of Excellence are built upon basic expected performance in the various areas of chapter operations. As an officer of your Chapter, the criteria within your responsibility are identified in the box that follows.

4. Alumni Relations (6 points)

_____ *The chapter & association jointly published an alumni newsletter twice each calendar year. Newsletter sent to alumni, other chapters, FH International and university administration (1 point)*
(Attachment #4 - submit copy of each newsletter – will become entry for Outstanding Newsletter Award)

17. Public Relations (4 points)

_____ *The chapter regularly updates its web site, and the webmaster has an e-mail account that is checked at least once a week. (1 point)*

Web Site Address: _____ **Webmaster's E-mail:** _____

_____ *Press releases were submitted to campus/local newspapers prior to special events/happenings (brother elected president, major community service efforts, noted guest speaker coming, anniversary celebration). (1 point)*

(Attachment #18 - Include sample copy of chapter press release)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chapter Historian's job is to maintain the official history of the chapter. At many chapters, this takes the form of a scrapbook. Items to include are: major events of the year and honors received by the chapter, alumni accomplishments and news, individual achievement by the brothers, etc. The Historian has the responsibility to ensure that members are aware of the Chapter's history and ensure they have access to the scrapbooks and other historical records, but also preserve those records – which can be difficult when everyone has access to them.

One of the bonds of FarmHouse is the connection between the past and the present – the Historian's role is vital to maintain these bonds across generations.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

Chapter Historian

The Historian shall be responsible for maintaining a written, pictorial, and video record of the activities of the chapter. All chapter members should be aware of the responsibilities of the Chapter Historian and should elect a Brother to this office who is consistently organized and thorough. The Chapter Director of Administration records proceedings of business meetings, but the Chapter Historian records the events and activities of the chapter outside of meetings. As such, the Historian:

- Makes certain that each initiate signs his name in the Chapter Register (Herd Book). Regularly checks the chapter's register to add new data; whenever alumni visit the chapter, review their history and makes it current.
- Ensures that photographs and video are taken at all appropriate events.
- Maintains a written record of all chapter activities.
- Maintains a scrapbook that contains all interesting current events of the fraternity and its members. He should also enter important collegiate history. This material should be suitable for publication in the chapter newsletter and the school yearbook.
- Maintains a file of all FarmHouse newsletters that are published each quarter, semester, or school year.
- Preserves all records and materials. This includes the conversion of prior archives into a digital format.
- Assists the Director of Administration in maintaining the chapter's website as well as ensures that the appropriate materials are submitted (by March 1st each year) for the annual Outstanding Website Award.
- Maintains all trophies and composites for the chapter. This includes all scheduling and arrangements for the composite.
- Researches and compiles chapter history.
- He makes sure the scrapbook is kept in the chapter house library and be visible for display at all appropriate times. It should be accessible to guests and is useful in recruitment. Also ensures that the current chapter scrapbook is brought to Conclave every two years to be judged for the Scrapbook Award.
- May be responsible for coordinating all applications for the International Annual Awards so that they are complete and submitted on time to the International Office.
- Determines what items should be sent to the International Headquarters for the Archives.
- Gives historical presentations to the chapter and community as appropriate.

Researching and compiling past history is important, but FarmHouse's history must also be recorded *in the present*. A great portion of Fraternity's history is comprised of the history of individual chapters, and this brings a renewed level of importance and responsibility upon Chapter Historians. IF a Historian shirks his responsibilities for a few semesters or years, it will be much more difficult to catch up while also recording the present. Research is more difficult than active recording.

III. ORGANIZATION

Files, Documents, and Pictures

Events and activities should be documented in written form in a journal that the Historian should carry whenever he is present at a chapter activity. The journal should be used to record descriptions of the event. All photographs should be logged. The photograph log should identify a brief description of the event, the date and location at which the photograph was taken, and the names of everyone in the photograph.

The same care should be taken with digital photographs or digital video. Be sure to identify each disk and find a safe and proper place to store these items. Make back-ups and do not keep them at a Brother's home. Photographs should be taken at all chapter activities, and numerous chapter members should be encouraged to bring cameras and share their prints with the historian. The Chapter Historian should also make use of a video camera if available.

The Historian may want to have a rotating group of brothers be responsible for the "official" photographs and other audio/visual recordings so he can focus on the journal and have more complete written and pictorial records. Any brothers assisting with this need to be instructed on the types of photographs the historical record needs and understand the importance of their efforts to the chapter's historical record.

If the historian is unable to attend an event, a substitute photographer must be assigned. "Photo Opportunities" should be a regular item of business in the weekly chapter meeting. As soon as the photographs have been developed or downloaded, the historian should label them appropriately. The items and people included in the photograph should be listed on the back of each photograph.

Annual Chapter Composite

The Historian should also arrange for a group photograph or composite of chapter members each year. There are a few fraternity composite services around North America or you can contact your Student Activities office for a local professional photographer who can produce a composite photograph. If this is not possible, the Chapter Historian should at the very least take a formal group photograph of the chapter.

Contact the FarmHouse International Headquarters for the latest suggestions of fraternity composite providers. The following are links to some of the leading companies:

Vantine Imaging: <http://www.vantineimaging.com>

GreekYearbook: <http://www.greekyearbook.com/new/home.asp>

Fraternal Composite Service: <http://www.fraternalcomposite.com/>

Freeze Frame Fotography: <http://www.freezeframefoto.com>

Greek Composites: <http://www.greekcomposites.net>

University Photography: <http://www.universityphoto.com>

Organization

The hardest part of preserving chapter files and documents is often devising a system of organization. The following Organizational System Guidelines is intended to serve as an aid to creating a system that works best for you.

OFFICIAL RECORDS

- Chartering Information
- Constitution, and chapter and district constitutions.
- Rituals and Ceremonies
- Fraternity and Chapter History
- Handbooks and Guides

CHAPTER

- Minutes (preserve a copy of all agendas and minutes and have them bound together at the end of each school year).
- List of Officers, Committees, and Committee Members by Year (these files may also include information on officer duties).
- Officer & Committee Reports & Committee Meeting Minutes (include written reports of chapter officers and committees with meeting minutes).
- Written and electronic communication (this includes both communication sent and received).
- Budgets (preserve a copy of each year's annual budget).

MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Initiation Reports
- Documented Membership Education Program
- Miscellaneous items (such as "What FarmHouse means" essays, chapter "family trees," etc.).

ACTIVITIES

- Utilize the Fall and Spring Activity Reports for documenting chapter activities.
- Descriptions of recurring projects and programs, concerts, annual fundraisers, etc.), including organizational details.
- Reports of projects and programs (including any publicity received).
- Reports of social activities.
- Publicity received by the chapter (such as newspaper articles, etc.).

PUBLICATIONS

- *Pearls & Rubies*
- Chapter newsletters
- Alumni newsletters

MEMBERSHIP

- Accurate list of Active, Alumni, and Honorary Members
- Achievements by chapter members, inside and outside the chapter.
- Marriage, birth and death announcements (in preparing death announcements, be certain to include a condensed biographical sketch of the deceased. Always inform your chapter

- alumni secretary and headquarters of any deaths so that the records may be properly revised and fellow alumni informed).
- Programs of performances by individual members (including faculty brothers).
 - Awards and Honors
 - Awards Received by the chapter, actives, and alumni
 - Awards given by chapter

Materials that can be discarded are:

- Flyers or notices of meetings.
- Routine correspondence, such as cover letters from the International Headquarters.
- After seven years, cancelled checks, check stubs, statements, invoices, and receipts.

Organization of Photographs

Photographs are an important part of a chapter's historical files. The Historian should have a system for the organization and storage of photographs so that they can be easily found when needed and so that future generations can have a visual record of the chapter's past. When labeling photographs, your photo log from events should make this a simple process; just double-check all the information to ensure that it is accurate. It is important to record the following information:

- Event or occasion
- Date & Location
- Names of individuals in photograph
- Corresponding number on the photo negative (this will it easier to make re-prints when necessary).

The best way to label photographs is to place a sticker on the back of each photograph and print the information in pencil (ink tends to smear on the face of other photographs when stacked together). Store all photographs from one year together, including photo negatives. Make sure your negatives always remain with the photographs; this will make it much easier to find negatives when they are needed.

It is highly suggested that you have photographs saved electronically to CD-ROM when developed. This will help to keep your photographs organized and easily accessible, and will also enable you to include them for publication without the necessity of scanning them (which can be very time consuming). If photographs are saved on CD-ROM, be sure to label and store the disks appropriately.

Digital photography can ease the job of the Historian. It is easy to collect photographs from brothers and organize photos when they are in digital format. Digital photos should be saved on disk, including a back up, as well as being printed. Even with the popularity of digital photography, physical scrapbooks should still be kept to ensure that the visual history of the chapter can be view for years to come.

Preparing Annual Scrapbook/Yearbook

Collecting and organizing news and photographs pertaining to the chapter's history is just one aspect of the historian's job. He/she must also arrange the history so that it is easily accessible.

Moreover, it must be in a format that allows for easy presentation. Most historians work on this project all year long, even though they don't actually put the chapter yearbook together until late in the school year. This final project is very important in the chapter's history. Don't overlook it!

The most common way to arrange the yearbook is chronologically. There are other ways, however, such as grouping them by activities (social functions, musical activities, new member activities, special events, etc.). No matter which way you choose to arrange the material, make sure that the arrangement will be clear to those who will follow next year and ten years from now.

You do NOT need to include every photograph taken during the year! For the sake of presentation, any single year's activities should not span several volumes of various scrapbooks. One of the roles of the historian is to decide what will be included and what will simply be left in the files. Include only what is pertinent to the current year's chapter story, and make sure what is not included is filed away in the chapter's archives (something that does not seem worth saving today might be important in the future).

Keep the materials balanced (don't include twenty photographs of one activity and only one or two of another). Always be aware that brothers will be looking through the yearbooks for many years to come. Don't include items that are inside jokes or only have meaning today. If you feel something is important, but you doubt future brothers will understand it, explain the situation or story in writing. The chapter yearbook should be fun, meaningful, and historical.

The Chapter Historian usually works with other chapter members to complete the scrapbook. A scrapbook not only serves as a method to keep a historical record of chapter activities, but it can also serve as an effective recruiting tool. Potential members can look through a scrapbook and get a full understanding of what the chapter accomplishes each year. Some hints for an eye-catching scrapbook include:

- Be creative, but use the traditional scrapbook form.
- Do not include any pictures with alcoholic beverages or disrespectful poses.
- Pictures should have a short caption explaining the event and the identifying the subjects.
- The pictures and captions tell a story about chapter activities throughout the entire school year.
- People looking at the scrapbook may not know anything about the chapter, the school, chapter members, etc. Do not use "inside jokes" or assume the reader will understand the activity shown.

Website & Interactive

The World Wide Web is an important communications tool – but only if its material remains relevant. The web can serve as an excellent archive of the chapter's historical records. You should work closely with the Director of Administration so that chapter news and photos remain current and fresh and accessible. This is one of the best ways to disseminate information to alumni and other chapters in the region.

The web and other tools, such as digital and streaming video, PowerPoint presentations can provide historical records in manners never dreamed of previously. However, remember that the Historian's job is not to produce a documentary but provide a record of the chapter's activities in a concise and informative presentation. The temptation with all of these new tools may lead one to go overboard.

Guard against that and always ask the question, “Is this really something noteworthy? Does it need this much detail?”

Preservation & Historical Research

Whether your chapter was chartered 80 years ago or last semester, you will have certain documents, photographs and artifacts that are irreplaceable and which should be cared for properly. As time goes on, many of the documents pertaining to significant moments in your chapter’s history (such as your charter) will begin to age and will become brittle or faded. One way to guard against this is to store precious documents in acid-free envelopes or folders. Older documents that have already begun to fade can be deacidified and preserved in a number of ways. Special materials for the storage of photographs and negatives will keep them from fading. A number of archival supply companies can supply you with the materials necessary to preserve your chapter’s history and also to preserve important materials from the present for future generations. You can request archival product catalogues or order online from the following companies:

- Gaylord Brothers: (800) 634-6307, www.gaylordmart.com
- University Products: (800) 628-1912, www.archivalsuppliers.com
- Light Impressions: (800) 828-6216, www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

In addition, if your chapter has materials that might be of historic interest to the International Fraternity, please send copies to the International Headquarters. Individual chapters (especially the older ones) often have valuable pieces of history that are best preserved in a more professional environment and can offer important insight into the Fraternity’s past to a broader range of brothers.

Researching and Compiling Chapter History

Another role of the Historian is to research and compile the chapter’s history. Ideally, your chapter will have all its pertinent information archived, accessible, and usable. But that may not be the case – especially if prior Historians were not diligent in their efforts to record chapter activities. Information not included in your chapter’s archives may be contained in your chapter’s file at Headquarters (another reason to send in regular reports of your chapter’s activities to the Headquarters) or in the Fraternity’s historical archives. When compiling chapter history, especially for events such as significant anniversaries, consider traveling to the Headquarters to find information that may not be found in your chapter’s files.

The record of your chapter’s history is not limited to documents and other written materials; much of it is retained in the minds of your chapter’s alumni. A great deal of your chapter’s history that cannot be found in writing can be compiled by interviewing alumni who were significant in the life of the chapter and preserving these interviews as recordings and type-written transcripts.

IV. HISTORICAL PRESENTATIONS

The Historian is the steward of knowledge and insight about the chapter’s past and present. At the chapter level, as well as the international level, the history of the Fraternity must be kept alive by teaching and sharing it with others. New members, old members, and even non-members should be reminded of FarmHouse’s rich history. The historian must possess a great urge to learn more about

the history of his chapter and the Fraternity. After gathering this information, he/she must share it with others through articles in the newsletter, photography displays, and verbal presentations.

There are many great opportunities for the Historian to share his/her knowledge. These historical presentations must be well planned and organized. Do not trivialize the history or bore others by doing a half-hearted job. Take pride in your presentation. Several good opportunities for the Historian to share his knowledge are:

- Founder's Day
- Alumni events
- Interest meetings for prospective members
- During the time new members are learning the history of FarmHouse.

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