

BRIEFINGS

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Our Mission:
To enhance fraternity communications through the exchange of ideas, experiences and information.



Letter from the President

Steven Latour, *Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity*

This is my second to last letter in *The Briefings*. This May, after two years as the Fraternity Communications Association President, I will step into the role of Past President. I thought I would use this letter and my next letter to talk about where we are today, where we are going, and what I have learned through this experience.

In my two years as President and my six years on the Board of Directors, I have seen the Association go through tremendous positive change. In 2008, we created our Association's first Strategic Plan and then started working on some large and audacious goals. That plan concludes this May, so at this summer's Annual Conference during my State of the Association Address, I will share with all of you, a list of accomplishments, as well as a list of takeaways. We have learned so much and have achieved more than expected, so being able to bring closure to the 2008–2012 plan will be an important moment for the Association.

This year at the Annual Conference, our Association's up and coming leaders will present our members with a new plan to take us from 2012 to 2016, I could not be more excited for them and for the Association! Getting to this point would not have been possible, had it not been for the men and women who have served previously and who are currently serving on the Board of Directors or in the role of a Committee Chair.

What surprises many when they become involved in the Association is that everything we do is driven by our members—the Association's volunteers. Whether it is coordinating the Midyear or Annual Conference, Awards, Membership Dues, or this newsletter—everything is done by people who love what they do and who have grown to love this Association as much as I do.

I realized a long time ago that this ship—the mighty and historic FCA—was a big and grand ship, and that I was merely its caretaker for a short period of time. Through my involvement I could not only learn how to do my job better, but I could learn how to take my position on staff at Alpha Sigma Phi and the experience I provided our members to the next level.

Our Association would not be what it is today, had we not had men and women dream of something bigger and better in 2008. Had we had not had those same men and women give of their time and talent, list of accomplishments I'll share in May could have never been possible. The great thing about FCA is that it gives back what you put into it. I would go so far to say that our volunteers would not be the high-performing staff members they are today had it not been for some of their experience in FCA. This experience will give you friends, ideas, professional and personal development, and above all else a real sense of belonging.

There will be opportunities this spring to get involved, run for a board position, serve as a committee chair or even serve on a committee. We need you in order to keep the Association moving forward, and you may not realize it yet if you don't serve in one of those roles I mentioned, but you need us too. 

You've Peaked my *Pinterest*

By Laura Stelsel, Kappa Alpha Theta

AS COMMUNICATORS, WE ARE ALWAYS ASKING OURSELVES, "WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG THING?"



That's why, when I received an email from a fellow FCA member in October about an up-and-coming social media site called Pinterest and how Greek organizations might benefit from it, I took notice.

The concept behind Pinterest is to connect people around the world by their common interests using a virtual pinboard. Using it couldn't be simpler. First, a user finds images of things they like, want or find inspiring on the web. After downloading a "pin it" button, the user pins the image to one of his or her boards—used to categorize pins—and adds a caption to the image. Other users can then like the pin, repin the image to their own board, and even leave a comment.

The popularity of Pinterest lies in the power and simplicity of images. We've always known that photos are important for attracting a reader's attention—for reference, just look to our magazines and blogs—but this medium shows how influential images can be in terms of sharing and engagement.

And, for consumers of information, photos really are worth 1,000 words. Pictures make it easy for users to determine if they want to learn more about something. They can quickly glance through hundreds of photos in the time it would take to read one blog post.

It's that simplicity that makes Pinterest so refreshing to a growing segment of social media users. By December, Pinterest had cracked the top 10 most trafficked social media sites, topping Google+ and Flickr. Although the most popular demographic is women ages 25-34, followed closely by women ages 35-44, the male demographic is steadily increasing.

So, how can we make this work for our organizations? How can we communicate via this medium, where a growing number of our collegians and alumni already are?

The answer is to find the aspects of your organization that can be explained or reinforced by images, and use those images to attract people to learn more about your organization and its mission.

Here are a few ideas for using Pinterest:

- College chapter facilities
- Greek-licensed merchandise
- Philanthropy or recruitment event ideas
- Fraternity or sorority magazines
- Books (of members who are authors)
- Notable members
- Chapters in the news



Every pinned image links back to the website source. Of course, an organization could—and should—strategically pin content from its website, but all of the pinned content shouldn't come from one place. Greek organizations, for example, could diversify by pinning images from college or alumnae chapter blogs and websites, philanthropic or service organizations, officially licensed vendors, news outlets, or any other website members might find useful.

Another benefit to Pinterest is that image captions are searchable, so specific keywords will enable users to find content more easily.

Yes, this means another social media site to monitor. Yes, Pinterest initially will take some time, both in terms of research and content curation. But, if any organizations have compelling visual content to share, it is ours.

Is Pinterest "the next big thing?" Right now, we can't be sure, but it certainly has peaked my (p)interest. 

2012 Annual Conference: Intern Applications *Now Available!*

A new component of the 2012 FCA Annual Conference will be the opportunity for up to four graduate or undergraduate students to serve as conference interns. Students, particularly fraternity and sorority members, seeking a career working in communications and journalism, are encouraged to apply.

The intern team will provide essential onsite support to the Conference Committee and FCA Board of Directors. Intern responsibilities will include staffing conference registration, posting signage, assisting with educational workshops and providing frontline customer service to conference attendees.

Interns will receive complimentary conference registration and all meals will be covered. Each intern will also have a one-on-one consultation with a member of the Board of Directors as an additional benefit for his

or her service. Interns must be available throughout the duration of the conference, from their training the morning of Wed., May 16, through the awards banquet on Fri., May 18. Lodging at the DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta-Buckhead Hotel will not be provided; interns must be local to the Atlanta area or book their own hotel room.

A detailed information sheet is available on the FCA website. The intern application is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/FCAinterns>. Applications must be received by Thurs., March 15. Applicants will be notified of their status by Fri., March 30. 

Please share this exciting information with your members! Apply online at <http://tinyurl.com/FCAinterns>

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Make Plans to Attend the 2012 FCA Annual Conference!

Registration is now open for the 2012 FCA Annual Conference that will take place May 16-18 in Atlanta, Georgia. The registration rate for FCA members is \$275, and early bird registration ends April 15. Lodging will be \$119 per night, plus taxes and incidentals, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta-Buckhead Hotel. Rooms must be booked by April 26 to assure this special rate and availability.

This year, FCA will offer two pre-conferences at no additional cost to attendees. The first pre-conference will offer tips and feedback for editors. The second pre-conference on creating a crisis management plan will be facilitated by Debbie Davis, owner of Triad Public Relations, a presenter at the 2011 FCA Midyear Conference. Staff members who attend this pre-conference will leave with a fully developed crisis management plan for their organization. Both FCA members and staff members working directly in chapter services are urged to attend this important program.

Several other exciting speakers have been confirmed. Meg King, senior coordinator of advertising and campaigns at Chick-fil-A, will welcome attendees to Atlanta and share marketing and branding information. Ben Hulse, a member of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games design team, will be a featured speaker as well as present a breakout session specifically for designers. Linda Ablard, Alpha Delta Pi Executive Director, and Darlene Reyes, Phi Mu Executive Director, will share insights for communications professionals who supervise or

aspire to supervise others. And David Stanhope, deputy director at the Jimmy Carter Library & Museum will educate attendees on archiving information for print and digital publications.

The conference and Atlanta site will also provide many opportunities for fellowship and fun! An off-site reception will be held at the Alpha Delta Pi Executive Office on Thursday, May 17. Also, conference attendees will want to make plans to explore the area around the hotel—there are several nearby restaurants, tourist attractions and shopping opportunities. Check the FCA website for more information on these attractions.

We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

