

## President's Pen

Gerow (Gerry) Brill  
National President

I have held positions as a National Officer of Alpha Chi Rho since August 2005, when I was appointed as Treasurer of the Fraternity. In July of 2007, I was elected National Vice President. I became President in December of 2008 when the previous president resigned. I was elected to my present term in July 2009. As President I have been on the Board of Trustees of the Alpha Chi Rho Educational Foundation and am currently Vice President of the Foundation. I am not running for election this year and plan to expand my activities on the Foundation Board and pursue activities within the National Interfraternity Conference. I have been active with the Zeta Phi Building Corporation since June 1994, am a former president of its board and am currently a Director on that board.

I have found these seven years of active participation in Fraternity and Foundation interesting, fulfilling and at times frustrating.

I will outline below some of our accomplishments as a National Council since my Convention Report in 2009. This report is in two parts, first a review of the goals set in 2009 and our accomplishments and secondly a proposal of goals for the next two years. Of course it will be up to the new President and the National Council to set up their goals between now and July 2013.

In my July 2009 report I listed four priority items needing Council and staff attention over these two years. These four areas included: Finances; Expansion; Graduate Brother Participation; and Ritual.

**Finances** – As I stated two years ago we have two financial problems. The first is that funds available from the Alpha Chi Rho Educational Foundation are down with the current worldwide financial crisis. This has required the Foundation to dip further into reserves than is healthy. Brother McGoey, as Director of Development, has been doing a wonderful job getting our message out to the Graduate Brothers. Due to a combination of circumstances, we as a Fraternity are too dependent upon the Foundation for the long term good of both organizations. We still have too many undergraduate Brothers and Chapters that are not paying their share of the cost of providing the services that the national office provides to the Brothers and their Chapters.

As you know, last year we began the association with Omega Financial as a service to help better organize the finances of the Chapters and the national office with the collection of dues and payment of Chapter bills. Approximately half of our Chapters have enrolled and are using Omega Financial. Admittedly, we at the National Council may not have communicated the needs for such a service as well as we should have (I

will discuss communication later.). However, in the near term and long term, I am convinced that using such a service will accomplish two things: improve the financial strength of our Chapters as well as the national Fraternity and will relieve the national staff from the time-consuming task of being bill collectors. I hope the Brothers attending this Convention know that the national Fraternity (staff and council) wants to work with you on these financial matters and will do what we can to help you with any difficulties you may be having.

We are not yet at a level with our finances where we can say we are in good shape. The National Council will make some proposals at this Convention that may help alleviate some of these problems so that the Fraternity can find a better balance between its income sources and the Foundation support. This matter will be a continuing top priority of the Nation Council, the National Staff and the Foundation.

**Expansion** - The second priority for the next two years is expansion. In any fraternity there is attrition of Chapters caused by financial factors, loss of recognition on a campus, or lack of membership. Therefore an ongoing campaign of developing colonies is continually needed. Expansion consumes staff time and travel costs. During this period of financial frugality, we will be continuing to ask our Graduate Brothers to help us with this activity. Since the last Convention, we have granted Charters to four Chapters, we have four colonies and three interest groups. With the efforts of Brother Ken Chapel (now a Graduate Councillor on the National Council) and several other graduate Brothers of Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, the Pi Phi Chapter has been reinstituted into the Fraternity.

**Graduate Brother Participation** --The third priority for the past two years has been greater graduate Brother participation at the Chapter level and at the national level. It is well known that an undergraduate Chapter with a strong Building Corporation or graduate Chapter will be a stronger undergraduate Chapter. We have several very strong graduate groups and their efforts continue to pay off. We need more. Brother McGoey has organized several regional graduate groups that meet regularly. Such groups will hopefully be the basis for more participation at the Chapter and national level. We need more graduate Brothers to be mentors for their undergraduate Chapter or a Chapter in their area needing help and guidance.

**Ritual** -- The fourth priority for the past two years is a greater use of Ritual at the Chapter level. One element of a cohesive Chapter is one that makes regular use of Ritual in its meeting. This creates a formality that reminds the Brothers of what being a member of Alpha Chi Rho is all about. I was very upset to find that several Chapters had "initiated Brothers" that had not been initiated under ritual. According to the Fraternity Constitution and Bylaws, such a "Brother" is not a Brother. Brother Mercaldo, our National Ritual Officer, is working with the staff on this problem and is developing a plan for a formal review of the ritual for possible revisions. Due to the lengthy process involved in any changes to ritual, this probably will take until 2015 to fully accomplish.

In addition to these four areas, we had two efforts that were not part of the four priorities listed and discussed above. We had a joint meeting of the Foundation Board of Trustees and the Fraternity National Council. I felt that both organizations needed to have a business plan to provide direction to our goals and needs. Your Convention Packet will include an up to date version of both of these business plans. However, the highlights of the discussion were in two areas: Finances and Communication. I have covered the financial situation above.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that Fraternity and the Foundation needed to pay major attention to our communication with the undergraduate Brothers and the graduate Brothers. As a result, an online version of the Garnet and White and major improvement to the Fraternity website have been implemented.

Brother Luckenbill, a Graduate Councillor on the National Council, took on the task of producing the Garnet and White as National Editor. I encourage all graduates and undergraduates to provide stories and material about your Chapter to Brother Luckenbill. He is working with the staff and the national officers to provide information to you, but we need your information. Remember communication works both ways. We went to an online version of the Garnet and White for financial reasons. Almost all fraternities and sororities have discontinued distributing their house magazine by mail. Keeping the national office up to date on your e-mail address and mail address is very important for getting the Garnet and White and other data to you in a timely manner.

With regard to the Fraternity Web Site, one of the stumbling blocks for getting a full-fledged web site was financial. As a result of the joint meeting, several graduate Brothers donated the funds needed to get the site on line. Brother Lahullier, our IT guru, and Brother Luckenbill established a wonderful website. Like the Garnet and White, the success of the web site is a function of the usage by all of our Brothers. This communication tool will continue to improve, but we need your input.

In summary, with your help, the new president, the Council and I (as your past president) will continue to work with the staff, undergraduate Chapters, graduate Chapters, Building Corporations and the Educational Foundation to make progress on these priority items. Our goal is to make AXP a stronger organization with Chapters that are successful and leaders on their campus. With your support, we will have a Council that achieves success with these priority goals.

So in addition to the goals established two years ago, communication between the Chapters, Fraternity national office and the Foundation is our top priority. Even though finances continue to be very important, I believe that with good communications we can work together for the betterment of the Chapters, national Fraternity and the Foundation, and the finances will get done.



I want to finish by thanking all of the members of the National Council for their hard work during the past two years. Please take the time during the Convention to thank the staff for their tireless efforts to make this Fraternity a success. I believe we have accomplished a lot. However, there is much yet to be done. I extend my offer to help, advise and support the Chapters, National Council, Foundation and the national staff in any way I can in my role as former President and Vice President of the Foundation.

I look forward to meeting each of the attendees at the Convention in Pittsburgh.

