

# Guide for Scholarship Chairman

Theta Xi Fraternity



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# GUIDE FOR SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN

(from *Guide for Officers*, Theta Xi Fraternity)

## **Job Summary:**

**Serves as the chapter's academic officer with primary responsibility for understanding and seeing that the chapter complies with the chapter's, Fraternity's, and institution's academic standards. Reviews and makes recommendations to the president for academic programs and budgets. Oversees scholarship programs and related budgets for the chapter, study resources, and scholarship awards.**

## **Job Responsibilities:**

- Develops, maintains, encourages and interprets the academic standards of the chapter, Fraternity, and institution. Provides guidance and direction to committee members in setting goals and objectives that directly support the goals and objectives of the chapter. Reviews and makes recommendations to the executive council regarding improvements in the overall scholarship program.
- Administers academic award review procedures for qualifying members (actives **and** AMs). Establishes, and updates as necessary, standards for determining qualifications for award(s) considerations.
- Assists the membership educator in establishing sound, quality academic programs for AMs.
- Reviews the chapter's scholarship programs each academic term. Informs the EBoard of any areas requiring improvements and/or revisions.
- Reports any academically challenged individuals (members and AMs) to the vice president. Discusses options/solutions to the problems. Utilizes and implements best option available to ensure resolution of situation.
- Submits budget requests to the Treasurer prior to the beginning of each term. Assists in the administration of an effective budget control program.
- Performs other responsibilities as assigned by the president and/or vice president.

# **DUTIES of the SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN**

The **FIRST** of seven goals listed in the purpose of Theta Xi is to develop “intellectual curiosity that assures the highest scholarship rating consistent with his ability.” Scholarship builds successful college men, who can then take the learned skills to their careers. (from *The Quest*)

The following pages outline many of the specific responsibilities of the chapter scholarship chairman. This will hopefully serve as a resource for you as you carry out your duties and responsibilities in the various areas of chapter operations.

NOTE -- The following abbreviations are used throughout this guide:

Associate Member	AM
Interfraternity Council	IFC
Executive Board	EBoard
Headquarters	HQ
Grade point average	GPA

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Scholarship occupies the forefront among Theta Xi activities...” and well it should. If it were not for scholastics, Theta Xi would not exist. Theta Xi exists to **augment** the college experience of its members; every member’s first and foremost goal should be to receive a good education. Therefore, any chapter that does not promote academics is doing a disservice to its members and is contributing to its own demise. Education, as defined by the broad meaning of expanding an individual’s horizons and teaching new concepts and skills, must be our top priority.

In this light, the office of scholarship chairman becomes increasingly important. It is the duty of the scholarship chairman to oversee the scholastic progress of the chapter members, to inform the membership of cultural events in the community, and to supervise a scholarship program designed to help each chapter member reach “the highest scholarship rating consistent with his ability.”

A strong scholarship program should include all aspects of the scholarship chairman’s office, not just enforcing study hours and collecting GPAs. Here are four good reasons why a scholarship program is important to a chapter:

- Good, efficient study habits can enable a student to achieve more in a shorter period of time, thus leaving more free time for fraternity activities, campus activities, and for himself.
- Good grades lead to higher individual morale.
- Good grades lead to a lower turnover rate for the chapter, which will put less pressure on the members to recruit a large number of AMs.
- When there are sound scholastics, the chapter leadership is usually stronger and more organized. This strengthens the chapter’s program and also enhances the chapter’s reputation with the administration, faculty and student body.

The first step to improving chapter scholarship is for the membership to recognize the need for improved scholastics. Whether your chapter has a sound program or no program at all, there is always room for improvement. It only takes a desire on the part of the members to do their best. A strong program should provide each member with the best opportunity to achieve his individual educational goal.

## **DEVELOP A POSITIVE CHAPTER ATTITUDE**

### **TOWARD SCHOLASTICS**

Despite the fact that we all attend college to receive an education, scholastics are often pushed into the background. To develop a positive attitude, it is necessary to make scholastic achievement a chapter priority.

This can be accomplished by **holding a chapter meeting in which only the importance of scholastics is discussed**. Also the Dean of Students or chief academic administrator could be invited to dinner or to an open/educational meeting to discuss the importance of scholastics and how it affects Fraternity operations and future employment possibilities.

A good attitude toward scholarship cannot be accomplished overnight; the chapter must commit itself to a positive attitude and view academics as a long range and continuous process. Each member, active and AM, needs to develop self-discipline, to learn to establish priorities, and to recognize that **maturity is the ability to postpone pleasurable activities until one's responsibilities are completed**.

Maturity is also recognizing the danger involved in "idolizing the brother who seems to be having so much fun by not studying." He may be having fun, but he is wasting his time and money. By using your time wisely, you can complete all of your academic work and still have fun.

A positive attitude, however, is not enough to improve a chapter's scholastics. Appointing a scholarship committee will show that the attitude is there, having a written program will show that it is more than just an idea, and following the program and evaluating it will give strength to the attitude.

To reach the goal of strong scholastics there must be a commitment. The best type of commitment is a written commitment. Therefore, the makeup of the scholarship committee and the scholarship program should be incorporated into the chapter's By-Laws and policies.

The chapter needs to set realistic goals and to continually review the progress towards reaching them.

The Bottom Line: Make good scholarship the "thing to do." This includes discouraging skipping classes, the excessive dropping of classes, and not making jokes about someone's grades. It means choosing an elective class because it is interesting and **not**

because someone said it was easy. It means challenging yourself and encouraging your brothers to get A's instead of settling for B's and C's, or worse.

## **ESTABLISH ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Each chapter is strongly encouraged to develop academic standards and incorporate these standards into the chapter's By-Laws so that everyone will be familiar with them. These standards should include:

### **MINIMUM STANDARDS TO EXTEND A BID**

Even though high school grades are not always a definite indicator of how an individual will perform in college, they are fairly accurate representations of an individual's dedication to academics. Chapters are encouraged to establish minimum standards for consideration of freshmen students with no college GPA. These may include:

- High School GPA (*The Constitution* – 25.5 - requires a 2.3 minimum, but chapters may set their own requirements higher.)
- High School rank (e.g., top 20% of their class or higher)
- ACT or SAT scores (e.g., average score or higher for that year)
- Extracurricular activities (e.g., two per year or more)

For second semester students, transfers, or upperclassmen, their college GPA should be used in deciding whether or not to extend a bid. The **minimum** for these students should be the same as the minimum standard for initiation (at least 2.3, per *Constitution*) or higher.

### **MINIMUM GPA FOR INITIATES**

The Constitution requires that all AMs **must** be initiated within 63 days of the AM Ceremony (49 days for All True Men chapters AND new colonies since 2006), unless prior approval has been granted by the Grand Lodge. Therefore, many chapters initiate before grades for the academic term are available. In this case, chapters are strongly encouraged to establish and enforce a minimum academic standard in order to extend a bid to a prospective member. Your chapter might even consider developing a questionnaire for incoming freshmen, transfers and upperclassmen that requests their high school and/or college cumulative grades. **REMEMBER: The minimum GPA a man must have in order to be affiliated is a cumulative 2.3, based on his college GPA or his high school GPA if no college grades are available. Chapters are also strongly encouraged to set their required minimums even higher, but they may not be lower.**

If a chapter places the appropriate priorities on academics and recruits top scholars, it will have no need to question whether an AM “makes the grade”.

***Remember: Chapters should use scholastic achievement as a criteria for recruitment, not initiation!***

In cases where the host institution requires first term students to obtain a specific grade point prior to be initiated, the chapter is reminded that, according to *The Constitution*, any man to be initiated must meet all academic requirements set by the school, the IFC, and the Fraternity. If any member does not meet these requirements, his records can be rejected or he may be suspended if such information is obtained after his records have been accepted (Article 4.2). If this requires extending the AM period beyond 63 days, you should contact Fraternity HQ for instructions on how to proceed.

Establish your chapter standards higher than the host institution’s and give the AMs something more to shoot for; let them know your chapter is serious about academics. **Establish a minimum for initiation and hold firm!** If a prospective initiate cannot achieve the chapter’s established minimum, then perhaps he is not the quality type of member the chapter should be recruiting.

#### ***MINIMUM GPA TO LIVE IN HOUSE***

This minimum should be set at least as high as the minimum to initiate. Living in the Fraternity’s house is a privilege, not a right! Therefore, just as with any other privilege, this privilege should be earned.

#### ***MINIMUM GPA TO BE ELIGIBLE TO HOLD AN OFFICE***

Chapters should set the standard for holding office **above** the minimum to initiate. The chapter officers are leaders and examples to the rest of the membership. They must be the best your chapter has to offer, including scholastics.

#### ***MINIMUM GPA FOR CHAPTERS***

Each chapter is required to maintain a chapter cumulative GPA of 2.5, on a 4.0 scale (*Constitution*, 23.3.5.1). If a chapter fails to meet this standard for two or more consecutive terms, they will be required to develop, with the assistance of HQ staff and the National VP for Chapter Operations, a detailed plan to achieve compliance in a reasonable period of time (*Constitution*, 23.3.5.2).

## **SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

A scholarship committee is necessary to assist the chairman in fulfilling his duty of ensuring that the proper atmosphere and attitude prevail in the chapter for the achievement of the highest GPA possible. The members appointed to this committee may not necessarily be the chapter's best scholars, but they should be members who are devoted to the idea of improving the academic attitude of the chapter and its overall scholastic standing. Since five-member committees often work best, the chapter should consider appointing a member from each class (Fr, So, Jr, and Sr) taking into consideration GPA ranges.

It should be the goal of the scholarship committee to develop programs that the chapter will adopt in an effort to improve its academic standing. These programs would include goals discussed earlier in this guide and the methods the committee implements to achieve those goals (quiet hours, study skills seminars, etc.). The following section outlines some of these strategies.

## **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

### **QUIET HOURS**

Every chapter should have established quiet hours. These are not to be confused with study hours. The difference is that during quiet hours, the house is kept quiet for the members who wish to study; members may choose not to study, but the house is quiet regardless. The objective of quiet hours should be to keep the sleep/study room area quiet during the week while classes are in session.

To be effective, the enforcement of quiet hours must be strict. If quiet hours are not enforced strictly by all members, they will lose credibility and members will lose respect for the program.

By enforcing a regular schedule of quiet hours, a significant contribution will be made to the chapter's morale and also to the chapter's overall GPA. Suggestions for when to hold quiet hours might include:

- Sunday evening through Thursday evening 7:00 PM to 8:00 AM
- One week before and the week of finals, 24 hours a day, until the last person in the house has completed his exams
- The chapter may consider providing an evening break (10:00 – 10:30 PM, for example).

## ***STUDY/SLEEP ROOMS***

Even with the house quiet, the members still need adequate facilities in order to study effectively. The study/sleep rooms should be used first and foremost for those two purposes. Entertaining guests should be considered a secondary function. Thus, rooms need to be designed to provide the maximum studying benefit:

- Providing sufficient lighting
- Providing a desk with sufficient space
- Providing a straight back chair
- Maintaining a comfortable temperature level
- Keeping study areas quiet (during quiet hours)

## ***GROUP STUDY AREA***

The chapter should also consider designating specific areas of the house as study areas. These areas should be separate from the chapter library, if the house is so equipped, so that out-of-house members will also have a quiet place to study.

## ***OTHER DISTRACTIONS***

Noise from stereos, televisions, card games, or socializing can be a problem if not addressed. During quiet hours, disruptions must be kept to a minimum in the study areas.

## ***CHAPTER FUNCTIONS***

Weeknight chapter activities are an area of concern, as there is the potential for them to interfere with members' study and academic work. It helps to have an established time limit and end at a reasonable hour. These guidelines may help the chapter realize a higher attendance at weeknight functions.

In addition to weeknight functions, all chapter activities must be planned so as to not infringe upon study time. This means that all activities need to be planned well in advance to ensure that they do not place undue demands on the actives or AMs.

## ***CHAPTER LIBRARY***

If the chapter does not already have an established library, you should consider organizing one. If necessary, consider utilizing space in the basement, attic, or some unfurnished portion of the house.

The chapter library, does not replace the school library. Rather, it is to be a quiet place to study with good resources. A good chapter library should be equipped with:

- Computer(s) with internet connection

- discontinued textbooks (ones that members cannot sell back and do not want for their own reference)
- continued textbooks (ones that members are willing to donate to the chapter)
- printer
- other resource materials deemed necessary by the chapter

The scholarship committee could also encourage every member to make a donation to the chapter library upon his graduation. With a little thought and a little time, the chapter could have a very well equipped and functional library in a relatively short period of time.

### **MAINTENANCE OF TEST FILES**

The chapter should have its members contribute old tests, quizzes and notes from their classes to expand and update the chapter's test files. The test files should be categorized by subject and maintained in filing cabinets or stored electronically. Access to these documents during study hours should be allowed to everyone, with a checkout and return system in place for those wishing to remove test files from the library. The test files should be updated regularly.

### **TUTORING**

Each chapter should have an in-house tutoring system. One of the greatest assets of a fraternity is its members' predisposition to help one another and the quickest and most available source of help is another brother in the chapter. Encourage members to help one another in classes that they have already taken or are taking together.

Very often, the best resource in any course is overlooked -- the instructor. If a member is not doing well in a course or is not satisfied with his grade, he should talk to the instructor. The instructor should be able to clarify the points the member does not understand or tell the member receiving a "B", how he can get an "A".

The scholarship chairman should also make the chapter aware of the services offered by the school. Every campus has a counseling center or academic success office to help students improve study habits. Most schools also sponsor a tutoring system available for its students at no additional cost. Distribute and/or post copies of the various campus resources for all members. The scholarship chairman should encourage all members to be aware of the study habits of their brothers. If there is a brother who always seems to be behind in his reading or who takes one hour to read one page in a textbook, then that member should be strongly encouraged to take advantage of services offered by the school. The same is true for writing skills. These two skills are vital to everyone's success in college and in life. Further, as a brotherhood, we do a disservice to members if we do not encourage them to seek help when we know of a problem.

Another type of tutoring offered, but infrequently utilized, is review sessions. Many courses, especially technically oriented ones, will offer review sessions every few weeks or at least before every exam. Members should be encouraged to attend review

sessions for any course they are enrolled in. It's a great way to clear up any questions a member may have and a good way to determine exactly how well he understands the material.

## **AWARDS**

**Recognition is a strong motivator!** People tend to work harder and to achieve more when they are recognized for their efforts, especially when that recognition comes from their peers. Some examples of types of recognition a chapter can implement are:

- Award for Most Improved GPA (plaque or certificate)
- Outstanding Scholar: highest GPA for term (plaque or certificate).
- Scholarship Dinner, with “better food” (steak, for example) for those with the highest GPAs
- Scholar of the Week: On the chapter bulletin board, list members who made an extra effort to study and name one of those members as the “Scholar of the Week” for doing the most to improve his scholastic.
- Applause -- Read the names of those who excelled in scholarship at a chapter meeting or banquet and applaud them for their achievements.
- Room Preference: Set aside one of the better rooms in the house to be assigned to the member with the highest GPA and/or most improved GPA from the previous term. Or, give the highest room preference to the highest GPA and/or the most improved GPA.
- Initiation Fee: Pay the initiation fee for AMs who receive a GPA above a predetermined level (e.g., 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or pay the fee for the AM with the highest GPA over a 3.0.
- Scholarship Grants: Reduce the house bill of any members who receives a GPA above a predetermined level (e.g., 3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or employ the support of your alumni association to give grants to those members who excel in scholastics.
- News Media: Use your chapter newsletter, campus paper, local paper, and members' hometown papers to congratulate those have achieved high scholastics.

## **OTHER MOTIVATORS**

Additional scholarship motivators might include:

- **“Study Buddies”**: Have members in the same major pair up to study; it is each member's responsibility to see that his buddy is studying.
- **Study Groups**: Encourage members enrolled in similar courses to study together. This helps any member having trouble in a class to get tutoring and helps those that are doing the tutoring to better understand the material themselves.
- **Group Study Table in the School Library**: Select a table in your school library where members can meet to study. Always use the same table so members know where to meet. Consider wearing letters or posting a sign that identifies your group (“Theta Xi: Scholars First, Brothers Forever. Come Study With Us!”),

for example) as a way to present you in a positive light and perhaps help with recruitment.

- **Competition:** Divide the chapter into groups and offer a prize (dinner at a local pizza parlor, etc.) to the group that gets the highest accumulated GPA.

Once the goals and strategies of your chapter scholarship program are in place, be sure that they are explained to the members. It is vital to establish a strong program and that the chapter support the program. Even if the chapter will not immediately “buy in” to a large-scale program, have patience and remember that this is an ongoing process of growth for the chapter.

**Implement the maximum change that the chapter is willing to accept, but continue to review the program and expand or strengthen it as you are able.**

Encourage the members to continue to strive to reach their individual and collective goals, and congratulate them for the progress they make.

## ***PROMOTING INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY***

The duties of the scholarship chairman are usually considered to only encompass those areas concerned with gaining knowledge through books. However, the chairman should not limit himself only to the improvement of the chapter GPA, but rather encourage members to expand their general knowledge by attending cultural events at the school and in the community. These might include visiting lecturers, concerts, recitals, movies, plays, and exhibitions.

The scholarship chairman should keep the members informed of any events “coming to town” or to the school by posting notices announcing coming events and announcing them during his report at the weekly meeting. He should also consider working with the social chairman to schedule such a function as a chapter event, particularly if a member of the chapter is a performer/participant in the event.

## **SCHOLARSHIP and MEMBER EDUCATION**

### **RE-THINKING FORCED STUDY HOURS**

It is long-standing practice of many chapters to require study hours (forced study hours) of their AMs. While this practice seems reasonable at first glance, it may be wise to re-consider it, for a number of reasons.

- It assumes that all AMs have poor study habits; this is a gross generalization. Many incoming freshmen already have good study skills, as do many upperclassmen you may affiliate. If they do not, this calls into question the type and quality of men you are affiliating.
- Forced study hours are a negative approach to teaching study skills. How is a person supposed to learn how to study if you set a textbook in front of him and tell him to study? What happens when the individual is initiated and doesn't have forced study hours any longer? Have you really helped him? It makes more sense to try and teach those members with poor study skills how to study more effectively.
- Forced study hours also represent a negative approach to the problem of self-discipline, again calling into question the quality and maturity of the men you have selected to affiliate.
- As an alternative, see Guest Speaker section on page 15 of this Guide.

#### **What's a Scholarship Chairman to do?**

The scholarship committee should hold a "get off on the right foot" meeting at the beginning of each fall term to include all members (actives and AMs).

The necessity for good scholarship should be discussed along with the chapter's scholarship program, the chapter's standards, and the need for members having problems with a course or with poor study skills to seek help. Committee members should be clear to make themselves available to assist members in finding the help they need.

### **SET SCHOLARSHIP GOALS**

Each member should set a realistic goal for each academic term for what they want their GPA to be by the end of the term. These should be written goals and given to the scholarship chairman to hold until the next fall term when the members will set new goals (or until graduation, if the member is graduating within the year). These need to be given back to each member so they can evaluate their progress and set new goals.

Short-term goals would include writing down the grade that the member realistically hopes to achieve for each course he is taking in order to reach his larger GPA goal. Each member should set his own goals and establish a personal reward for successful completion of those goals. This reward will work as a motivator for the individual. If a member skips class to do something fun, he is rewarding class skipping in the short run, but is hurting his grade in the long run.

The distraction is that we tend to be motivated by immediate rewards more than by something that could occur in the future (e.g., a good grade at the end of the term). Therefore, it is necessary for each member to provide himself with short-term rewards that will reinforce the correct behavior. An example would be to set a goal of reading two chapters during the afternoon, with a reward of being able to go to the basketball game that evening. Another example would be to set a goal of studying 25 hours during the week, with a reward of taking Sunday afternoon off to go to the beach, or skiing, or to a ball game. If the member cannot meet a goal, he should not become discouraged and quit, but set a new goal and work to achieve it.

### **SCHEDULE GUEST SPEAKERS**

The traditional policy in regards to membership education is that only the AMs need to be educated. **However, membership education is for the entire membership, actives and AMs.** There are many topics about which active brothers can learn more, or have their knowledge deepened, including the national Fraternity, risk management, recruiting, scholarship, health and wellness, career development and financial responsibility, among many others.

Another invaluable service a chapter can offer its members is in-house seminars. The scholarship committee could designate one committee member to be in charge of identifying guest speakers/presenters and confirming dates when they could speak to the chapter. Resources for these are readily available on campus and, in many cases, among a chapter's alumni membership. Some topics might include:

- Time Management
- Study Skills
- Test Anxiety
- Note Taking Skills
- Faculty/Administration Members
- Career Development
- Dressing for an Interview
- Social Etiquette
- Writing a Resume

### **ALUMNI AND CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Every chapter should publish an **alumni newsletter each term**, either by hard copy or electronically. Use the publication to promote job inquiries for graduating members (i.e.,

list the graduating members' names, majors, and qualifications in a special article). There may be an alumnus who is looking to employ particular majors or may be able to make a contact for a graduating member.

The scholarship chairman can also do the members of his chapter a service by making them aware of what the school has to offer in the way of career guidance. The **career planning and placement services on campus** will be able to conduct interest inventories and have professional staff available to assist members with the full range of career development, from selecting a major to applying for a job.

## **SCHOLARSHIP and MEMBER SELECTION**

It is essential to have good scholarship ratings to dispel the myth that fraternities do not care about scholastics. Not only must you convince prospective members that scholarship is important to your chapter, you must also convince their parents. If you can show that person's parents that your chapter exemplifies strong scholastics (by having a respectable chapter GPA) and can really offer their son something more than "a good time" objections will be minimized. Consider mailing a letter to incoming freshmen's parents to familiarize them with the idea of their son joining Theta Xi, but make sure that the chapter has the grades to support the letter. With a strong academic foundation, the chapter will be positioned to recruit well.

If your chapter presents an image of "throwing the best parties," then it will attract the "best" parties and not necessarily the best candidates for membership in Theta Xi. The chapter will then experience high attrition and low membership from members dropping out of school due to a lack of interest or from members flunking out of school. High attrition causes a chapter to have to affiliate a large number of AMs yearly.

When talking with any prospective member, discuss his academic background (high school and/or college) and with which extracurricular activities he has been involved. Discuss what his attitudes are toward studying, grades, instructors, and his college program and major. What are his long-range professional goals? His attitudes and goals should reflect the thinking of someone who is fairly mature and who will be able to contribute positively to the chapter. **Remember, when the chapter recruits members with a strong focus, the chapter's focus becomes stronger!**

Along with discussing a prospective member's attitude towards scholarship, it is essential that he understand what commitments the chapter is going to expect from him, scholastically and otherwise. Discuss the chapter's scholarship program and let him know that he would be expected to attain the "highest scholarship rating consistent with his ability."

In summary, the point is **not** that academic ability should be the sole criterion when selecting prospective members. However, the quality of the chapter's scholarship and programs can be no better than the quality of its input. Therefore, such superficial qualities as appearance and popularity should **not** be emphasized, and greater priority placed on academic preparation and future potential.

In short, recruit scholars!

## **SCHOLARSHIP REQUIRES A COMMITMENT**

While the specific details of any scholarship program must fit the needs of the individual chapter, the most important point is that each chapter **have** a scholarship program and a sincere commitment on the part of all members (actives and AMS) to achieve and maintain strong scholastics. Performance in scholarship is closely related to other goals and purpose of our Fraternity. Poor scholarship is a recognizable symptom of an ailing chapter where commitment to future success is lacking.

When we take our oath, we pledge ourselves to a value system held by our Founders and thousands of men since 1864. One of these values is to strive for strong scholastics. This does not mean the chapter should give scholarship lip service by discussing its merits, but, rather, to practice what we preach. What is accomplished will be immeasurably more important than what is said and will have a greater effect on those around us.

Though the terms gentleman and scholar may now seem old-fashioned, it is still not outdated to say that **a fraternity man should graduate as a gentleman and a scholar**. This needs to be strongly emphasized if our members are to be successful in their personal and professional lives.

***It's a matter of commitment!***