

Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity  
Style Guide and Definitions of Common Terms  
Last Updated August 25, 2021

This guide will evolve over time to reflect common usage when writing about Phi Sigma Pi. If you have a question about this guide or anything contained herein, please feel free to email [socialmedia@phisigmapi.org](mailto:socialmedia@phisigmapi.org).

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## A

### **Active Member**

- An individual Inducted as a Member who has met all requirements of Collegiate membership to retain voting rights and has not requested National or Local Inactivity.
- “Active Member” should always be capitalized.
- See “**Member.**”

### **Advisor**

- When referencing an Advisor for Phi Sigma Pi, the word should always be capitalized (ex. Chapter Advisor, Faculty Advisor and Alumni Advisor).

### **Alumni Member**

- An individual who has been a Collegiate Member and has left or graduated in good standing from the sheltering institution of a Collegiate Chapter.
- “Alumni Member” should always be capitalized.

### **Alumnus/Alumna/Alumni**

- Referring to graduates of a college or university, these words should always be capitalized.
- Graduates are referred to, singularly, as “Alumnus” (masculine or gender neutral) or “Alumna” (feminine).
- A group of graduates is referred to as “Alumni.”

### **apostrophes**

- Use apostrophes only in cases of single letters (ex. straight A’s).
- Full dates should be written with no apostrophe before the “s” (ex. 1950s).

### **Associate Chapter Development**

- The process by which Collegiate Chapters are established at Sheltering Institutions without a currently recognized Active Chapter.

## B

### **Bro**

- “Bro” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Brother**

- A term that is sometimes used to refer to Members of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, it should be reserved for internal communications.

- “Brother” may be used when it relates to the name of a position, recognition, award, etc. (ex. Brother at Large, Big Brother, Brother of the Week, Most Involved Brother Award) or the name of one of the Fraternal songs (ex. “Brothers Are We” and “Brother”).
- See “**Member.**”

### **Bylaws**

- A Chapter governing document that contains high level policies made by a Chapter to guide the actions of its Members.
- “Bylaws” should be unhyphenated.

### **byline**

- When a story or blog article is written by someone, the byline should read as follows: by Name, Position Title with the Chapter and abbreviated graduation year in parenthesis [ex. by Adrienne Freeland, Director of Communications (Alpha Zeta Chapter ‘07)].

## **C**

### **campus**

- Referring to the physical location where a Collegiate Chapter is established.
- “Campus” should not be capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.

### **captions for photos**

- Use (left), (from left) or the like if there might be confusion about who is pictured in the photo.
- Use a middle initial, only if needed, and only the first time you use an individual’s full name.
- Use periods in captions only when it is a full sentence.

### **ceremonies**

- All Phi Sigma Pi ceremonies should be capitalized when referred to by their official name(s).  
The official ceremonies are:
  - Pinning Ceremony
  - Big Brother Ceremony
  - *The Ritual Formal Induction Ceremony* (see “***The Ritual***”)
  - Meeting Commencement Ceremony
  - Officer Installation Ceremony
  - Alumni Ritual
  - National Officer Oath of Office
  - Founders’ Day Ceremony
  - The Funeral Rite

### **“Ceremonies and Ritual Review and Discussion” Book**

- A book that holds all information about how to prepare, set up and perform Phi Sigma Pi ceremonies.
- Use quotation marks around the title of the book.

### **Chair**

- Use when referencing the head of a Committee (ex. Social Chair).
- When referencing an individual’s position, the word should be capitalized.

## **Chapter**

- “Chapter” should be capitalized when used immediately after a Chapter name (ex. Zeta Zeta Chapter).
- “Chapter” should be capitalized when referring to a specific Chapter or group of Chapters after a previous mention (ex. The Chapter executed a well-planned event. OR The Chapters executed a well-planned event.).

## **Chapter Admin Portal (CAP)**

- The portion of Phi Sigma Pi’s website where all official Chapter forms and administrative elements are located (<https://chapteradmin.phisigmapi.org>).
- “Chapter Admin Portal” and “CAP” should always be capitalized.
- “Chapter Admin Portal” may be abbreviated to “CAP” after a previous mention.

## **Chapter Consultant**

- Members of the National Staff assigned to support Collegiate Chapters.

## **Chapter Excellence Boards (CEB)**

- Refers to a group of Alumni Members who volunteer to serve as educators, coaches and mentors to assist Collegiate Chapters in implementing strong and successful operational practices.
- “Chapter Excellence Boards” may be abbreviated to “CEB” after a previous mention.
- “Chapter Excellence Boards” and “CEB” should always be capitalized.

## **Chapter Officer**

- “Chapter Officer” should be capitalized when referring to an individual’s position.
- All Chapter Officer position titles (ex. President, Secretary, Parliamentarian) should be capitalized.

## **Chapter Standards of Excellence (CSE)**

- Refers to an online evaluation resource to empower Chapters to annually meet the highest standards of Chapter governance, management and mission-driven operations.
- “Chapter Standards of Excellence” may be abbreviated to “CSE” after a previous mention.
- “Chapter Standards of Excellence” and “CSE” should always be capitalized.

## **Coed/Coeducational**

- “Coed” and “Coeducational” are incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.
- See “**Gender Inclusive/Gender-Inclusive.**”

## **Collegiate**

- “Collegiate” should be capitalized when referring to a Collegiate Chapter or Collegiate Member.

## **comma**

- A punctuation mark indicating a pause between parts of a sentence.
- Used to separate items in a list (ex. Phi Sigma Pi’s Tripod includes Scholarship, Leadership and Fellowship); no comma is needed before the “and” in a series except to resolve ambiguity.

## **committee**

- “Committee” should be capitalized when used immediately after a Committee name (ex. Fundraising Committee).
- “Committee” should be capitalized when referring to a specific Committee or multiple Committees after a previous mention (ex. The Committee executed a well-planned event. OR The Committees executed a well-planned event.).

## **Constitution**

- See “**National Constitution.**”

## **CORE**

- An acronym that stands for Community, Opportunity, Resources and Engage.
- CORE is an online platform where Members connect, discover resources, participate in thoughtful discussions and volunteer with the organization.
- Every letter of “CORE” should be capitalized.

## **Crossing**

- “**Crossing**” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.
- See “**Induction**”

## **D**

### **database**

- “Database” should not be capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.
- “Database” should always be unhyphenated.

### **Delegate**

- A representative of a Collegiate or Alumni Chapter, the National Alumni Association or the National Officers who attends the Grand Chapter Meeting to participate in Fraternity business.
- “Delegate” should always be capitalized.

## **E**

### **email**

- “Email” should not be capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.
- This word should be unhyphenated
- Email addresses should be kept on one line.

### **event date**

- Dates for events should include the abbreviated month with the day of the week before when included (ex. Dec. 16 OR Monday, Dec. 16).

### **event name**

- Names of events should begin with the year followed by the event (ex. 2014 National Convention).

### **event time**

- Times of events should be written without zeros and include a.m. or p.m. with periods and in lowercase. The capitalized time zone designation should always be included . (ex. 7 p.m. ET, 8:15 a.m. ET).

## **F**

### **Fellowship**

- The fostering of non-discriminatory, fraternal fellowship within Phi Sigma Pi's ranks according to Phi Sigma Pi's National Constitution.
- "Fellowship" should be capitalized when referring to a leg of the Tripod.

### **Foundation**

- See "**The Phi Sigma Pi Foundation.**"

### **Founders**

- The three men that founded our Fraternity: Dr. Eldo L. Hendricks, Dr. Claude A. Phillips and Dr. Clarence H. McClure.
- This word should always be capitalized when in reference to the Fraternity.

### **Founders Day**

- The day a Chapter or the Fraternity was founded.
- "Founders Day" should never include an apostrophe when referencing an associated item, event or the like.

### **Fraternity**

- "Fraternity" should always be capitalized
- See "**Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity**".

## **G**

### **Gender Inclusive/Gender-Inclusive**

- Our Fraternity is a gender-inclusive organization, accepting of all gender identities and expressions per the Gender Inclusion Resolution passed by the 2014 Grand Chapter.
- Use a hyphen when used as a modifier (ex. Gender-Inclusive organization).
- "Coed" and "Coeducational" are incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Grand Chapter**

- An assembly of Delegates composed of representatives of each Collegiate Chapter and Alumni Chapter, representatives of the National Alumni Association and the National Officers.
- "Grand Chapter" should always be capitalized.

### **Grand Chapter Meeting**

- The annual meeting at which discussion and debate over Fraternity business, including amendments to our National Constitution and the election of the National Council, occurs.
- "Grand Chapter Meeting" should always be capitalized.

## **grip**

- The Fraternal handshake, it is known only to Members of Phi Sigma Pi and must never be shared with non-Members.

## **H**

### **homepage**

- “Homepage” should not be capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.
- “Homepage” should always be unhyphenated.

### **Honorary Member**

- An individual, who is ineligible for Collegiate Membership, and is Inducted as a Member due to exemplary service to the Fraternity, or demonstrating the ideals of the Fraternity in word and deed through commitment to the community.
- Honorary Members do not participate in an Initiation Program and are not considered Active Members of a Chapter.
- “Honorary Member” should always be capitalized.

### **Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY)**

- Phi Sigma Pi’s National Philanthropy, HOBY, has a mission to inspire and develop our global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service, and innovation.
- Every letter of “HOBY” (pronounced hoe-bee) should be capitalized.
- The use of the acronym, “HOBY,” is permitted in Phi Sigma Pi communications.

## **I**

### **Improving Humanity with Honor**

- The abbreviated Mission Statement of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.
- “Improving Humanity with Honor” should always be capitalized.

### **Induction**

- The ceremonial means by which an individual is Inducted as a Member of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.
- “Induction” should be capitalized when referring to the “*The Ritual Formal Induction Ceremony*.”

### **Initiate**

- An individual who has been asked to enter an Initiation Program.
- “Initiate” should be capitalized when referring to an individual or group of individuals (“Initiates”).

### **Initiation**

- See “**Initiation Program**.”

### **Initiation Program**

- The process through which Initiates must complete requirements set forth in the National Constitution prior to being Inducted as a Member of Phi Sigma Pi via *The Ritual Formal Induction Ceremony*.
- “Initiation Program” should always be capitalized.
- “Initiation” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

- “Initiate Program” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Inter-Chapter Relations (ICR)**

- A term that is used to refer to events and activities that include two or more Phi Sigma Pi Chapters.
- “Inter-Chapter Relations” may be abbreviated to “ICR” after a previous mention.
- “Inter-Chapter Relations” and “ICR” should always be capitalized.

## **J**

## **K**

## **L**

### **Lampadion**

- See “*The Lampadion.*”

### **Leadership**

- The application of professional skills and the fostering of leadership qualities by promoting and advancing the welfare of humanity according to Phi Sigma Pi’s National Constitution.
- When referencing a leg of the Tripod, “Leadership” refers to Leadership through service.
- “Leadership” should be capitalized when referring to a leg of the Tripod.

### **Leadership in Action (LiA)**

- A leadership training and certificate program for Members of Phi Sigma Pi, its goal is to empower Members with the skills to inspire a positive change in all facets of our Fraternity and our communities.
- “Leadership in Action” should be capitalized when referring to “Leadership in Action Facilitators” who are trained to lead “Leadership in Action Modules,” which should also be capitalized.

## **M**

### **Member**

- An individual who has been Inducted into Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.
- When used to refer to a Member of Phi Sigma Pi, the word should always be capitalized (ex. Collegiate Member, Alumni Member, Honorary Member, Active Member, Locally Inactive Member, Nationally Inactive Member).
- “Member” should be capitalized when referring to a specific Member or group of Members after a previous mention (ex. Member John Smith implemented a great system OR The Members implemented a great system).
- “Member” is preferred over the use of “Brother,” especially in external communications.
- “Bro” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.
- “Sibling” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **membership**

- “Membership” should be capitalized when referring to the Members of the Chapter (ex. The decision to amend the Bylaws is left to the Membership.).

- “Membership” should be capitalized when referring to a specific Phi Sigma Pi item (ex. Membership Pin, Membership Certificate).

## **N**

### **National**

- “National” should always be capitalized.

### **National Alumni Association (NAA)**

- Refers to the umbrella entity that includes Members of Alumni Chapters, Alumni Associations and Alumni-at-Large.
- “National Alumni Association” may be abbreviated to “NAA” after a previous mention.
- “National Alumni Association” and “NAA” should always be capitalized.

### **National Constitution**

- The governing document of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.
- “National Constitution” should always be capitalized.

### **National Convention**

- Essential to the education, enthusiasm and communication of our Brotherhood, this event brings Collegiate Members and Alumni Members together for activities to promote fellowship and personal growth.
- “National Convention” should always be capitalized.

### **National Council**

- The elected group of volunteers who serve the Fraternity.
- “National Council” should always be capitalized.

### **National Headquarters**

- The physical facility of our National operations in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- “National Headquarters” should always be capitalized.

### **National Office**

- Members of the National Staff and National Council comprise the National Office.
- “National Office” should always be capitalized.
- “Nationals” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **National Philanthropy**

- Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity’s fully supported charity.
- Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) is Phi Sigma Pi’s National Philanthropy.
- When used in reference to HOBY, “National Philanthropy” should be capitalized.

### **National Staff**

- The group of paid employees of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.
- “National Staff” should always be capitalized.

### **Nationals**

- See “National Office.”
- “Nationals” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

## **numbered lists**

- When using a numbered list, type the number as a figure and then a period (ex. 1. 2. 3.).

## **numbers**

- Numbers one through nine should be written out in word form (ex. one, two, three), and numbers 10 or higher should be written as figures (ex. 11, 12, 13).

## **Q**

### **Officer**

- “Officer” should be capitalized when referencing an individual’s position.

### **Operating Policies**

- A Chapter governing document that contains policies/guidelines to guide the day-to-day actions of a Chapter.
- “Operating Policies” should be unhyphenated.
- “Operating Policy” and “Operations Policies” are incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

## **P**

### **Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity**

- The official name of the organization.
- “Phi Sigma Pi” and the representative Greek letters (“ΦΣΠ”) may be used in official communications.
- “Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity” or “Phi Sigma Pi” should be used in internal and external communications.
- “National Fraternity” may be used after a previous mention.
- Variations and abbreviations (ex. “Phi Sig”, “PSP”) are incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Pillars**

- “Pillars” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.
- See “**Tripod.**”

### **Pledge**

- See “**Initiate.**”
- “Pledge” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Potential New Member (PNM)**

- A student at a Sheltering Institution where there is a Collegiate Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi.
- “Potential New Member” may be abbreviated to “PNM” after a previous mention.
- “Potential New Member” and “PNM” should always be capitalized.

### **Purple & Gold**

- See “***The Purple & Gold.***”

## **Q**

## **R**

### **Recruitment**

- The process through which the ideals of Phi Sigma Pi and the requirements of becoming a Member are demonstrated to Potential New Members..
- “Rush” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

### **Ritual**

- See “*The Ritual.*”

### **“Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised”**

- The parliamentary authority that contains the rules governing Phi Sigma Pi in all cases to which they are applicable and consistent with the National Constitution and any special rules adopted by Phi Sigma Pi.
- The use of “Robert’s Rules of Order,” “Robert’s Rules” or the acronym, “RONR” are permitted in Phi Sigma Pi communications.
- Use quotation marks around the title of the book.

### **rush**

- “Rush” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.
- See “**Recruitment.**”

## **S**

### **Scholar’s Province**

- See “*The Scholar’s Province.*”

### **Scholarship**

- The acquisition and dissemination of information and knowledge according to Phi Sigma Pi’s National Constitution.
- “Scholarship” should be capitalized when referring to a leg of the Tripod.

### **school**

- Referring to the college or university where a Collegiate Chapter is established, this term is inclusive of all types of post-secondary institutions.
- “School” should not be capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.
- See “**Sheltering Institution.**”

### **Sheltering Institution**

- A college or university where a Collegiate Chapter has been established.
- “Sheltering Institution” should always be capitalized.

### **Shingle**

- Phi Sigma Pi’s official Membership Certificate.
- “Shingle” should always be capitalized.

### **song titles**

- Song titles should always be in quotes (ex. “Brothers Are We”).

## **staff**

- See “**National Staff.**”

## **Subrosa**

- Meaning “under the rose,” it designates that anything said or done is to be held sacred and to remain confidential.
- “Subrosa” should always be capitalized, including when referencing the “Subrosa Fund.”
- “Subrosa” should be unhyphenated.

## **SURGE**

- Phi Sigma Pi’s Recruitment program designed to support Chapters in increasing the number of Potential New Members that participate in Recruitment.
- Every letter of SURGE should be capitalized.

## **T**

### **The Phi Sigma Pi Foundation**

- The non-profit philanthropic arm of Phi Sigma Pi.
- “The Phi Sigma Pi Foundation” should always be capitalized.
- “Foundation” may be used after a previous mention.

### ***The Purple & Gold***

- The official magazine of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, which is distributed by the National Office.
- “*The Purple & Gold*” should always be capitalized and italicized.

### ***The Ritual***

- Refers to one of several ceremonies known in secret only to Members of the Fraternity; the most prominent among these is the *The Ritual Formal Induction Ceremony*.
- “*The Ritual*” should always be capitalized and italicized.
- The primary element distinguishing Phi Sigma Pi from all other organizations, *The Ritual* unites all Members of the Fraternity.
- *The Ritual* should be conducted only in the presence or view of Phi Sigma Pi Members in a room of proper atmosphere.

### ***The Scholar’s Province***

- The official handbook of Phi Sigma Pi that serves as a resource during the Initiation Program to guide Initiates through learning the National Fraternity’s history and ideals.
- Should always be capitalized and italicized.

## **titles**

- When referencing an individual’s position, titles should always be capitalized with the individual’s name listed before or after (ex. Executive Director Suzanne Schaffer OR Suzanne Schaffer, Executive Director).

## **Tripod**

- Refers to Phi Sigma Pi’s three ideals: Scholarship, Leadership and Fellowship, which are valued equally.
- “Tripod” should always be capitalized.

- “Pillars” is incorrect usage and should not be used in reference to Phi Sigma Pi.

## U

### **undergraduate**

- A student pursuing a degree at a college or university, “undergraduate” may also be used to differentiate from “graduate” students or degrees.
- “Undergraduate” should be lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence.
- “Undergraduate” is incorrect usage when referring to a Member or Chapter of Phi Sigma Pi and should not be used.
- See “**Collegiate.**”

## V

### **Vice President (and other position titles of two or more words)**

- Position titles should be unhyphenated.
- Position titles should always be capitalized.

## W

### **(the) Web**

- “Web” should always be capitalized when referring to the World Wide Web.

### **website**

- “Website” should be lowercase unless at the beginning of a sentence.
- “Website” should always be unhyphenated.
- Use http:// if the address or URL of the website does not include “www”.
- Avoid ending a sentence with an address or URL of a website; it may appear to readers that the period ending the sentence is part of the address or URL.
- An address or URL of a website should be kept on one line, when possible.
- When linking an address or URL for a website, include only the portion following “www.” (ex. phisigmapi.org).
- A link to a website may be added to the word “online” instead of including the full address or URL (ex. Check out the resource online.).

## X

## Y

## Z