The Black Lantern Processional Planning Handbook

Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity
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*L.E.A.D.S.*
Leadership Education and Development System
The Mission of ΑΣΦ
To Create and Perpetuate Brotherhood

Brotherhood is the development of lifelong human relationships based on respect, mutual love, and support.

Alpha Sigma Phi provides opportunities for its members to experience brotherhood through the creation and maintenance of chapters. By experiencing brotherhood, the members of Alpha Sigma Phi grow stronger intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually, thereby, becoming more empowered to enrich society and improve the quality of life.

The chaotic state of moral and ethical values within our society has prompted many of our members to urge Alpha Sigma Phi to expand and strengthen the brotherhood experience. In addition, increasing numbers of men desiring membership have expressed their eagerness to experience brotherhood.

In response, Alpha Sigma Phi will actively work to create new chapters and to create an environment of respect, mutual love, and support in each chapter. Further, in support of Our Reason for Being and our purpose To Better The Man, Alpha Sigma Phi will provide programs and services that assist each member to:

- Pursue high scholarship
- Seek a deeper awareness and understanding of self and others
- Recognize the qualities that make self and others unique and needed
- Demonstrate responsible leadership
- Exemplify integrity, patriotism, and respect for the opinions, beliefs, actions, cultures, and principles of others
- Serve others
- Invite, without prejudice, men for membership
- Possess self-confidence
- Exercise autonomy
- Demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the Fraternity’s Code of Conduct

Alpha Sigma Phi will have succeeded when its members are successful in developing lifelong, meaningful relationships that enrich society and improve the quality of life.
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Introduction:

As Brothers in Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, we are bound by our commitment to the virtues of the organization that were espoused in 1845 by Stephen Ormsby Rhea, Horace Spangler Weiser and Louis Manigault. We are bound to these virtues for our lifetime, and are reminded of these virtues and our commitment to them through the ceremonies that represent our rituals. These rituals challenge us to lead more meaningful, more complete lives.

A number of Alpha Sigma Phi’s rituals are public ceremonies and should be shared with those who care and can assist us in our journey. While these rituals are not esoteric (confidential), they are based soundly on the ideals, traditions, and symbols of the Mystic Circle. Use of public rituals allows our brotherhood to give those outside of the Mystic Circle some insight into the high purpose of our Order. Further, they reaffirm the joy of brotherhood in all aspects of our lives, they enrich our fraternal experience and they serve to renew the vows and dedications of all members of all ages.

The Black Lantern Processional is one of our brotherhood’s public rituals and one of Alpha Sigma Phi’s oldest. It was born at Yale College in the mid-1800s. Traditionally, those selected for membership were placed into the line in between brothers and taken to the place where they were to be initiated. Today the processional is used to celebrate Founders’ Day, to mark the anniversary of a chapter, to gather new members for the formal pledging or initiation ceremony, or as a memorial for our deceased brothers.

Ritual offers a time for personal renewal - recommitment to the oath to which we pledged.

Great care should be taken when organizing and performing the Processional. This handbook contains materials and checklists that will help your chapter carry out a successful Black Lantern Processional.

In addition to this handbook, please refer to pages 38-39 of “Rituals for Life and Esoteric Ceremonies of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity” (The Black Book) for assistance in planning and performing the Black Lantern Processional.
Black Lantern Processional Checklist

Equipment:

• One lantern for each brother participating in the processional. If there are not enough lanterns – have at least one for every third brother.
• Candles or lamp oil for each lantern
• Local Permits for conducting processional (if needed)
• Extra wicks for lanterns
• Black Robes for each brother
• White Robe or Black Robe with white Omega sash for HM
• Processional Handouts
• Fire Extinguishers

Letters of notification / invitations sent to:

• Greek Advisor
• All Campus Minority Groups
• Faculty
• University President
• University Vice President for Student Affairs
• IFC/ Greek Council
• NPHC / Black Greek Council
• Panhellenic Council
• All other Greek Organizations on Campus
• Public Safety/ Campus Police
• City/ Town Police
• Campus/ Community Fire Department
• Area chapters & alumni

Press Releases / Forms:

• Campus & Local Newspapers
• Campus Radio
• Parade Permit (if needed)
• Notification form submitted to National Headquarters
Black Lantern Processional Time Line:

45 days prior to the proposed date:
- Chapter Planning Meeting (HM, Prudential Committee, GCA, and Faculty Advisor) to select date, time, and delegate tasks, etc.
- Meeting with Greek Advisor
- Inventory chapter equipment / make necessary arrangements to borrow robes & lanterns from area chapter if needed

30 days prior to the proposed date:
- All press releases delivered
- Letter of notification sent to: Greek Advisor, University President and Vice President for Student Affairs, Residence Life office, IFC, NPHC or Black Greek Council, Panhellenic Council and all campus Minority Groups
- Invitations to local alumni and/ or chapters mailed
- Parade Permit obtained (if needed)
- Route for processional mapped out

20 days prior:
- Letters of notification sent to: Campus/ city police, local fire department
- Notification Form in at Fraternity Headquarters
- Clean Robes (if necessary)

3 days prior:
- Lanterns checked to make sure they work
- Rehearsal

Day of the processional:
- Phone calls made to double check with: Greek Advisor, Campus Police, City Police
Proper Notification & The Press Release

The Black Lantern Processional is a very solemn ritual, but one that can be easily misinterpreted by the public. It is imperative that the chapter takes the time to properly educate the public about the ceremony and its significant meaning to Alpha Sigma Phi.

Word of Mouth & Face to Face Meetings:

Probably the best medium in which to promote and educate your community about Alpha Sigma Phi and the Black Lantern Processional is word of mouth. Be certain that all chapter members are well versed in the purposes of the processional and can educate their friends, family, professors, administrators, and classmates on the significant meaning of the processional.

Additionally, it is recommended that representatives from the chapter attend meetings of the IFC, Panhellenic, NPCH/Black Greek Council once letters of notification have been sent to answer any questions and address any concerns. Representatives may also want to attend a Resident Assistant meeting to educate Residence Life staff about the ceremony and its purposes. Many times they can help diffuse situations with residents in their building before they get out of control.

Radio:

FCC regulations require that radio stations make public service announcements (PSA) about programs and events in the community. A PSA cannot sell anything or promote a profit-making enterprise. You can follow the same format as with a press release, but include the time it takes to read your PSA; it should be 10, 20, 30, or 60 seconds in length. It should be sent to the radio station at least two days in advance of the date on which you want the announcements made. Stations have the right to decide when and if the PSA will be aired.

Local & Campus Newspapers:

Most newspapers have an “events column” and will announce the event for free. For information about procedures and deadlines contact the paper’s editor.

A press release is an easy and efficient way to communicate the facts regarding the processional to local newspapers and television stations. The press release is rarely more than one page in length and is a proposed news article written by the chapter.
Only essential information should be covered and be aware that the release may be edited before being printed. Deliver each release by hand or email if possible. If delivering by mail, allow ample time for it to arrive, and make contact by phone to let the media know when it is arriving.

**Press Release Guidelines**

1. **Identification** – if you don’t have chapter letterhead, make sure the chapter name, address, phone and e-mail address are included in the upper left hand corner of the page.

2. **Disposition** – this tells the editor when the release should be published. The time, day, date and year should appear in capital letters below the last line of identification. If you want the release published upon receipt, write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”.

3. **Headline** – a brief, one line summary of the release that appears just above the body of the release.

4. **Copy/Body** – copy should be straight news style with an informational sentence in the first paragraph including who, what, when, where and why. Include a telephone number and e-mail address at the end where someone can contact the chapter for further information. The release should be typed & double spaced.
APPENDIX
Black Lantern Processional Notification Form

SEND TO:
ALPHA SIGMA PHI
FRATERNITY HEADQUARTERS
710 Adams Street
Carmel, IN 46032
Fax: 317-843-2966
E-mail: hq@alphasigmaphi.org

Chapter

University or College

Date for Ceremony

The ______________________ {chapter name} Chapter of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity wishes to notify the Fraternity Headquarters that it will be performing the Black Lantern Processional on the date shown above. We the undersigned certify that all the steps listed on the checklist have been carried out and that all preparation has been completed.

Date
HSP

Date
HM

Date
Greek Advisor

________________________
________________________
Sample News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

{Date}                          Contact:      {Name & Office}
{Chapter Name}                  {Address}
                                {Phone number}
                                {E-mail Address}

BLACK LANTERN PROCESSIONAL OF ALPHA SIGMA PHI FRATERNITY

{City of Chapter}---A ceremony dating back to the early years of American education will be re-enacted on the campus of {University/ College} on {date and time}. It is the Black Lantern Processional of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, born in the mid-1800s at Yale University. Members march in silence in dark robes, carrying a Diogenes Lantern (the lantern is named for the kind of light carried by the Greek philosopher Diogenes in his search for an honest man.) The manner of the processional is passed down from the early days at Yale when members of the fraternity marched to various student residences to announce to candidates that they had been selected for membership. The new member was placed into the line of the march, and then taken to the Fraternity's rooms for his first meeting.

The solemn ceremony is carried out today on campuses throughout America where Alpha Sigma Phi has chapters. It is used today as a memorial for deceased brothers, to commemorate the Fraternity's or chapter's founding, and to welcome new members. The brotherhood wishes to stress that this fraternity ritual has no racial overtones and is not in any way related to any supremacist organization.

The Black Lantern Processional can be viewed at {time}, when members will march from {starting location} to {ending location}. Those watching are asked to respect the solemnity of the ceremony.

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Sample Letter to Minority Groups and Faculty

Date:

Dear (Group Name),

The Brothers of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity wish to inform you that our fraternity will be re-enacting one of our oldest rituals on (date) at (location).

The ritual is called the Black Lantern Processional, which was born in the mid 1800's at Yale University. Members march in total silence wearing dark hooded robes, carrying Lanterns.

The processional has been passed down from the early days at Yale where it was used to announce candidates that had been selected for membership. The solemn ceremony is still carried out today by many chapters of Alpha Sigma Phi. It is used today as a memorial for deceased brothers, and to commemorate the Fraternity's or chapter's founding.

The brotherhood wishes to stress that this fraternity ritual has no racial overtones and is not in any way related to any supremacist organization.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact (name and number). Those watching are asked to respect the solemnity of the ceremony.

Sincerely,

The Brothers of Alpha Sigma Phi
{Chapter name} Chapter
THE OMEGA PRAYER

Almighty Ruler of the Endless Round,
Creator of Life and Lord of Death,
Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End,
We approach Thee humbly and gratefully,
Remembering the names of Brothers dead.

Bless the full circle of this Brotherhood;
Make it a light of wisdom in a
world dark with ignorance;
Make it a beacon of Brotherly love in a world made
treacherous by envy, greed and petty hates;
Make it an arm of service in a
world of need, brokenness, and despair.
The Black Lantern Processional of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity

The march you are observing is called the Black Lantern Processional. It is one of the oldest traditions of Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, dating back to the 1800’s when it was used at Yale University to announce the new members who were accepted into Alpha Sigma Phi. The processional is used today to remember our deceased brothers. The brotherhood wishes to stress that this fraternity ritual has no racial overtones and is not in any way related to any supremacist organization.

Alpha Sigma Phi is proud to share with you a portion of our heritage and traditions. Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity has been part of American colleges and universities for over 158 years. We are pleased to be part of this campus and to celebrate our history and future as the fraternity that strives “To Better the Man.”