



Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity Policies on Suspended Actives

Adopted July 2011

This document outlines policy on the powers of chapters to suspend active members, reporting of suspensions, and administration by the Grand Council.

Mutual obligation and discipline in a chapter

When joining Alpha Rho Chi, members undertake obligations to the chapter and its success. For a chapter to operate, it depends on brothers meeting expectations of membership. It is the responsibility of the entire chapter to set these expectations and see that they are met.

Everyone can use reminders, and a kind word can help solve many minor or potential issues. Some may need assistance from the chapter or to be excused from specific responsibilities on occasion. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to administer some form of discipline.

Most disciplinary action is minor. It might include a fine for a unexcused absence to a meeting or event or a late fee for not paying dues on time. As the chapter determines what is expected from its members, the chapter must also decide what discipline is required or appropriate.

In extreme cases, the chapter will determine that an individual is no longer in good standing as an active member of the chapter. Chapters do not have the power to expel members of Alpha Rho Chi, but they may suspend them, relieving them of most of their rights and privileges within the chapter.

Note on "inactive" members: This document does not refer to "inactive" members. This term – in addition to being confused with a classification of membership – has been applied to various situations even within a single chapter. These have included: members excused from certain obligations to the chapter for a limited time, actives who have disassociated with the chapter, actives members behind in dues, students traveling abroad or on another campus, or an active with whom the chapter has not contacted that semester, etc. With confusion surrounding the use of the term "inactive," it is better to substitute more specific language.

Exception from collecting active dues

Chapters are responsible for collecting active dues on behalf of the national fraternity. However, the Grand Council recognizes that chapters cannot be expected to collect dues from active members the chapter has suspended.

The Grand Council will exempt chapters from collecting dues on behalf of suspended actives provided that:

- the chapter takes definitive action to suspend the member following their bylaws and the principal of due process.
- the chapter formally notifies the Grand Council of the action.
- the change in status is properly recorded in the Chapter Reporting System.

As part of the process, the Grand Council may direct the Regional Director (RD) to review that the action was proper and to advise the chapter on underlying issues affecting retention of active members.

Suspension provisions in chapter by-laws

Each chapter's by-laws should include provisions for suspending active members of the chapter. The by-laws should establish causes for possible suspension as well as a means for deciding the cases and administering suspension.

Causes for suspension

Suspension proceedings should not be entered to lightly. The by-laws should list reasons worthy of suspension. Examples of causes for suspension may include (but are not limited to):

- Failure or refusal to pay dues or indebtedness to the chapter
- Failure or refusal to meet minimum standards of participation
- Malfeasance as an officer of the chapter
- Actions unbecoming a member of Alpha Rho Chi

Many of these causes may be addressed with probationary action before suspension is considered.

Administering suspensions

The by-laws should specify who should decide cases and administer suspension. Depending on the chapter's by-laws, this judicial function may be given to the chapter as a whole or delegated to the executive board or a judicial committee. If delegated, the chapter may serve as the ultimate court of appeal.

In fairness to the brother, the process for administering suspension must follow due process, and give the member the opportunity to make their case and answer any charges against them. In some cases, however, the member might not contest the matter or even show up.

The act of suspension should be a deliberate act of the body (i.e., chapter, e-board, or committee) given that judicial responsibility. The proper body needs to pass a motion (with the required majority) in order to suspend a member. For example, a suspension should not take effect merely because some set deadline has passed, the expiration of the deadline would need to be followed by proper action to issue the suspension.

Lifting suspensions

A procedure should be provided for the suspended active to make amends and ask for the chapter to lift the suspension.

Official notification

Upon taking an action to suspend a member, the chapter shall inform the Grand Council in writing of the action that was taken and (very briefly) the reason for suspension. An example notice might read:

In a meeting on March 1, 2011, the Chapter voted to suspend active member John Dopdeaux for refusal or failure to pay dues for the past 6 months.

The wording of the notification may vary according to the chapter's by-laws or procedures.

When this notification is received, the Grand Council will refer it to the chapter's RD to investigate.

Reporting suspensions

The chapter can record the suspension in the Chapter Reporting System (CRS). This is handled like other changes to member entries in the roster such as study abroad or graduation. When recording the change, menus allow the chapter's officer to indicate when the change took effect. This month should be when the formal suspension action was taken.

If an active member is marked as suspended in a report, the CRS will note it in the confirmation emails it distributes. This should prompt the RD to contact the chapter, especially if the chapter had not notified the Grand Council of the suspension. The CRS also notes new non-graduate brothers on the report confirmations; in these cases, RDs should also contact the chapter to verify that the member had left school and is not merely "inactive."

Names of suspended members appear in the "See Other Names" view of the chapter's roster. Chapters may record when suspended members graduate, leave school, or have their suspensions lifted by the chapter.

RD review

When notified or learning of a suspension, the RD should contact the chapter to investigate. The purpose of this investigation is mostly advisory and meant to assist the chapter. The RD will talk with officers of the chapter to answer the following questions and resolve outstanding issues.

- What was the reason or issue prompting the suspension?
- Was the proper process followed? Is further clarification necessary on outstanding issues of this particular disciplinary action?
- Are changes needed to the processes for the future?
- Are there underlying issues that affect the chapter's ability to retain members?

Notes

From APX By-laws Article XIX, Section 01, A

Each Chapter shall forward membership reports as required to the Worthy Grand Estimator.

Chapters are responsible for reporting its active members and collecting dues and fees on behalf of the national fraternity.

From APX By-laws Article XIX, Section 5

... In no Chapter shall there be any class of membership that is exempt from the Constitution and By-Laws of the Fraternity, nor free from the obligations imposed by the Fraternity's schedule of charges and regulations. ...