



## The Realities of Rush – Fall 2018



The landscape of Greek Life has had significant challenges across college campuses in the past year. Many colleges have suspended or eliminated Greek Life. Sigma Chi International Fraternity has responded to this challenge taking leadership positions with new Health and Safety standards and a modified pledgship condensed to a 5-week program. The Beta Phi Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity at the University of Arizona is still positioned well. The members are a fine group of high achieving young men. The chapter has performed admirably for years and conservatively speaking is consistently considered among the top three on campus. The chapter is in good position to receive the 2017-18 Peterson Significant Chapter Award for overall chapter operational excellence. In the Spring semester of 2018 the chapter posted a GPA of 3.2 and with Derby Days they raised over \$26,000 for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation, with a goal of substantially increasing it this year.

The UofA Greek system is healthy and a cornerstone of student life. Most universities' Greek systems recruit members. At the UofA, there is a flood of young men going through rush and a very limited number of spots. It is somewhat unique in that the demand to get into a fraternity at UofA far exceeds the supply of available openings. It is very competitive. If you attended college any time prior to 2000, the game is completely different now. There are currently 20 Fraternities on campus and there are about 800 young men registered for Fall Fraternity Rush. It is not so much recruitment at UofA as it is quickly (in just a few days of rush) filtering the best pledge class possible out of 800 young men coming through the door.

Recently, Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) had their charter revoked by their national organization. Kappa Sigma lost its' recognition from the University and is awaiting its' appeal by their national organization. They will not be taking a pledge class this Fall. That puts an even bigger demand on Sigma Chi. We will have even more quality candidates for a limited number of spots.

Sigma Chi is well known and respected internationally, the chapter is successful, the undergraduate members are solid, and the new chapter house is terrific. There is a lot to like and the chapter has a lot to offer. It is not only excelling now but has a long history of excellence on campus. The chapter has a bylaw limiting membership to 125 active brothers. This was part of a more comprehensive agreement with university when we returned to campus in 2007. Given this constraint, the chapter can only pledge a small number of men (in comparison to some fraternities). This fall, that number is about **25-35 bids**. Conservatively speaking, of the 800 young men coming through rush, well over a hundred of them will want to join Sigma Chi. It is a daunting task and the undergraduate members of Sigma Chi take this very seriously and do their best to select those they think best fit the chapter. Most years, we have significantly more legacies, younger brothers of active members, and recommendations than we have spots. No matter who the chapter pledges, many quality and deserving young men will not receive a bid. That can cause hurt feelings for many people in the process.

It is important to note that new members are chosen by the undergraduates. While it is nice to get input from well-meaning adults and alumni, the active brothers choose whom they think will best fit the chapter. It is common for some alumni to try and project their Greek experience to the current day landscape. This generally does not work and we caution against that temptation. The system, while sometimes painful, has served the fraternity well for over 160 years.



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## Suggestions for parents or adult friends:

1. Recommendation letter: A recommendation letter helps the undergraduate members be on the lookout for him. It will not guaranty a bid and will not even necessarily translate into a better chance of getting a bid. That is up to him and the chapter. If you are a Sigma Chi, send it to the Recruitment Chairman (copy the Consul if you like). If you are not a Sigma Chi alumnus, have a Sigma Chi (preferably a Beta Phi) send in a recommendation letter. A straightforward way to do this can be found at <http://uasigmachi.com/> and <http://tucsonsig.com>
2. Most importantly, help set realistic expectations for your young man. Only about 4 out of 100 young men going through rush will get Sigma Chi bids. The system has flaws. A young man may do everything right and may be well deserving, but still not succeed in receiving a bid.
3. See #8 below.

## Suggestions for the young man going through rush:

1. First and foremost, get established in school. There is nothing critical about joining a fraternity first semester freshman year. Many have more success getting school squared away for a semester or year and then considering a fraternity.
2. Check out multiple fraternities. The feelings you get when you visit during rush will grow if and when you join. So if you are uncomfortable, that is probably not the best place for you. If it feels comfortable and at home, that is a good sign. Don't force it.
3. Do your homework. If you know guys in the chapter, get the lay of the land and what they consider important in a potential member.
4. Meet some of the active chapter members over the summer if possible; especially the Recruitment Chairman and the Chapter President (Consul). It helps when you walk in the door if they already have met you or know you.
5. Be yourself. Have fun. No fraternity is worth joining if you have to act your way into an invitation to join.
6. Bring something to the table in the form of what you can contribute. If you are gifted in areas like sports, art, or other activities that is a plus. The biggest plus is a solid GPA.
7. Read up on the fraternity and what it stands for. It is really easy to get information and bringing a little knowledge of the group with you will generally help. Check out <http://tucsonsig.com> and <http://sigmachi.org/>
8. Realize the numbers are daunting. If you do not receive a bid it is not the end of the world. Consider coming back for Spring Rush or looking at other good fraternities on campus. By basic math alone, only about 4 people in 100 going through fall rush will receive a bid from Sigma Chi.

Sigma Chi has a long tradition of selecting members with different temperaments, talents and convictions. The Jordan Standard is one of the cornerstones of our fraternity which says we will "...admit no man to membership in Sigma Chi who is not believed to be: A man of good character; a student of fair ability; with ambitious purposes, a congenial disposition, possessed of good morals, having a high sense of honor and a deep sense of personal responsibility..." Visit <http://greeklife.arizona.edu/> for info on Greek Life and rush. Good luck and Bear Down!

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