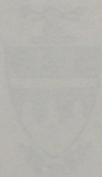


Rushing
and
Pledge Training
Manual



of
Theta Tau Fraternity

Rushing
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Manual



of
The Tau Epsilon

RUSHING AND PLEDGE TRAINING MANUAL

TWO AREAS of chapter operation determine the future strength of an individual chapter. They are: 1) rushing and pledging and 2) pledge training.

Every chapter, whether or not it is a house chapter, needs to have these activities well organized. Without an effective rushing and pledging program, good men — men who have the potential to be good Theta Taus — cannot be obtained. Even good men obtained as pledges can make poor actives if their training is poor, lax, incomplete, or too short.

The need for a minimum standard of pledge procedure was emphasized by a survey of the chapters before the 21st Biennial Convention. The Pledging Procedures Committee at that Convention presented a series of Constitution amendments on the subject of pledging requirements. In addition, many general recommendations on desirable pledging procedures were made. This Manual is, therefore, devoted to suggested programs which can be adapted to suit each chapter's need.

By the nature of our organization, each chapter must determine and conduct its own pledging practices. Therefore, this Manual deals in general areas to be followed by the chapters. There is no basic difference between the house chapter's and non-house chapter's needs in this area. If anything, the non-house chapters need a more rigid pledging and training system to avoid operating as an honorary organization, which is an unfortunate tendency. The object in either case is to limit membership to desirable men. When the men do not live together, this is harder to accomplish.

RUSHING AND PLEDGING

THE BYLAWS specify that a "pledging committee" be appointed by the Chapter Regent. (Bylaws, Chapter II, Part E, Section 1.) This "Rush Chairman" or "Pledging Chairman" and his committee should be responsible for all of the rushing activities of the chapter. They coordinate the rushing from initial contact until each prospect is pledged or eliminated.

Each chapter should adopt its own such procedure, but rushing should be handled by a committee organized for that purpose. The rushing should be tailored to meet the chapter's needs, but should follow a rigidly high standard.

Getting the names of prospects

Some universities will supply printed cards each summer (for a small fee), listing all the new male students entering school. The cards can be sorted out and all of the engineering students retained. This is a very good method for obtaining the names of the prospects new to the campus.

If such a system is not available, it is often possible to obtain the same information from the office of the Dean of Engineering.

A third method is to maintain a current class list (Sophomore, Junior, etc.), and to make a list of prospects from the acquaintances of chapter members.

Any method used should obtain a maximum number of prospects early in the school year.

A current card index can be kept on all prospects. Each man should be listed on an individual card and his "history" written on it, i.e. the results of contacts, pledge bids, etc. The card file can be categorized to keep the working list as low as possible. Such sections may be: "current rushees," "deferred rushees," "pledged to other fraternities," "dropped," "pledged," etc. Any convenient system can be used.

Contacting the prospects

The first contact should be made as soon as possible in the school year. In fact, summer contact of men is desirable and often necessary when Theta Tau competes indirectly with social fraternities.

Participation in "rush week" activities is often desirable. Chapter rushing, if carried on independently, should be started within two weeks after the opening of school.

A good way to "sell" the chapter is to have a printed leaflet or rush booklet about the Fraternity, which rushees can review on their own time. These booklets also can be used during the normal rush period to give to men who are contacted personally. At least one chapter sends out these booklets, accompanied by a personal letter, during the summer to all new engineering students.

A sample summer rush letter is shown. This type letter can be done effectively by the "Multilith" process with the name of each student filled in and the envelope addressed by typewriter. *Each* letter should be signed by the Rush Chairman to help keep the letters as personal as possible. In fact, the letter should look as if it were personally typed for each man.



THETA TAU

1608 Doune Street
Winston-Salem
North Carolina
August 12, 1957

Dear Sidney:

I'm glad to hear that you're coming to K.U. and that you'll be a fellow engineer. I think K.U.'s "Engine School" is one of the best, and you'll be proud that you chose it.

One of the best ways to succeed in the School of Engineering, as well as on the campus in general, is to be a member of a strong fraternity. Theta Tau is one of these fraternities. Since it is a national professional engineering fraternity, Theta Tau offers the common bond of engineering studies as well as the social advantages of other fraternities.

Theta Taus participate in a wide variety of campus activities, especially in the Engine School. We have our share of the "Hill" parties. What's more, when the courses get tough, it helps to have brothers who have been through them before. The enclosed booklet describes some of the advantages of fraternities in general and Theta Tau in particular.

We hope you're planning to go through Rush Week, because we believe that most men can benefit from the fraternity way of life. We also hope that you'll plan to visit the Theta Tau house. We'd like to show you how we live and work together, and how a professional engineering fraternity might add to your college career.

If you have any questions about Rush Week or the Engine School, I'll be glad to help you if I can.

Yours truly,

THETA TAU FRATERNITY

George Dodd, Rush Chairman

The chapter rush booklet should be small, of high quality, and professionally printed. The topics should be concise, straightforward, and to the point. They should include:

- 1) a *brief* history of the Fraternity and the chapter
- 2) the chapter activities
- 3) thumbnail sketches of outstanding actives
- 4) mention of outstanding alumni
- 5) what a professional fraternity is
- 6) information about pledge life
- 7) a chapter picture
- 8) informal pictures of chapter activities, etc.
- 9) other information applicable to the individual chapter.

Personal contact is mandatory in rushing procedures. The actives (and pledges) should meet each rushee so they can make personal evaluations of him. Many systems can be used to accomplish this:

- 1) rush week
- 2) summer rush parties
- 3) rush smokers
- 4) dinner dates
- 5) professional meetings sponsored by Theta Tau
- 6) luncheon meetings
- 7) chapter parties or other functions
- 8) casual get-togethers.

Several of these methods should be used by each chapter in addition to others adaptable to the situation.

Acquainting the prospect with Theta Tau has already been discussed indirectly. Every time a Theta Tau meets a man, he is acquainting the man with his chapter and its quality through his own personality. Other methods are:

- 1) Prestige of the chapter on the campus. Is it active and well respected by students and faculty alike?
- 2) Individual members and their pride in the chapter, shown among friends and fellow students.
- 3) Word of mouth by the members, telling specific things to the rushees.
- 4) Printed material explaining the Fraternity and its purposes, such as rush booklets, rush leaflets, newsletters, etc.

Choosing new pledges

After a big rush date such as a dinner, smoker, etc., the actives should meet and discuss all of the rushees while their impressions are still vivid. At this time, many can be eliminated from further consideration and favorable prospects can be chosen for more active rushing.

It is always best to be selective and critical when choosing pledges. Having many poor pledges is much worse than having a small pledge class of high quality. Men that will be active and interested Theta Taus are most desirable. Each man should be considered for his worth as an individual, not overlooking the "gems in the rough." Some qualities to look for are:

- 1) good character
- 2) interest in Theta Tau
- 3) a favorable personal background
- 4) pleasing personality
- 5) ability as a student
- 6) the potential to develop into a top rate man and engineer
- 7) professional interest
- 8) outside interests.

Each rushee should be met on at least two different occasions before he is voted on. This is the minimum time in which a man's character, interest, potential, etc. can be evaluated.

When the favorable prospects have been met two or three times, they may be brought up in a regular meeting for voting. (If every member has not met the man, he should be brought back again.) After each man is discussed thoroughly and his "boosters" have explained his qualities, the voting can take place — always by *secret* ballot, using a ballot box. (Only the Regent should see inside the box after voting, and he should *not* disclose the number of black balls, since a man is disqualified whether there are one or many. Disclosing a small number may tend to cause dissension among the actives.) If the vote is unanimous and favorable, the rush committee can then extend the bid to pledge. (See Constitution, Article V, Section 4.)

A man's grades should be checked *before* he is asked to pledge. A man carrying an average below the school minimum for graduation is unlikely ever to be eligible for initiation. Many poor students switch majors or drop out completely. Poor grades are to be avoided, no matter what a man's other qualities are. On

the other hand, high grades alone are not enough; the whole man must be considered. (See Bylaws, Chapter II, Part B, Section 8.)

The practice of initiating freshmen should be carried on with caution. (See Constitution, Article V, Sections 1 and 5.) Since many men leave engineering during or after their freshman years, it is generally unwise to initiate freshmen. However, the pledging of freshmen is desirable in many cases.

Generally, sophomores and juniors make the best initiates. Seniors usually should not be considered, since their time as actives will be so short. Many have an aversion to fraternities after being "independent" for three years or more, and it is unlawful to initiate a man within six months of graduation. (See Constitution, Article V, Section 5.) The best members can be molded from younger men — freshmen, sophomores, and first-term juniors.

Extending the bid

The bid to pledge should be extended to each man *personally* and *privately* by two or more actives. The bid should never be extended by mail unless it is a rule of the school and all fraternities on the campus extend bids that way. Not only is a letter more impersonal than a verbal bid, but a letter may signify to the man that Theta Tau is merely an honor society — which it is not. This misconception is to be avoided.

When a man is asked to pledge, the general laws and customs of Theta Tau — both local and national — should be explained, including financial obligations, membership requirements, pledge duties, the chapter functions, etc. Any questions the man may have can then be answered. When extending the bid, it is good diplomacy to emphasize the aspects of the pledgeship and membership which seem to appeal to the given rushee. However, he should never be given a distorted picture. No rushee should ever be "pressured" into pledging; this often results in undesirable situations later. At this time also, the rushee should understand that his pledgeship is strictly a probationary period, and that becoming a pledge does not guarantee that he will be initiated into membership.

If the man consents to pledge, he should complete and sign the pledge form immediately. The pledge form must be witnessed by two active members. Their names, chapter, and years of graduation are to be signed on the lines provided. (See Bylaws, Chapter II, Part E, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 13.)

The rushing committee

This committee should be the ramrod of the rushing operations. It should begin its work at the start of the school year and continue throughout the year if necessary. Periods of concentrated rushing should be carried out at the beginning of each term.

The rushing committee should follow each prospect from the time his name is presented until final action is taken, arranging all contacts, smokers, etc. After a man has been a guest at a rush function, action should be taken by the chapter (rushing committee) to follow up immediately. If a rushee is allowed to "cool off" for a while, he may forget Theta Tau exists, or pledge another fraternity because he thinks he has been forgotten by Theta Tau. Each man should be considered and be: 1) asked to pledge; 2) deferred until a later date; or 3) dropped from the list as undesirable (through a "blackball" etc.)

Rushing obtains the life blood of the chapter, so it should be carried on with all due serious efforts. The exact method must be determined by each chapter, but a plan should be followed. The quality of a chapter is determined largely by its rush program and the attitude of the members toward it and toward their Fraternity.

PLEDGE TRAINING

THE BEST PLEDGE available will not become a good Theta Tau by osmosis — he must be trained and taught the laws and customs of the Fraternity. It is the further obligation of the active chapter to develop men who have a high professional interest and ideals, social compatibility, ability to work with a group or individually, and a strong bond of fraternal brotherhood. The pledge training program should strive for this.

The attitude and spirit of the active chapter carry over to the pledges. A spirit of pride in the chapter must exist to "teach" it to the pledges. This is also true of everything the chapter does and stands for; it is an intangible that cannot be replaced.

Almost without fail, the strongest chapters have comprehensive and fairly rigid pledge training programs. Far from being just a work period, the pledge training period is a time of development of men and improvement of the chapter.

The Pledge Trainer

Each chapter should have an excellent pledge training program designed by the chapter and administered by a Pledge Trainer or Pledge Master. The Pledge Trainer can be appointed or elected. One chapter has this definition of a Pledge Trainer's duties:

"The primary duty of the Pledge Trainer shall be to supply the necessary induction and training to the pledges to assure that those pledges will become good actives upon initiation. To implement this, he shall, with the consent of the active chapter, establish and enforce a set of pledge rules; shall, with the House Improvements Chairman, list and schedule the house improvements projects to be assigned to the pledges during their pledgship period; shall make and require the completion of pledge duty and pledge work assignments; shall assign and require the learning of fraternity information by the pledges; shall direct the instruction of the pledges in all fields in which they should receive instruction while pledges; shall, by precept, example, and discussions with the pledges, so orient their thoughts and actions toward the end that they may become outstanding actives upon initiation.

"The Pledge Trainer also shall be responsible for providing mutual liaison between the active chapter and the pledge class; shall be responsible for reporting the progress of the pledges individually and collectively to the active chapter; and shall be responsible for the holding of a pledge class meeting at least once a week."

Each chapter should adopt similar requirements for its Pledge Trainer, designed to suit its needs *whether or not* it is a house chapter.

A standard set of pledge rules, "house rules," pledge duties, etc. should be developed. It is also a good idea to reproduce such information, as well as a list of table manners, courtesies, etc. for the pledges.

Pledge training standards

Here are some standards which should be met in the general area of pledge training:

- 1) Each man should be voted upon (unanimously and favorably) at least twice before being initiated — first, before he is asked to pledge, and second, immediately prior to his initiation. Any member may call for a vote at any time, of course.

- 2) The shorter the pledgship period, the less likely a man is to be a good active and feel he's a member of Theta Tau instead of an honor society. The pledgship period should not be less than six weeks, exclusive of enrollment and vacation periods.

- 3) Assignments should be given to the pledges from the Pledge Manual. Each should learn the contents of the manual as well as information concerning the local chapter and its members.

(See Bylaws, Chapter II, Part E, Section 14 and Resolution X, 15.)

4) Pledges should be given tests periodically on the assignments. These tests should be both written and oral.

5) Projects of service to Theta Tau should be assigned to each pledge, and those projects should be completed progressively through his pledgship and prior to initiation.

6) Pledge-active functions should be planned in addition to the normal contacts. These may be picnics, parties, professional meetings, etc. An active-pledge work project is often desirable.

7) Close relationships between actives and pledges develop the fraternal bond of Theta Tau. All chapters should use an "adviser system," i.e. pledge father-son; big brother; sponsor, etc. Each pledge is thus brought closer to the chapter by his relations with a specific active. A pledge's problems, questions, shortcomings, etc. can be solved best by this relationship. Those chapters which use it now find it very successful.

8) The pledges should meet on the average of once a week or at least as often as the active chapter. For non-house chapters, these meetings should be scheduled at a time when the actives and pledges can meet informally before or after their separate meetings. This helps to get the actives and pledges better acquainted with each other.

9) The Pledge Trainer should meet with the pledges and give them instructions from the Pledge Manual, on chapter government, and in areas of character development.

10) The pledge class should be self-governing in so far as possible and should conduct its own meetings. This teaches group participation and develops leadership. Early in the school year, officers may be elected by the pledge class (president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer), and the succeeding meetings should be conducted by the pledge class president. Of necessity, the Pledge Trainer will dominate the time during these meetings.

Below is a list of topics for pledge meeting talks which may be given by the Pledge Trainer or other particularly qualified actives.

- a) Chapter government – talks from major officers
- b) Finances – chapter, House Corporation, and national Fraternity
- c) Etiquette

- d) What is a good pledge? A good active?
- e) Extracurricular activities on the campus
- f) Public relations
- g) Study suggestions and school counselling
- h) School history and traditions
- i) Intramural athletics

Other training

One of the most ridiculous beliefs held is that, "We're engineers and a professional engineering fraternity, and therefore need not concern ourselves with teaching or learning of social graces." Engineers have to live with people, work with people, eat with people, and communicate with people every day of their lives. No successful engineer can get along without so-called "social graces," and the best time to learn them is as a pledge.

Proper table manners as well as other rules of etiquette one needs in everyday living should be taught and observed. Formal lessons are not at all out of line, and often actives will find that they too need a little "brush up" work. Most house chapters have house rules, table rules, etc. These are good.

Professional and social events are an important function in every chapter. (See Resolution X, 2, 3, and 10.) Here again, a relaxed attitude and more enjoyable time is had by all if good manners are practiced naturally rather than in an embarrassed, amateurish way. The pledges should always be included in professional meetings and social functions sponsored by the chapter.

The actives should show an interest in the pledge's grades and his problems in studying. Help from older men is of great benefit to the underclassmen.

Pledges should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities, which help make them well-rounded men. Such activities include civic work, church work, technical societies, honorary and departmental societies, the school engineers' magazine, Engineering Council, Engineers' Day, student government, etc.

Study assignments

Below is a suggested list of weekly pledge study assignments. These include most of the information that every pledge should know about the Fraternity. For shorter pledge training periods, these assignments can be combined into larger ones.

WEEK 1: Names of all actives and pledges, with chapter elective or appointive positions held by each (including committee chairmen).

WEEK 2: Complete information on all actives (full name, department, home town, nickname, and girl friend if pinned, engaged, or married).

WEEK 3: Complete information on all pledges. Words and tune of the "Sweetheart Song."

WEEK 4: Complete information on _____ Chapter (original name if any, charter members' last names, names of those living, date of founding, chapter house location or mailing address, phone number if any, and other pertinent data).

WEEK 5: Complete information about Alpha Chapter (original name, school, city, state, Founders' names, date of founding, and chapter house location [address]).

WEEK 6: Fraternities competitive with Theta Tau on the campus, the fields included by each, and sight recognition of their badges.

WEEK 7: Names of all Executive Council members and *Gear* editors, with the chapter of each, and Past Grand Regents from the pledge's chapter. Fraternity colors, flower, jewel, and complete information on all insignia.

WEEK 8: Theta Tau faculty members on the campus (including first name or initials, department, and academic rank). Words and tune of "St. Patrick Was an Engineer."

WEEK 9: Sight recognition of the badges of all sororities and fraternities on the campus.

WEEK 10: The name (Greek letter), school, city, state, and chapter status (active or inactive), of chapters 1-14, Alpha to Xi.

WEEK 11: Chapters Omicron to Epsilon Beta.

WEEK 12: "Final examination" — a comprehensive written test on all the data learned. The test should be partially essay, true-false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, etc.

Initiation

Every pledge should be well prepared for the day he will be initiated. Some type of informal initiation should be held; it should be the test of a man's knowledge of Theta Tau and engineering ability, etc. During this time the initiate should be tested verbally and in writing on all information he should know. Engi-

neering reports and technical talks can be presented by them. (See Resolution VIII.)

Many chapters require a special project of the pledges prior to initiation, such as building a replica of the badge, a slide rule, or a paddle. Many also require the signature of all of the members of Theta Tau on the campus on these "projects." These projects, if well constructed, are a source of pride to many men after initiation.

The initiate should also engage in some worthwhile improvement work for the chapter or university, or for the community. Hazing should be at a minimum. (See Constitution, Article XII, Section 4.)

At this time the chapter can satisfy itself that the pledges have acquired a thorough knowledge of Theta Tau and are worthy of becoming actives. The formal initiation should give pride to the new Theta Tau as well as to the actives. (See Bylaws, Chapter II, Part E, Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.)

To go one step further, immediately after initiation the new initiates should be instructed thoroughly by the Regent on the details of the Constitution, Ritual, and Oath of Membership in an organized program. This will assure a thorough and meaningful knowledge of Theta Tau and a willingness to work for the chapter and Fraternity. (See Bylaws, Chapter I, Part A, Sections 3 and 4 and Resolution X, 14.)

IT HAS BEEN the experience of several chapters that the more closely a pledge training program conforms to the standards mentioned in this section, the better the chapter. The entire purpose of pledge training should be to develop a well-rounded professional man as well as an outstanding Theta Tau who is proficient in the knowledge of his chapter and national Fraternity. Each day leading to becoming an active should be a step toward instilling a spirit of fraternal brotherhood in each man. The result is that each chapter, as well as the national organization, is materially strengthened.

