

A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a meeting, looking at a laptop. The man on the left is wearing a blue polo shirt and is pointing at the screen. The man on the right is wearing a grey jacket and glasses. The image has a purple overlay.

# MEETING 1: INTRODUCTION TO SIGMA PHI EPSILON

SigEp

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## PURPOSE

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This meeting should provide attendees with an understanding and foundation of Sigma Phi Epsilon's history, current organization and membership expectations.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

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Participants will...

- Gain knowledge about Sigma Phi Epsilon's organizational founding and history.
- Understand the expectations of chapter members and members in the Sigma Challenge.
- Understand member safety and risk management policies.

## AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

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SigEp.

## SESSION FACILITATORS

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- Vice president of member development.
- Sigma Challenge coordinators.
- Chapter president.

## SESSION OUTLINE [75 MINUTES]

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[5] Welcome.

[10] Introductions.

[20] Overview of member expectations & Sigma Challenge.

[10] SigEp founding and history.

[10] Cardinal Principles & values-based decisions.

[15] Member safety policies.

[5] Session wrap-up.

## MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

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- "The Lifetime Responsibility of Brotherhood."
- New Member-Member Safety Video.
- Membership agreements.
- Sigma Challenge overview & calendar.
- PowerPoint presentation and projector (if needed).
- Index cards.

## SESSION PREPARATION

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- Print copies of the membership agreement.
- Setup room for challenge meeting.
- Verify with guest speaker the date and time of the meeting or activity.
- Send out reminder to challenge participants about the meeting and to watch the "Introduction to SigEp" video prior to attending. Include the video link in your reminder message.

## **1. WELCOME [5]**

### **CHAPTER PRESIDENT WELCOME**

- The chapter president should welcome new members to the chapter and introduce himself. He should briefly explain his role and how he can be a resource to the new members.

### **VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT & SIGMA CHALLENGE COORDINATOR WELCOME**

- The vice president of member development should welcome new members and explain his role. He should also provide a brief explanation about the importance of member development.
  - Keep in mind that the next meeting will heavily focus on the Balanced Man Program and its role in the chapter experience.
- The Sigma Challenge coordinator(s) should welcome the new members, introduce himself and explain his/their roles and responsibilities.

## **2. INTRODUCTIONS [10]**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Have each member introduce himself (name, where they are from, etc.).

### **WHY? WHAT?**

- Provide each member an index card.
  - **Note:** These cards will be used at the end of the Sigma Challenge during reflection and Rite of Passage preparation.
- On the front of the index card, have each member write their name, why they joined SigEp (i.e. why are you here?). Encourage members to expand beyond simple statements (I liked the guys in recruitment, to get involved).
- On the other side of the index card, have each member state what they hope to gain during their SigEp experience.
- If time permits, have a few members volunteer to read their responses.
- Explain that the Sigma Challenge coordinators will collect these index cards so that members can revisit them throughout the Sigma Challenge.

## **3. OVERVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS & SIGMA CHALLENGE [20]**

### **EXPLANATION OF MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS & AGREEMENTS**

- The president should lead a discussion on the expectations of chapter members. This discussion should include:
  - Financial obligations.
    - Dues, payment, consequences of non-payment.
  - Housing and meal plan commitments (if applicable).
  - Academic requirements.
    - Minimum GPA, scholarships, academic resources, study hours.

- Standards of behavior & conduct.
  - Firearms, drugs, disorderly/illegal behavior, etc.
  - Explain that there will be a more detailed discussion regarding member safety policies later in the session.
- Explain the difference between individual and group rights.
  - The actions of an individual brother reflect the entire organization. This can be both beneficial and harmful for the chapter.
  - Tie this concept back to equal rights and responsibilities. All members have equal rights in the organization, but they are also equally responsible to uphold the organization's standards and keep others accountable.

### **PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE SIGMA CHALLENGE.**

- The Sigma Challenge coordinator(s) will lead a discussion on the Sigma Challenge, including topics:
  - What is the Sigma Challenge?
  - Why do we participate in the Sigma Challenge?
  - What is expected of members in the Sigma Challenge?
  - What is the difference between a meeting and an activity?
    - **Note:** Meetings bring together members in the Sigma Challenge to discuss topics relevant to their development. Activities supplement meetings to help members explore these topics further. Activities can be completed individually or in small groups, but allow for members to pace their experience to their preference.
  - What topics will be covered/what activities will be completed?
  - How does the Sigma Challenge differ from pledging?
    - **Note:** Pledging separates new members from other members of the chapter and does not deem new members full membership of the organization until after an initiation ceremony. The Sigma Challenge differs from pledging as it embodies the philosophical tenet of equal rights and responsibilities. New members are members of the organization from the time they sign a bid. They have equal benefits of membership as older members in the organization, but also take on equal responsibilities expected of older members. Pledging often focuses on a group of pledges achieving tasks together to lead up to initiation, whereas the Sigma Challenge provides opportunity for individuals to self-pace through the challenge.
      - Explain membership lapsing and the potential consequences.
- Provide each new member with a Sigma Challenge Guide and calendar of events (if applicable).
- Provide an overview of the new member mentor position and discuss the role that they play in supporting brothers in the challenge.
  - Give brothers the information to their new member mentors if they don't already have it.
  - **Note:** Mentoring will be covered more in depth in Meeting 4-Building Healthy Relationships, but is important to discuss now as they have already been paired with a new member mentor.

**PROVIDE EACH PARTICIPANT WITH A MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT FORM TO READ AND SIGN.**

If members are not completing these immediately, set a deadline for agreements to be turned in.

**PROCESSING QUESTIONS:**

- Are there any questions at this time regarding the membership expectations and agreement?
- Why do you think each member is required to sign a membership agreement upon joining? (Explain the importance of accountability and the role it plays in the BMP.)

**4. SIGEP FOUNDING & HISTORY [10]**

**PROVIDE EACH NEW MEMBER WITH A COPY OF "THE LIFETIME RESPONSIBILITY OF BROTHERHOOD" (LROB). EXPLAIN THE LROB'S PURPOSE AS A RESOURCE:**

- To serve a source of education.
- Guide the development of the Fraternity and members.

**MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE VIEWED THE "INTRODUCTION TO SIGEP" VIDEO PRIOR TO ATTENDING THIS MEETING. IF THEY HAVE NOT, PLAY IT FOR THEM NOW. AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO, HOLD A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FOUNDING AND HISTORY OF THE FRATERNITY:**

Processing questions:

- What stands out to you about the founding of the Fraternity?
- How do we see the spirit and the intentions of the Founders alive today?
- Why is it important that we discuss SigEp's founding and history in our first meeting?
  - You should include a brief history of your local chapter.
    - Focus on the positives aspects of your history and milestones your chapter has achieved. This could include campus and national awards won, successful events or times when your chapter achieved a goal.
    - Don't shy away from talking about previous struggles or big learning moments from your chapter's history.
    - Providing a transparent and holistic view of your chapter's history will help set the foundation for the new member experience by providing an idea of where your chapter is heading.

**5. CARDINAL PRINCIPLES [10]**

**HAVE EACH MEMBER TURN TO PAGE VII IN THE LROB TO READ THE CREED:**

- Have members take turns reading a portion of the Creed.

**DEBRIEF THE CREED, BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

- What is a creed?
  - It is a formal statement of beliefs or aims that guides someone's actions.
- As a Fraternity, why do we have a Creed?
- What parts (in the Creed) stand out to you?

## **DIRECT MEMBERS ATTENTION TO THE PORTION OF THE CREED THAT FOCUSES ON THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.**

Processing questions:

- Ask members what they think Virtue, Diligence and Brotherly Love mean?
- Ask members for some examples of Virtue, Diligence and Brotherly Love in action?
- Ask members why they think the Founders selected brotherly love instead of brotherhood?
  - **Note:** Brotherhood is exclusive, brotherly love is inclusive. We extend brotherly love to those outside of our organization's walls so they can experience and understand the benefits of fraternalism.
- These Cardinal Principles serve as our guiding values. How can we incorporate these values into our daily lives?

## **6. MEMBER SAFETY POLICIES [15]**

### **VIEW THE MEMBER SAFETY POLICIES VIDEO AS A GROUP:**

The member safety policies video can be accessed in this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2RrD5gQ3ew&feature=youtu.be>

### **DEBRIEF THE VIDEO BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

Processing questions:

- Does anyone need clarity on the policies covered in this video?
- What stood out to you in this video?
- What does this mean for how we conduct ourselves?
- Why is member safety important?
- How does member safety play a role in our values?

### **CONCLUDE THE CONVERSATION BY COVERING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:**

- Our risk management policies are intended to keep each of our brothers safe. SigEp holds insurance to protect its members.
- Violating a risk management policy could result in voiding the insurance coverage provided through the national Fraternity. Individuals are covered under the insurance policy as long as they are acting within the scope of their duties for SigEp and are in accordance with risk management policies
- It is our job as brothers to keep one another safe and help one another make healthy and positive choices.
- Explain that accountability, equal rights and responsibilities include that we stand up and say something if we are uncomfortable or recognize that something is not right or safe. We are all responsible for holding each other accountable.

**EXPLAIN THAT ALL MEMBER SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SIGEP WEBSITE AND CAN BE ACCESSED AT ALL TIMES.**

**PROVIDE MEMBERS THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE CRISIS HOTLINE:**

- The phone number for the crisis hotline is 1-800-767-1901.
- You can use the crisis hotline to report an incident or any issues that occur 24/7.
- You can also reach out to Kathy Johnston, SigEp's risk management director, via email ([kathy.johnston@sigep.net](mailto:kathy.johnston@sigep.net)) or by phone (804.286.2191), with any questions or concerns regarding risk management and member safety.

**7. WRAP-UP [5]**

**LESSONS LEARNED:**

Provide an opportunity for a few members to share the most important thing they learned from today's meeting.

**FOLLOW UP:**

- Set expectations for members to complete by the next meeting or event: view video, meet with their new member mentor, complete new member registration online, etc.
- Set time and place for next week's meeting.
- Post/provide contact information for the Sigma Challenge coordinator(s), vice president of member development and chapter president.

**QUESTIONS**

Provide an opportunity to answer any questions members have from this meeting and in preparation for the next meeting.