

INTRODUCTION

The office of Standards Chairman is often held by the Chaplain, Vice President or other chapter officer. As the chair of the Standards Board, this member has the added responsibility of ensuring that the chapter holds its members accountable for their actions. As chair of the Standards Board, you must be willing to enforce the policies and by-laws of the fraternity along with the other officers of the chapter. As such, it can be difficult to maintain indifference when dealing with friends. You must however keep in mind that your successful completion of the requirements of your office will lay the groundwork for a strong chapter. This manual will give you some tips and advice to create an effective and influential Standards Board and to leave your mark on the chapter in a positive fashion.

GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STANDARDS CHAIRMAN

- Enforce local by-laws, National By-Laws and Chapter Code of Conduct for any cases brought before entire Standards Board. Decisions shall be made democratically with each of the five members voting on major decisions.
- Keep local by-laws and National By-Laws and Chapter Code of Conduct posted for all to view.
- Review local by-laws as needed or requested and present suggestions for revisions to chapter.
- Announce all Standards Board decisions and recommendations at the next chapter meeting.
- Maintain and review the Standards Board procedures as necessary and present suggestions to chapter.
- Hold one official up-to-date copy of each of the following: National By-Laws, Chapter by-laws, Standards Board policies and Chapter Code of Conduct. These are to remain in the Standards Board Chairman officer's notebook at all times.
- Maintain hearing documentation for future Standards Board Chairman.

INTERNAL DISCIPLINE AND THE STANDARDS BOARD

What is a Standards Board?

A Standards Board operates as the judicial body for the chapter. It investigates and hears infractions of the Ritual, Constitution, International and local By-laws and Code of Conduct of the Fraternity. It will also set the penalty for such violations.

Why do we need a Standards Board?

1. Allows chapters to handle problems internally.
2. Takes some of the "heat" away from officers, allowing them to focus on their primary roles.
3. Serves to deter problems.
4. Administrations will look favorably upon chapters who hold themselves accountable.

What authority shall the Standards Board have?

The Standards Board shall have the authority to remove specific privileges (such as social or athletic), to levy fines, and require restitution for damages to property or reputation.

A Standards Board cannot suspend a member, however it shall have the option to recommend such action to the chapter.

No Standards Board member shall hear any cases against himself.

Decisions of the Standards Board may be overturned by a 3/4 vote of the chapter.

How can we establish a Standards Board?

The composition and duties of the Standards Board should be set in your local by-laws. Procedures for bringing a member before the Board and appeals are to be outlined as well.

The Board should consist of 5 non-Executive Committee members. They shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and individually approved by a chapter vote. They should represent a fair cross section of the chapter in terms of age and interest.

It should be the duty of one Standards Board member to act as a secretary. All decisions of the Board should be recorded as to build a fair and consistent procedure and precedent of sanctions. The recording shall consist of the guilt or innocence and the sanctions given, however, the vote tally shall not be recorded.

Procedure for hearing offenses:

1. Any member may submit a written allegation to the President or a member of the Standards Board. The name of the member submitting the allegation does not need to be disclosed if he so wishes.
2. The Standards Board shall investigate the charges to a reasonable degree, questioning any member of the chapter or any other person relevant to the charge.

Procedure for hearing offenses - continued:

3. The accused shall have an opportunity to present his case to the Standards Board.
4. The Standards Board shall come to a majority agreement as to whether disciplinary action is necessary.
5. The Standards Board shall determine a penalty for a guilty member and may establish a time frame for restitution.
6. The Standards Board will report all findings and penalties to the chapter.

How should discipline be handled?

1. Any discipline should address the problem at hand. A member who displays conduct unbecoming of a brother at a social event should lose the privilege of attending any social event for a stated period of time.
2. A member who damages chapter property should fix the damage (at his own expense) and make improvements beyond that. This is more effective than simply giving fines. It also serves to compensate for the inappropriate action and the results.
3. Discipline must be consistent. The Standards Board will lose authority if penalties are inconsistent or show favoritism.

Can a brother be suspended?

Yes. Any member who violates his obligations to the fraternity (which by definition includes all Ritual obligations as well as International By-Laws) may be suspended from the chapter.

A suspended member may not wear the badge of Theta Chi, participate in any chapter activities or be present on chapter property. The member is still a brother, but not a member of the chapter. Upon his graduation, he will be considered an alumnus in good standing. **This is in accordance with Article VI, Section 10.a of the International By-Laws.**

Any member brought up for suspension has the right to state his case before the chapter (with at least 48 hours notice). A 3/4 vote of all eligible voting chapter members, whether present or not, is necessary to suspend a member.

Suspension on financial grounds:

Any member who fails to pay any financial obligation to the fraternity within 10 days of notice is **automatically suspended**. This is in accordance with International Legislation Article I, Section 1:3.2. If a brother is unable to meet these obligations, a payment plan may be arranged with the Treasurer and the Alumnus Financial Advisor to prevent suspension. Failure to follow this plan will result in suspension.

Can a member be expelled?

Only the Grand Chapter has the authority to expel a member from Theta Chi. However, an undergraduate chapter may recommend that a member be expelled. The member must first be suspended (as above), and then 4/5 of the active members on the roster must vote to expel. The case will then be turned over to the Grand Chapter. Accurate minutes of the proceedings must be typed and submitted with the Expulsion Trial Procedures form.

A member who is expelled is no longer a member of Theta Chi Fraternity, even upon graduation.

Questions concerning Standards Boards, discipline, suspension and expulsion should be directed to the Director of Chapter Development at the International Headquarters.

DEVELOPING, UPDATING, AND IMPROVING CHAPTER BY-LAWS

Rule No. 1: Chapter by-laws may not override or conflict with the Ritual, Constitution, By-Laws, Legislation or policies of the International Fraternity. This includes the *Risk Management, Standards and Insurance Manual*.

Good chapter by-laws will streamline chapter operations. They will give a clear picture of rules and procedure.

By-laws establish chapter rules and procedures. They should stand firm but are not unchangeable. Standing Rules may be established for more flexible matters. These may be attached to the by-laws.

The sample illustrates the usual form for by-laws. In addition to supporting the International Constitution and By-Laws, they clarify the following:

1. Membership; there is no "inactive" or "social" status.
2. Voting on members; to pledge, de-pledge and initiate.
3. Requirements to be elected to office.
4. Composition and authority of a Standards Board.
5. The authority and responsibilities of the Executive Committee and other Committees.
6. Meeting procedures.
7. Financial requirements and penalties.
8. Procedure for amendments.

Chapter by-laws are often unwieldy and unworkable. They may contain outdated "traditions." If this is the case, it is usually best to develop a completely new set of by-laws.

Procedure for revising by-laws:

1. Establish committee (3-5 members). They will need input from officers as well (especially on financial concerns).
2. Use the sample as a guideline. The format and wording are generally correct. The figures reflecting voting on membership, and on finances are guidelines recommended by the International Headquarters. Chapters will need to make variations in actual dollar amounts as well as committees and appointed positions.

3. Draft a copy of the new by-laws for approval by the Executive Committee and by the chapter. It is recommended that the new by-laws be read at least one meeting prior to final approval. Approval is by a 3/4 chapter vote.
4. Your by-laws are not secret! Draft a copy for all members and pledges, be sure to include the date of approval. Copies should also go to all advisors, alumni officers and the International Headquarters.
5. All future amendments need to be recorded and distributed as soon as possible.

Standing Rules:

Standing rules can be more flexible than by-laws. They may be altered by a simple majority of the members present. Standing rules may include:

1. Handling of internships (an increasing question).
2. Establishing dues.
3. Room assignments.
4. House rules (such as quiet hours).
5. Positions on issues such as hazing and drugs.

In conclusion, good by-laws and standing rules:

1. Are streamlined and do not go overboard on frivolous details.
2. Follow a general format.
3. Are easily read and understood.
4. Are in the possession of every brother, new member and advisor.
5. Are kept up to date.
6. Respected and reinforced.

Resources:

1. International Constitution, By-Laws and Legislation. Latest editions are dated 1994 (almond color cover).
2. *Robert's Rules of Order.*
3. Director of Chapter Development

THETA CHI FRATERNITY
CHAPTER CODE OF CONDUCT

This code provides standards of conduct that the chapter and its members should adhere to in the specific areas of: The Chapter, The Community, The College and Social Life.

I. The Chapter

1. Each member should respect every other member of the chapter.
2. Each member should respect the property of the chapter, individuals, and others.
3. The chapter and its members should respect guests of Theta Chi and other people.
4. The chapter and its members should abide by the policies set by the Alumni Corporation.
5. The chapter and its members should adhere to Grand Chapter policies and IFC policies against hazing and harassment of members.
6. Each member should conduct himself properly at every meeting of the fraternity.
7. The chapter and its members should conduct themselves properly when visiting another chapter in Theta Chi.

II. The Community

1. The chapter and its members should have respect for its neighbors and the residents of its community to pursue the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their property.
2. The chapter and its members should adhere to community standards and legal responsibilities.
3. The chapter should comply with city codes and ordinances that govern fraternities.

III. The College

1. The chapter and its members should adhere to IFC policies regarding recruitment of new members (Rush).
2. The chapter and its members should comply with all college policies that govern its students and fraternities.
3. The chapter and its members should conduct themselves properly when visiting another fraternity or sorority at their, or any, other college.

IV. **Social Life**

1. The chapter should be socially responsible
2. Each member should be socially responsible.
3. Each member should promote a positive social environment in the chapter house at all social events.
4. The chapter and its members should treat all people properly and respectfully at all times in all places.
5. The chapter and its members should avoid tasteless, insensitive, socially demeaning parties, themes, and advertising.
6. The chapter and its members should comply with state, local, Theta Chi Fraternity, and college policies concerning the use of drugs and alcohol.

