

SIGMA ♡ KAPPA

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Hello Sigma Kappas!

I hope you are enjoying the summer so far.

Sigma Kappa staff and volunteers have been busy making progress on many initiatives in the strategic plan, including preparing to transition to a governance model of leadership. This shift from subject-matter vice presidents to general vice presidents will elevate Sigma Kappa leadership to a more strategic focus, allowing them time to study industry trends, prepare for issues down the road, and think big-picture instead of spending their time on operational duties. This transition will also necessitate a reorganization of the volunteer structure with a focus on stronger local support for chapters.

Much of the work of the Sorority over the next few months will focus on guiding our chapters as they prepare to go back to campus and back to in-person classes and sorority events. New resources are being created to support them through this transition and ensure they feel prepared and confident as they return to school.

Governance

- At the 2022 national convention, national council is recommending a Bylaws amendment to transition the national council roles to a governance board. The recommendation will be voted on by the convention body. Sigma Kappa is working with governance consultant Angela Costley Harris, *Alpha Chi Omega*, to coach us through the transition. [Click here to watch her keynote from Virtual Volunteer Summit.](#)
- **Whys** behind the Sorority's decision to transition from an operational board to a more strategic governance board
 - Enables the Sorority to be more future-focused
 - Allows additional time to focus on strategy inside AND outside board meetings and monitor progress on our strategic plan
 - Enables council to operate with foresight and prepare for issues in the future

Things you Need to Know

- Staff and operational volunteers will assume managerial roles for day-to day tasks, projects and initiatives
- National council transitions to national president, national vice president for finance and six national vice presidents in 2022

Diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) has been and will remain a major focus of the work of the Sorority. Staff and volunteers have been working on initiatives such as accessibility of programming, publications and resources; financial barriers to membership; non-inclusive language in policies and Ritual; and creation of member development programs on bias and privilege.

I am very proud of the accomplishments of our Sorority over the past few months and optimistic about the direction we are headed, and I thank every one of you for the part you have had in it. I hope that you have the opportunity this summer to reconnect with other Sigma Kappas and renew your bonds of friendship.

In Sigma Kappa,
Ann O'Connell Adams, *Theta*
National President

Jordan Duffie Bentlage, *Theta Upsilon*
Executive Director

- More than 2/3 of NPC groups have transitioned to a governance model
- A LowDown Live will be held on July 15 – details below

Benefits

- Volunteer pool for national council candidates expands to all Sigma Kappa strategic leaders, rather than a presumed line of succession through operational volunteer teams
- National council positions become manageable for professionals and those with families
- Modernizes the board from a model more typical of newer organizations that lack professional staff

Resources

- [Why of governance video](#) from National President Ann O'Connell Adams, *Theta*
- [Governance FAQs](#)
- Email Governance@sigmakappa.org with other questions not addressed

Volunteer Structure

A volunteer structure task force (VSTF) was created to suggest changes to support a transition to a governance model. Learn more about governance, the volunteer structure and why Sigma Kappa is making this change below.

- VSTF's charge was to develop a structure that can best support our collegiate chapters with national council's transition to governance. [A video explanation of the charge can be viewed here](#)
- Recommendations include moving from seven to eight districts beginning in January 2022
- Revised volunteer structure will help support chapters and members-at-large and allow for quicker decision making to support our membership
- Current positions were reimagined and new ones added, including advisory councils and committees
- Training incorporated throughout the volunteer structure to address the need for more education to support our volunteers in their roles
- All job descriptions are being reviewed and will be posted by August 6
- Due to these changes, national council made the decision to open up all volunteer positions and conduct interviews. Initial timeline is shared below in Opportunities. More details about the process will be shared later this summer

- A national [personnel committee](#) is being created and will coordinate the interview process for all teams. We are looking for members with experience in human relations and nonprofit management experience to serve on the committee. [If you are interested, additional information can be found here](#)
- LowDown Lives will be held in July and August to share additional details and answer questions on the national and local volunteer structure
- The local volunteer structure is still being fine-tuned with insight from our advisors and will be shared in the coming months

Resources

- [Volunteer structure FAQs](#)
- [Who do I report to?](#)
- [Team diagrams](#)

Strategic Plan Update

In 2024, Sigma Kappa will celebrate 150 years of providing members opportunities for personal growth, loyalty, service and friendship, bound by a promise. Throughout our rich history, Sigma Kappa has thrived through periods of societal change and instability and illustrated the importance and relevance of the sorority experience for all stages of life. National council worked with staff to create the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and it's a bold commitment to the importance and vitality of the sorority experience. [Click here](#) to see an overview of the plan and continue below to see the progress we've made.

- **Sigma Kappa will become a strategic leader in the Sorority community**
 - Sharing details on the transition to governance and the volunteer structure with volunteers and members-at-large
 - Created [new governance webpage](#) for members to access all things governance and volunteer structure
 - Completed communication assessment with the goal of reducing the number of times we are communicating with officers and volunteers and ensuring our communications are relevant. Recommendations are being reviewed and new cadence will roll out fall 2021
- **Sigma Kappa will re-shape the alumnae and collegiate membership experience with a focus on enhanced relevance**
 - Collecting data, information and resources to help address financial inclusion
 - Assessment has been woven into all educational programming efforts to intentionally gather feedback for future decisions and identify needed changes and updates
 - Automated the membership petition workflows and constitution page/member number process within Dove Hub
 - Launched the [One Heart Napa Wine Club](#) membership to provide additional engagement opportunities for interested alumnae

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) update

Another goal of the strategic plan is to model a diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible membership experience among women's fraternal organizations. We continue to make progress in this area, below are a few updates on our work.

- All components of the Promise for New Members Program have been reviewed to ensure accessibility
- [The ritual inclusivity task force](#) completed their charge to review the Sigma Kappa ritual for language and information that is non-inclusive or marginalizing while preserving items that were adopted by the Founders. Recommendations will be presented to national council at the end of June with changes being shared at convention 2022
- Partnering with Ebony Rose, *Alpha Delta Pi*, to create training for volunteers, chapter members and advisors around applying general DEIA practices to volunteer experiences, bias response and recruitment
- Completed a comprehensive review of the *Bylaws* and *National Policy Handbook* through a DEIA lens. Edits that can be made to the *National Policy Handbook* without *Bylaws* impact will be considered by national council later this summer. *Bylaws* amendments will be proposed for the 2022 convention
- [The History Task Force](#) continues their work to research, document and acknowledge Sigma Kappa's history as it relates to organizational discriminatory behavior and practices, as well as our historical steps toward inclusion. The work of the task force is slated to wrap up December 2021 and will be shared with the membership in various communications, including a *Sigma Kappa Triangle* article
- A [form](#) has been created to collect stories and quotes from our members to get a broader perspective on how they are celebrating or observing holidays and awareness months
- We now have 12 affinity groups created by Sigma Kappas for members to support each other and more closely connect. [Interested in creating a group? Click here.](#) You can view a full list of groups already in existence [here](#). Newest groups include:
 - Sigma Kappa Graduate School Collective
 - Mamas of Tiny Violets
 - The One Heart Club
- [Our written style guide](#) has been updated to add inclusive language and commonly used acronyms for the organization.

How can you help?

- Our current DEIA committee is nearing the end of its term, and we are looking for a new group of members to serve in this capacity
- [For this committee](#), we are specifically looking for collegiate and alumnae members with DEIA campus or professional experience, as well as members who can offer the perspective of Black, Indigenous, Members of Color, LGBTQIA+ members, and members with disabilities
- 2021-2022 DEIA committee charge
 - Ensure the boards and staff of Sigma Kappa Sorority, Sigma Kappa Foundation, and the National Housing Corporation are aware of emerging issues and trends related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) so Sigma Kappa understands how those developments impact the organization
 - Serve in partnership with the leadership and engage in meaningful conversations to advance DEIA and support Sigma Kappa as a welcoming and respectful organization

- Study and make recommendations on key identified DEIA focus areas critical to the future of the Sorority experience and its relevance to new generations
- Provide feedback and advice to Sigma Kappa volunteers and staff on specific issues or projects as requested
- [DEIA committee application form](#)

Opportunities

- [Personnel committee application](#)
- [DEIA committee application](#)
- Volunteer Appointment Timeline (full details will be included in the July LowDown)
 - August 6: All job descriptions posted on the Sigma Kappa website
 - August 23: Director level interest due
 - Late August/early September: Director interviews conducted
 - September 15: Coordinator level interest due
 - Late September/ early October: Coordinator interviews conducted
 - October 14: Advisory board supervisor and advisory council interest due
 - Late October/early November: ABS/advisory council interviews conducted
- Dove Connection
 - Ready to make a new connection with a Sigma Kappa sister? Join The Dove Connection – Sigma Kappa’s modern take on a pen pal program. [Click here for the sign-up information!](#)
- LowDown Lives
 - Governance - Thursday, July 15 at 8 p.m. Eastern. [Click here to register.](#)
 - National volunteer structure and appointment process - Wednesday, July 21 at 8 p.m. EST. [Click here to register.](#)
 - Local advisory board structure - Monday, August 2 at 8 p.m. EST. [Click here to register.](#)