



# OMEGA PHI ALPHA

## **Legislative Consent Agenda**

Convention 2022

**Approved by Legislation Committee**

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## Overview

This is a consent agenda, which means the proposals herein will be considered and voted on as a collective group without discussion. The Legislation Committee considers these amendments low-impact, and mostly administrative in nature to reflect current terminology and practice.

However, because the constitution and bylaws require different proportions of affirmative votes cast to be ratified, the consent agenda will be considered in 2 phases. 1 agenda will be considered for constitutional amendments and 1 agenda will be considered for bylaws amendments.

All revisions to the national constitution and bylaws will take effect upon the final adjournment of Convention.

# Proposed Constitutional Amendments

## Constitutional Consent Proposal #1

### Author:

Kasey Stevens

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article III in its entirety.

### This section currently reads as follows:

Article III in its entirety – currently includes 3 national policies (Alcohol & Illegal Drug, Discrimination & Harassment, & Hazing) and a section on policy violations.

### The proposed amendment:

Strike the article in its entirety and renumber subsequent sections accordingly.

### What is the rationale behind this amendment?

It is an operational best practice for non-profit and member organizations that policies are typically determined and approved by the Board of Directors. The Board may delegate the responsibility of creating policies to Committees which is one way that Members can have influence on the content of policies. Typically, policies are consolidated into a policy manual or they may exist as stand-alone documents separate from the organization's constitution and bylaws.

Currently, Omega Phi Alpha only partially adheres to the best practice of keeping national policies separate from its constitution and bylaws.

Article III of our constitution only includes only SOME of our national policies (Alcohol & Illegal Drug Policy, Discrimination & Harassment Policy, and Hazing Policy). Additional policies such as our Social Media, Privacy and Accessibility Policies live as stand-alone documents separate from our constitution.

Additionally, since these policies are in the national constitution, they are not determined and approved by the Board of Directors. Instead having these policies in our national constitution makes it so that any needed changes or updates must be made at Convention. This means that integral updates sometimes could not even be considered until the next National Convention, which could potentially put the organization at risk of waiting up to 2 years for legislation.

In order to follow organizational best practice, Article III should be removed from the national constitution, and the three cornerstone policies & stipulations for policy violation should live in our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), our version of a Policy Manual, which includes all national policies, procedures and instructions.

While these policies are integral to our organization, removing them from the constitution does not mean we are removing any of the importance around them. They will still be policies that our members are expected to adhere to, and rules regarding violations will be applicable to ALL policies.

It is imperative that these policies and rules for violation be moved to SOP so that they are more easily amended and approved by the Board of Directors as issues arise and timely additions or edits must be made.

## Constitutional Consent Proposal #2

### Author:

Jenna Zielinski

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article IV, Section 10, Clause 1

### This section currently reads as follows:

If a chapter deems it necessary to conduct selective recruitment, they must receive prior written approval from the Collegiate Membership Director and comply with the selective recruitment guidelines that will be provided in procedures. Selective recruitment is defined as a recruitment period in which some interested students attending recruitment are not invited to become new members.

### The proposed amendment:

Delete clause in its entirety and renumber subsequent clauses.

### What is the rationale behind this amendment?

We have a Standardized Operating Procedure (SOP) for selective recruitment which we will continue to use. It goes over all the details regarding Selective Recruitment (how to apply for it, the process, why selective in an option, etc.). This also coincides with taking policies and procedures out of the constitution which allows us to make edits and changes as needed without needing a convention, and additional voting and approval. Overall as we continue to manage through the pandemic, we are encouraging our chapters to continue to do non-selective recruitment as well.

## Constitutional Consent Proposal #3

### Author:

Board of Directors

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article V, Section 2

### This section currently reads as follows:

1. Operational Leadership Team. The Operational Leadership Team consists of the following members: Chapter Operations Director, Cardinal Principles Director, Alumni Membership Director, Expansions Director, Collegiate Membership Director, and other directors, managers and coordinators as appointed.

### The proposed amendment:

1. Operational Leadership Team. The Operational Leadership Team consists of ~~the following members: Chapter Operations Director, Cardinal Principles Director, Alumni Membership Director, Expansions Director, Collegiate Membership Director, and other~~ directors, managers and coordinators as ~~appointed~~ described in the Standard Operating Procedures. All members of the Operational Leadership Team are appointed.

### What is the rationale behind this amendment?

Current and past members of the Operational Leadership Team (including positions listed above) have identified the need to make changes to the organizational structure to create consistency with the OLT positions and have requested that the Board of Directors review the current structure. Many positions that are vital to the operation of the sorority have **not** been listed in the constitution and some that are listed above have not been filled consistently since this structure was implemented. Moving the positions to a Standard Operating Procedure allows reorganization of the structure and flexibility for positions to change with the needs of the organization without requiring constitutional amendments. All Standard Operating Procedures and Position Descriptions are reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. They are available for all members to review at any time and we welcome feedback or suggestions on those items.

## Constitutional Consent Proposal #4

### Author:

Board of Directors

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article VI, Section 1 and Section 2

### This section currently reads as follows:

1. Any active or alum member of Omega Phi Alpha may run for a national office.
  1. Candidates for president must have served for one year as a member of the Board of Directors.
  2. All candidates for the Board of Director offices must be alumni. All candidates for Alumni Membership Director must be an alum at the time they would take office.
  3. All candidates for national office must have been a member of the sorority for a period of one year after their activation or induction date.
2. Election of Board of Directors and Operational Leadership Team.
  1. Members of the Board of Directors are elected at the biennial national conventions held in the odd-numbered years.
  2. The elected members of the Operational Leadership Team include: the Chapter Support Director, the Cardinal Principles Director, the Alumni Membership Director, the Collegiate Membership Director, and the Expansions Director. The slate for these officers will be presented at even-year District Summits. The officers will be elected according to the Summit Election Procedure for two-year terms.
  3. All remaining Operational Leadership Team members will be appointed in even years for two-year terms.

### The proposed amendment:

1. Any ~~active or~~ alum member of Omega Phi Alpha may run for a ~~national office~~ position on the Board of Directors.
  1. Candidates for president must have served for one year as a member of the Board of Directors.
  - ~~2. All candidates for the Board of Director offices must be alumni. All candidates for Alumni Membership Director must be an alum at the time they would take office.~~
  2. All candidates for national office ~~the Board of Directors~~ must have been a member of the sorority for a period of one year after their activation or induction date.
  3. Members of the Board of Directors are elected at the biennial national convention.
- ~~2. Election of Board of Directors and Operational Leadership Team.~~
  - ~~1. Members of the Board of Directors are elected at the biennial national conventions held in the odd-numbered years.~~
  - ~~2. The elected members of the Operational Leadership Team include: the Chapter Support Director, the Cardinal Principles Director, the Alumni Membership Director, the Collegiate Membership Director, and the Expansions Director. The slate for these officers will be presented at even-year District Summits. The officers will be elected according to the Summit Election Procedure for two-year terms.~~
  - ~~3. All remaining Operational Leadership Team members will be appointed in even years for two-year terms.~~

## **What is the rationale behind this amendment?**

Summary: The proposed changes would give the sorority flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing needs and priorities of the organization.

The changes above reflect key changes that the Board of Directors is proposing.

1. Clarifying that “alumni” is the only eligible membership status to run for a Board of Directors position;
2. Removing reference to “odd-numbered” year convention;
3. Removing reference to “even-numbered” years for elections;
4. Removing elected positions on the Operational Leadership Team;
5. And removing specific positions from the constitution

Removing the reference to odd and even numbered years gives the sorority flexibility to adapt to changes, such as a global pandemic. We hosted a virtual convention in 2021 and moved our in-person convention to an even numbered year. The sorority cannot financially support back-to-back conventions in order to meet the odd numbered year designation that is currently in the national constitution. Removing any reference to the year and keeping “biennial” gives us flexibility should we need to adapt to a global situation as we have the past two years.

Removing reference to specific positions on the Operational Leadership Team from the National Constitution first and foremost allows the sorority and its elected leadership (the Board of Directors) the flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing priorities and needs of the organization. By moving the description of the Operational Leadership Team to a Standard Operating Procedure, as is already done with many other positions, we can remove the complicated layer of voting to make changes. All positions that are defined in the SOP for the OLT will have coordinating position descriptions to clearly identify their roles and responsibilities. The changes to the positions on the OLT are driven by the feedback we’ve received from members who have been elected to those positions and have served in that capacity. We want to ensure the sorority is more efficient and respectful of the time and energy of the people who volunteer in those leadership positions.

Finally, many OLT positions are not appointed in two year terms according to their position descriptions. Removing this from the constitution will allow us to practice what is noted in the position descriptions, has been the reality of said positions, and create additional flexibility with our volunteer capacity.

## **Constitutional Consent Proposal #5**

### **Author:**

Board of Directors

### **Which portion of the document would be amended?**

Article VII

### **This section currently reads as follows:**

1. National standing committees consist of: Nominating, Budget, Legislation, Chapter Assistance, Standards, and Financial Review.
2. National standing councils consist of: Alumni Liaison, Membership, Presidents, and Service.
3. Special committees are appointed by the national President when it is deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.
4. Alumni committee chairpersons and task forces may be appointed by the Alumni Membership Director at their discretion.
5. Duties of these committees and councils are assigned by the Board of Directors or as outlined in the national bylaws.
6. The terms of these committees and councils will coincide and be limited to the terms of the appointing Board of Directors member.

## The proposed amendment:

1. National standing committees consist of: Nominating, ~~Budget~~, Legislation, ~~Chapter Assistance~~, Standards, and Financial Review.
2. National standing councils ~~consist of: Alumni Liaison, Membership, Presidents, and Service~~ are described in the Standard Operating Procedures.
3. Special committees are appointed by the national President when it is deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.
- ~~4. Alumni committee chairpersons and task forces may be appointed by the Alumni Membership Director at their discretion.~~
- ~~5.4.~~ Duties of these committees and councils are assigned by the Board of Directors or as outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures ~~national bylaws~~.
- ~~6.5.~~ The terms of these committees and councils will ~~coincide and be limited to the terms of the appointing~~ be determined by the appointing Board of Directors member.

## What is the rationale behind this amendment?

The changes being proposed to Article VII of the constitution are to move very specific information that could change in between convention years to the Standard Operating Procedures. This is because our organization's governing documents should not have to change every single year to ensure our organization is able to meet the needs of our members.

Section 1: The budget committee, informally, is the Board of Directors and the Managing Director. A formal budget committee has not been utilized in several years and is unnecessary with the current structure of the sorority. There is no Chapter Assistance Committee, but rather a team of volunteers on the Operational Leadership Team that head this. A formal committee is no longer needed.

Section 2: All councils should move to the Standard Operating Procedures and not be listed or described in our governing documents for greater flexibility.

Section 4: There is no alumni committee.

Section 5: The duties of the committees and councils will be described in the Standard Operating Procedure associated with each committee. This is already how we use the Legislation, Nominating, Standards, and Financial Review committees.

Section 6: There may be a time when a special committee or council should continue despite a Board member's term and this change allows that.



## Constitutional Consent Proposal #6

### Author:

Board of Directors

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article XIII, Section 10

### This section currently reads as follows:

Section 10. To attain alumni chapter status, the alumni group must petition the Alumni Membership Director and complete a provisional period of at least one year during which the group must complete all required events.

Clause 1. The petition for alumni chapter status must include the following information:

1. Location of the group.
2. Names and respective chapters of all members.
3. Chapter goals and reasons for desiring chapter status.
4. Names and addresses of all elected officers.
5. A \$25 nonrefundable petition fee per member.

Clause 2. Required events include 2 events in each of the following categories which are defined in standard operating procedure: sisterhood, service, leadership, and tradition.

### The proposed amendment:

~~Section 10. To attain alumni chapter status, the alumni group must petition the Alumni Membership Director and complete a provisional period of at least one year during which the group must complete all required events.~~

~~Clause 1. The petition for alumni chapter status must include the following information:~~

- ~~1. Location of the group.~~
- ~~2. Names and respective chapters of all members.~~
- ~~3. Chapter goals and reasons for desiring chapter status.~~
- ~~4. Names and addresses of all elected officers.~~
- ~~5. A \$25 nonrefundable petition fee per member.~~

~~Clause 2. Required events include 2 events in each of the following categories which are defined in standard operating procedure: sisterhood, service, leadership, and tradition.~~

### **What is the rationale behind this amendment?**

When the alumni associations were dissolved ~20 years ago, we formed the process for creating alumni chapters but did not complete the steps needed to ensure that they report all activity under our group tax exemption. Therefore, our Alumni Chapters are not in compliance with IRS regulations regarding our group tax exemption and its affiliates.

Formalizing Alumni Chapters would have required alumni chapters elect officers, open bank accounts, implement meeting requirements, service hour requirements, and collect dues on behalf of the alumni chapter and national organization.

The Board of Directors feels that sisterhood is much more important than getting into the logistics of forming official alumni chapters following the criteria required by regulations. To reduce the risk of jeopardizing the existence of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority and our group tax exemption status, effective immediately, we must no longer recognize any alumni chapters of Omega Phi Alpha and must remove this language from our constitution and bylaws.

The removal of alumni chapters and their requirements from the constitution and bylaws does not prevent alumni members from gathering as a regional or local group. We will continue to encourage alumni engagement, networking, sisterhood, and service through alumni regions. Those who are associated with current alumni chapters can continue to organize as a local group, but cannot be recognized as and cannot refer to themselves as a chapter of Omega Phi Alpha.

# Proposed Bylaws Amendments

## Bylaws Consent Proposal #1

**Author:**

Juanita Wade

**Which portion of the document would be amended?**

Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3

**This section currently reads as follows:**

Officers elected in District Summits take office by July 1 following the District Summit cycle in which they were elected.

**The proposed amendment:**

Delete clause in its entirety and renumber subsequent clauses.

**What is the rationale behind this amendment?**

Strike entire clause as we currently are not having District Summits, therefore no officers are being elected.

## Bylaws Consent Proposal #2

**Author:**

Board of Directors

**Which portion of the document would be amended?**

Article V - National Committees and Councils

**This section currently reads as follows:**

Strike entire article

**The proposed amendment:**

Strike entire article and renumber subsequent articles.

**What is the rationale behind this amendment?**

Removing all of this information from the Bylaws and into Standard Operating Procedures would allow the Board of Directors to make any changes that are needed in real-time. It is important that we are able to make updates to items that impact the operations of the organization in real time and not have to wait up to two years for legislation changes at the next National Convention.

Additionally, many of these committees and councils are already described in Standard Operating Procedures. It is a best practice and would eliminate confusion to ensure that **all** of these are described in Standard Operating Procedures.

## **Bylaws Consent Proposal #3**

### **Author:**

Board of Directors

### **Which portion of the document would be amended?**

Bylaws Article IX

### **This section currently reads as follows:**

- 1.** All active chapters in a district attend and participate in at least one District Summit per school year with 25 percent of each chapter's active members attending at least 75 percent of the summit, planned by the District Summit Coordinator, in cooperation with Active District Officers of each chapter.
- 2.** To qualify as a District Summit:
  - 1.** The summit date and location must be approved by the District Summit Coordinator, and all active and alumni chapters in the district must be notified no less than eight weeks before the summit date.
  - 2.** A module from the national Leadership Program will be delivered by a member of the Leadership Development Team.
  - 3.** A sisterhood activity must take place.
  - 4.** A service project must take place.
- 3.** Other workshops may be given by either a sorority representative or an outside consultant with knowledge in a specific area.
- 4.** Chapters may hold other district-level events in addition to a District Summit.
- 5.** All district summit organizers shall work to ensure that buildings are ADA accessible.
  - 1.** Members organizing district summits shall ensure that all university or college campus buildings or business booked for district summits are ADA accessible. Planned activities should also be accessible to be inclusive of the different abilities of the members attending.
  - 2.** Members organizing district summits shall work together to accommodate members with disabilities requests to ensure accessibility. These requests can include but are not limited to allowing members to bring their service dogs, providing a sign language interpreter, or ensuring that there is accessible seating and bathrooms available.

## The proposed amendment:

~~1. A District Summit is an event that encourages members of collegiate chapters assigned to the same district and alumni living in that district to come together and bond through service, sisterhood, and leadership. Details of the District Summit including requirements and expectations can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures. All active chapters in a district attend and participate in at least one District Summit per school year with 25 percent of each chapter's active members attending at least 75 percent of the summit, planned by the District Summit Coordinator, in cooperation with Active District Officers of each chapter.~~

~~2. To qualify as a District Summit:~~

~~1. The summit date and location must be approved by the District Summit Coordinator, and all active and alumni chapters in the district must be notified no less than eight weeks before the summit date.~~

~~2. A module from the national Leadership Program will be delivered by a member of the Leadership Development Team.~~

~~3. A sisterhood activity must take place.~~

~~4. A service project must take place.~~

~~3. Other workshops may be given by either a sorority representative or an outside consultant with knowledge in a specific area.~~

~~4. Chapters may hold other district level events in addition to a District Summit.~~

~~5.2. All district District summit Summit organizers events shall work to ensure that take place in buildings that are ADA accessible.~~

1. Members organizing district summits shall ensure that all university or college campus buildings or businesses booked for district summits are ADA accessible. Planned activities should also be accessible to be inclusive of the different abilities of the members attending.

2. Members organizing district summits shall work together to accommodate members with disabilities requests to ensure accessibility. These requests can include but are not limited to allowing members to bring their service dogs, providing a sign language interpreter, or ensuring that there is accessible seating and bathrooms available.

## What is the rationale behind this amendment?

Based on feedback from the recent member engagement survey, the Board of Directors has identified a need to reflect on the purpose of District Summit and determine if it's in the best interest of the organization to move this requirement forward. The District Summit Coordinator along with the Managing Director have published a survey to gather additional member insight into the future of this event. Additionally, there is a plan to hold a focus group to get feedback from those who have organized and attended this event in the past.

Moving the specifics of this national event to a Standard Operating Procedure allows the Board of Directors to define the role of the national team in executing this event and also revise the requirements.

If it is determined that District Summits should not continue in the same way they have for the past few years, the Standard Operating Procedures can provide guidance to chapters on planning a district wide event.

## Bylaws Consent Proposal #4

### Author:

Summer Ray

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article X, Section 4

### This section currently reads as follows:

In cases of extreme financial hardship, national active dues, new member fees, activation fees, and expansion fees may be waived by the national organization in compliance with guidelines set forth in the national procedures.

### The proposed amendment:

In cases of extreme financial hardship, national active dues, new member fees, and activation fees, ~~and expansion fees~~ may be waived by the national organization in compliance with guidelines set forth in the national procedures.

### What is the rationale behind this amendment?

Each prospective new member is required to pay \$75 to start the expansion process at their local university. We currently do not offer our prospective new members a dues waiver for their expansion fees. These fees are important to help pay for a new chapter's retreat and induction ceremony. Expansion fees are also used to help purchase items for a prospective new chapter for the events and throughout the process. We do not collect national dues for these members until their first active semester of membership. The \$75 is crucial to help support these students while expanding to a new university.

The national organization does not require a prospective new member during the expansion process to pay any other fee to the national organization until they become an active member- they do not pay active national dues until their first semester as an active member. The \$75 fee does act as a due for these members. While we do offer waivers for our active members for national dues we encourage ALL new members entering the expansions process to pay the \$75 fee to set the tone moving forward about dues. If a member does not pay dues for over a year, they may not stick around with the organization. Locally, a prospective new chapter may set a local due during the process but it is not a requirement. If money is collected then it is several months into the process. The money collected at the start of expansions to the national organization can be a fall back for these chapters if they are in need of specific items.

## Bylaws Consent Proposal #5

### Author:

Board of Directors

### Which portion of the document would be amended?

Article XIII, Sections 2 & 4

### This section currently reads as follows:

Section 2. Alumni chapters are named with the Greek-letter Omega and a second Greek letter. The second letter is assigned by the Alumni Membership Director.

Section 4. To maintain alumni chapter status, the chapter must submit an annual report by June 1 to the Alumni Membership Director outlining activities of the chapter for the preceding year along with names and addresses of the current members and officers.

### The proposed amendment:

~~Section 2. Alumni chapters are named with the Greek letter Omega and a second Greek letter. The second letter is assigned by the Alumni Membership Director.~~

~~Section 4. To maintain alumni chapter status, the chapter must submit an annual report by June 1 to the Alumni Membership Director outlining activities of the chapter for the preceding year along with names and addresses of the current members and officers.~~

### What is the rationale behind this amendment?

When the alumni associations were dissolved ~20 years ago, we formed the process for creating alumni chapters but did not complete the steps needed to ensure that they report all activity under our group tax exemption. Therefore, our Alumni Chapters are not in compliance with IRS regulations regarding our group tax exemption and its affiliates.

Formalizing Alumni Chapters would have required alumni chapters elect officers, open bank accounts, implement meeting requirements, service hour requirements, and collect dues on behalf of the alumni chapter and national organization.

The Board of Directors feels that sisterhood is much more important than getting into the logistics of forming official alumni chapters following the criteria required by regulations. To reduce the risk of jeopardizing the existence of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority and our group tax exemption status, effective immediately, we will no longer recognize any alumni chapters of Omega Phi Alpha and must remove this language from our Constitution and By-laws.

The removal of alumni chapters and their requirements from the constitution and bylaws does not prevent alumni members from gathering as a regional or local group. We will continue to encourage alumni engagement, networking, sisterhood, and service through alumni regions. Those who are associated with current alumni chapters can continue to organize as a local group, but cannot be recognized as and cannot refer to themselves as a chapter of Omega Phi Alpha.