

The Sigma Chi Position on Alcohol

“Misuse of alcohol is conduct unbecoming a Sigma Chi.”

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The Issue

The conflict between each brother’s voluntary commitment to live according to the values and ideals of Sigma Chi versus his behavioral patterns relating to the misuse of alcohol.

Background: How is the issue affecting today’s Greeks?

The dangers of alcohol abuse have been well known for many years and have manifested themselves in tragic ways in the Greek-letter world. This has resulted not only in bad publicity for fraternities, but also in senseless deaths and permanent disabilities for individuals. Alcohol, directly and indirectly, has ruined many lives. It is the obligation of all Sigma Chis to recognize and to deal effectively with the real and potential problems caused when alcohol use becomes alcohol abuse.

The Fraternity recognizes that a number of chapters have benefited from an alcohol-free living environment and pledges its support and educational resources to a chapter, house corporation or university that chooses to implement such an environment.

Sigma Chi is a values-based organization with a desire to educate its members and prospective members in sound risk management policies and the legal, responsible use of, or abstinence from, alcohol. Prohibition, historically, has not been effective, and the Fraternity has no intention of mandating alcohol-free living. However, the Executive Committee will continue to have the right to impose alcohol-free housing stipulations as a disciplinary measure for chapters which flagrantly or repeatedly misuse alcohol.

Statement of position: Where does Sigma Chi stand?

The misuse of alcohol is conduct unbecoming a Sigma Chi. Consequently, the Sigma Chi Fraternity resolves to eliminate the misuse of alcohol by its membership, particularly among undergraduate and prospective members.

The Fraternity has several policies regarding alcohol use and misuse, including:

- The Sigma Chi Policy on Alcohol and Drugs
- The Risk Management Foundation Policy on Alcohol and Drugs
- Host college/university alcohol policies
- Chapter bylaws

Action: How is Sigma Chi addressing the issue?

The Fraternity and Foundation have developed programs to assist undergraduate chapters in their

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alcohol education efforts and foster true brotherhood. These include:

- Balfour Fellow Program
- RMF Interactive 2.0
- Leadership Consultant Program
- CHOICES: Alcohol Education Program
- Province Conferences (RMF Case Studies)
- Balfour Leadership Training Workshop
- Individual chapter programs
- Host institution programs
- Interfraternal and other programs as applicable

However, the most difficult—yet essential—aspect of true brotherhood is accountability. If we truly trust our brothers, then we are obligated to be open and honest with them. Consequently, we may be the only ones who are able to hold each other accountable in a positive, brotherly manner, with pure motives, to help one another improve.

Accountability must begin with the man in the glass. We must hold ourselves first, then each other, accountable to live by the ideals and values to which we each voluntarily committed. This includes holding ourselves and each other accountable if we misuse alcohol.

The primary structured accountability mechanism must be the individual chapter judicial board. Remembering that the actions of any one brother reflect on all of us, and that just one incident may affect the future of the chapter, the chapter judicial board must act promptly and fairly when brothers misuse alcohol. The courses of action(s) that should be considered alone or in combination include:

- Mandating counseling if there has been a pattern of misuse (most colleges/universities offer such services to their students at no additional charge)
- Suspending social and/or other chapter privileges for a minimum of one semester (or its equivalent) along with financial remuneration for any damage

The second structured accountability mechanism must be local alumni, specifically the chapter advisor and his advisory committee from an operations perspective, and the members of the house corporation as the chapter's landlord or property manager. Possible courses of action could include:

- Counseling (as noted for chapter judicial board)
- Soliciting parental/guardian intervention and support
- Evicting from the chapter house those deemed to be undesirable tenants
- Building or remodeling houses without bars or barrooms (prevention)

Both the individual chapter judicial board and the local alumni should utilize the Grand Praetor, the Fraternity's official representative in the province, as a resource for these deliberations and proceedings.