



## **BY-LAWS OF SIGMA EPSILON SORORITY CHAPTER OF TRI-ESS INTERNATIONAL**

### **I. NAME & AFFILIATION**

*The name of the organization shall be SIGMA EPSILON, the Atlanta chapter of Tri-Ess International Sorority.*

### **II. PURPOSE**

In accordance with the objectives of Tri-Ess International, the primary premise for the founding of Sigma Epsilon is:

- A. To provide a place for cross dressers to come for support and counseling as well as the opportunity to express their preferred mode of dress. Sigma Epsilon also provides the same support and counseling for the family and friends of our members. Due to the nature of our organization, attendance at chapter meetings and functions is limited to those who are over the age of 18.
- B. To unite cross dressers in their pursuit of self-acceptance, in the achievement of a balance between their masculine and feminine selves – and to integrate their cross dressing into their lives in communion with their families.
- C. To provide a safe and secure venue wherein each member, their spouses or significant other may engage in activities oriented to the interests we share as Sigma Epsilon Sorority Sisters.
- D. To provide information on cross-dressing to the general public, in order to encourage understanding and acceptance within the community.

### **III. SECURITY**

#### **A. ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY**

- 1) Sigma Epsilon places a premium on preserving the privacy and protecting the identity of our members.
- 2) Each of our members has entrusted the Board with personal and confidential information about themselves and, as such, they trust us to uphold these values through the strict enforcement of the rules, which we each adopted upon becoming a member of the Sigma Epsilon Sorority.
- 3) Each new and renewed member signs a pledge to respect their fellow members' privacy and security needs, and is subject to swift and automatic expulsion if caught breaking their pledge.

#### **B. CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Sigma Epsilon members including spouses / S.O.'s, invited guests and visiting guests shall adhere to the code of conduct as outlined in these By-Laws and in the Addendum, *Sigma Epsilon Security Guidelines and Code of Conduct*. Abuse of this code of conduct may result in expulsion from the function at which the violation occurred. Serious violations may result in revocation of membership.

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### C. REFUSAL OF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Sigma Epsilon reserves the right to refuse application for membership, or membership renewal, if the Administrative Board determines that any of the following applies to the applicant:

- 1) Applicant has not acted in the best interest of Tri-Ess or Sigma Epsilon as defined by these By-Laws.
- 2) Applicant has violated the Security Guidelines.
- 3) Applicant does not meet the qualifications for membership outlined in these By-Laws.

### IV. MEMBERSHIP IN SIGMA EPSILON

#### A. QUALIFICATIONS:

Membership in Sigma Epsilon shall be limited to adult Cross Dressers, and their spouses or significant others. An important part of Sigma Epsilon's mission is to provide support to these spouses and significant others, many of whom struggle with the cross dressing of their partner and its near and long-term impact on their relationship. Experience has shown that Sigma Epsilon cannot be all things to all people and, therefore, Sigma Epsilon does not have the ability to provide the counseling, nor the support, to meet the needs of transgender persons who are on a path to full transition while still providing adequate support to these spouses and significant others.

The following criteria shall apply:

- 1) Membership in Sigma Epsilon may only be considered for any adult, either male or female, who has a need to express a social gender presentation considered appropriate for persons of the opposite genetic sex.
- 2) Anyone accepted into the membership of Sigma Epsilon shall affirm that they have no intention of entering a psychiatric and/or medical program designed to lead to sex reassignment surgery. Sigma Epsilon also prohibits membership to those who apply with the intention of attracting a partner of the same genetic sex.
- 3) During the course of membership, should an individual's direction conflict with the above qualifications, then that member is expected to immediately notify an Administrative Board member of their intention at which time the individual agrees to relinquish their membership in Sigma Epsilon.

#### B. SPOUSE / SIGNIFICANT OTHER MEMBERSHIP:

- 1) Any Sigma Epsilon member's spouse or significant other shall also be entitled to full and equal membership status including the ability to hold office.
- 2) Spouses and significant others are held to the same laws of conduct governing all members and as outlined in the Security Guidelines.

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### C. GUESTS OF MEMBERS:

To ensure the privacy and security of our members, including spouses and significant others, all guests whom a member wishes to invite to a meeting or a function must first be approved by an active member of the Administrative Board. That Board member shall notify the President in a timely manner that such guest(s) will be attending.

### V. MEMBERSHIP DUES AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES

#### A. CURRENT MEMBERS

- 1) Membership dues will be assessed annually.
- 2) Annual dues and a monthly activity fees will be ascribed by the Officers of the Administrative Board and may be changed at their discretion by two-thirds (2/3) Administrative Board vote.
- 3) There will be no fee assessment to spouses / significant others or guests for the monthly meeting.
- 4) Members who are delinquent in annual dues payments shall be dropped from the rolls of Sigma Epsilon
- 5) Any member in good standing, who has not renewed on a timely basis as defined above, may be reinstated upon their payment of the current full year's dues. Such dues for a past member are not subject to prorating regardless of the month of reinstatement.
- 6) A past member of Sigma Epsilon is defined as one who has been a paying member of Sigma Epsilon within the immediate prior fiscal year. Any such past member may not participate in any meeting weekend or function at any time, until their annual dues are brought current, or arrangements have been made under the Hardship Clause.

#### B. NEW MEMBERS

- 1) Prospective new members, who meet the criteria for membership as outlined in these by-laws, will be welcome to attend one (1) meeting weekend without the assessment of meeting fees or annual dues. A "past member of Sigma Epsilon" (see paragraph V.A.5) must pay a meeting fee for any meeting attended.
- 2) On or before attending their second meeting prospective new members will be expected to apply for membership in order to continue to attend meetings and functions.
- 3) Prospective new members attending their first meeting who also wish to attend a function such as Spring Cotillion or Holiday Party will be required to pay the function fee.
- 4) Anyone applying for Membership in Sigma Epsilon during the course of this fiscal year shall be assessed dues for Sigma Epsilon for a full year, commencing with the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month following the month in which that member submitted payment of annual dues. There is no prorating of dues. Members may pay multiple years dues at the time of joining or renewing. There is no discount offered for multiple year dues payments.

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### C. MEETING FEES

- 1) All members of Sigma Epsilon, who are subject to the monthly meeting fee, must pay this fee in order to attend a meeting or function. This fee must be paid immediately upon arrival at the meeting or function regardless of the venue, time of day or period of time spent at said meeting or function.
- 2) There will be no fee assessment to spouses / significant others or guests for the monthly meeting.
- 3) Failure to pay the meeting fee (without a predetermined hardship arrangement) may result in the revocation of membership from Sigma Epsilon.
- 4) Special functions may have associated fees, which are separate and additional to the standard meeting fee.
- 5) Meeting fee amounts shall be set by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Administrative Board members in good standing.

### D. HARDSHIP CLAUSE

- 1) In the event the payment of the dues by a current member of Sigma Epsilon presents a hardship, the Administrative Board shall reserve the right to waive this fee for a specified period of time.
- 2) The final determination of the waver process shall be reserved for the Administrative Board of Sigma Epsilon.

### E. VISITING GUESTS

- 1) Tri-Ess sisters who are current members of other chapters who are visiting Atlanta and wish to attend a meeting, will not be assessed the monthly meeting fee.
- 2) Visiting sisters who wish to attend a function such as Spring Cotillion or Holiday party will be required to pay any applicable special function fee.

## VI. ORGANIZATION OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Sigma Epsilon is provided through an Administrative Board and an Advisory Board. These boards are described in detail in Sections VII through IX.

## VII. ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

The Administrative Board shall be in charge of all operations of Sigma Epsilon as defined by the positions listed below. Membership on the Administrative Board of Sigma Epsilon is strictly on a voluntary basis and as designated in Section VIII Election of Administrative Board and Officers.

The following positions will be held by members of the Administrative Board, each individual (not position) having full voting rights in all board meetings. While it is preferred that these positions be held by separate individuals, an individual Administrative Board member may serve in multiple positions. Position duties may be shifted between positions by mutual agreement of those holding the affected positions, if such a shift is concurred with by the President. Any such shift of duties may be for any period of time that does not extend beyond the date of the first Administrative Board meeting of the next fiscal year.

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Circumstances may require that some positions be filled by individuals that have not been elected to the Administrative Board. Such individuals shall have no voting rights over any board business. They may, however, attend board meetings as non-voting members.

### **A. PRESIDENT**

The President shall preside over business and social meetings of Sigma Epsilon and manage emergency concerns when an Administrative Board meeting is impractical. The President is an Officer of Sigma Epsilon and as such may commit Sigma Epsilon contractually with third parties. The person assigned this position must become current in payment of dues to Tri-Ess within 30 days after being assigned this position. Specific duties include:

- 1) Appoint committees for any purpose and shall serve as an ex-officio member of same.
- 2) Act as official spokesperson of Sigma Epsilon and represent it to the public and other organizations as appropriate.
- 3) Serve as prime contact with Tri-Ess International and other Tri-Ess chapters.
- 4) Foster mission and goals of Sigma Epsilon and as defined in these By-Laws.
- 5) Serve as disciplinarian, mediator and sergeant-at-arms as such occasions warrant action.
- 6) Oversee all Sigma Epsilon operations.
- 7) Approve all candidates for membership in Sigma Epsilon.
- 8) Approve the final version and distribution of the Southern Belle and other notifications to the general membership.

### **B. VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice-President will act as President in the event the President is incapacitated or unable to perform her duties. The Vice-President is an Officer of Sigma Epsilon and as such may commit Sigma Epsilon contractually with third parties. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Obtaining locations for special events i.e. Holiday and Spring Ball.
- 2) Approving monthly activities and special events, including procurement of vendors who provide appropriate services of interest to the general membership.
- 3) Developing and organizing committees consisting of the Members-at-Large to facilitate chapter business. This officer shall serve as ex-officio on all committees.
- 4) Promoting upcoming events and meetings in the Southern Belle and web site.
- 5) Communicating Sigma Epsilon business to Tri-Ess National as directed by the President.
- 6) Providing budgeting information for upcoming events.

### **C. FINANCIAL OFFICER**

The Financial Officer is an Officer of Sigma Epsilon and as such may commit Sigma Epsilon contractually with third parties. The responsibility of this officer shall include maintenance of financial records and handling the management of Sigma Epsilon finances as follows:



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- 1) Reimbursing expenses incurred for normal operating expenses. Procuring the appropriate receipts and documentation of expenses from said individuals prior to reimbursement.
- 2) Shall collect meeting activity fees and chapter dues or designate another Sigma Epsilon Member to do that function in her absence.
- 3) Provide timely financial reports for the Administrative Board.
- 4) Providing for publication in the Southern Belle, and for review by the general membership, an annual financial balance sheet.
- 5) Advising the President of any misuse of funds, budget overages, or other issues that would have adverse financial implications.
- 6) Be responsible for securing the monthly meeting venue.
- 7) Be responsible for maintaining and updating the Sigma Epsilon membership roster.
- 8) Issue notices to members when their individual memberships are about to expire and that membership renewal is needed.
- 9) Provide monthly updates of the membership roster to the President.

### **D. SECRETARY**

This Board Member shall keep Administrative Board Members informed of critical business. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- 1) Prepare and maintain minutes of Administrative Board meetings.
- 2) Distribute minutes and other business items as needed to members of the Administrative Board.

### **E. SOUTHERN BELLE EDITOR**

The responsibility of this Board Member shall include overseeing the publication of the (Sigma Epsilon) Southern Belle, specifically editing, format development, and publishing the Southern Belle newsletter as follows:

- 1) Procuring articles of interest from the general membership of Sigma Epsilon.
- 2) Reviewing to assure that the content of said articles is appropriate within the guidelines of both Sigma Epsilon and Tri-Ess goals (as defined in these By-Laws).
- 3) Bringing any objectionable content submitted to the attention of the President.
- 4) Advising those submitting information for the purpose of profit (as opposed to service to the organization), Sigma Epsilon's policy regarding advertising.
- 5) Sending of the Southern Belle to the President for final review and distribution to the general membership at least one week prior to each meeting weekend.
- 6) Assisting the Vice President with the placement and promotion of upcoming events (flyers and other PR) in the Southern Belle.
- 7) Communicating with other Tri-Ess chapters and organizations in regard to exchange of newsletters.

### **F. WEBSITE DIRECTOR**



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The responsibility of this Board Member shall include the development and maintenance of the Sigma Epsilon Web Site as follows:

- 1) Development, maintenance of the Web Site as well as posting updated Sigma Epsilon meetings, events, and chapter information.
- 2) Cultivating and sustaining a Big Sister response network designed to provide appropriate information regarding the goals and services of Sigma Epsilon and Tri-Ess.

### **G. DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH**

The person assigned this position must become current in payment of dues to Tri-Ess within 30 days after being assigned this position. The responsibility of this Board Member shall be to manage and conduct outreach functions by way of the following:

- 1) Presenting information, as outlined in these By-Laws to individuals, who qualify for Sigma Epsilon and Tri-Ess and are interested in applying for membership.
- 2) Coordinating and facilitating all community outreach activities including, but not limited to, classified advertising, outreach presentations, contact with universities and colleges and speakers' bureaus.
- 3) Monitor the Sigma Epsilon information telephone line and answer all caller inquiries. As appropriate, provide information to the necessary Sigma Epsilon individuals for follow up.
- 4) Screen all callers and provide information about Sigma Epsilon and Tri-Ess, including mailing information packages and providing meeting weekend dates and locations.
- 5) Subject to approval of the President, to appoint as necessary, other members to assist in accomplishing the above listed functions.

### **H. HOSTESS**

The responsibility of this Board Member shall be to ensure that the monthly meeting venue is equipped with appropriate supplies and refreshments.

### **I. MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

These Board Members, with full voting power, shall serve as Ombudsman to, and representative of, the General Membership with responsibilities as follows:

- 1) Actively serve on committees to facilitate chapter business as appointed by the President, Vice President, and Outreach Director. When possible, act as Chairperson on at least one committee.
- 2) Solicit and involve the General Membership for the purposes of coordinating various activities and events.
- 3) Gain feedback and input from the General Membership of Sigma Epsilon to gain insight into ways to better meet the needs of our sisters and grow and develop the chapter as a whole.

## **VIII. ELECTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD AND OFFICERS**

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- A. Each member of the Administrative Board shall be elected by a vote of eligible voting members of the General Membership to a three-year term on the Board. To maintain leadership continuity, only one third of the members of the Board shall be subject to election each year. The total number of members necessary to serve on the Administrative Board shall be determined by a vote of the Administrative Board.
- 1) There may be candidates being elected to terms shorter than three years to fulfill the unexpired terms of members that have left the Administrative Board early. Where there are candidates being elected to differing term lengths on the Administrative Board, those candidates receiving the most votes shall be elected to the longest terms.
  - 2) If two or more candidates receive an equal number of votes, and this impacts who should serve on the Board, any such tie shall be resolved by vote of eligible voting members of the General Membership, unless one or more of the candidates involved in the tie withdraw their candidacy. The runoff vote(s) should be conducted as soon as possible. If the result impacts only the term lengths to be served by the new Board Members, such tie shall be resolved by a vote of the Administrative Board at the first Administrative Board meeting of the fiscal year.
- B. A Nominating Committee that is appointed by the President shall nominate all Candidates for election. The Nominating Committee shall be made up of an equal number of members from the Administrative Board and General Membership.
- C. Candidates will be considered for election to the Administrative Board on the basis of the quality of their involvement in Sigma Epsilon as well as their adherence to our ideals and objectives. To be considered for election to the Administrative Board, a Candidate must:
- 1) Have consistently demonstrated willingness to support and serve the chapter.
  - 2) Understand and adhere to the rules of the chapter.
  - 3) Demonstrate willingness to help others.
  - 4) Assist any member who may come to her for help.
  - 5) Express a strong and positive desire to offer her services to help the chapter grow.
  - 6) Understand that to be an Administrative Board member is to serve others and that a Board position is not one of power but one of service.
- D. Wherever possible, the Nominating Committee shall propose at least one third of the Candidates to be spouses or significant others. The Nominating Committee shall contact all Candidates personally to verify that they are both eligible and willing to serve on the Administrative Board.
- E. Any Significant Other proposed as a Candidate must be listed as a Wife or Significant Other on the membership (or renewal) application of a dues-paying member of Sigma Epsilon. Any such person must be in a serious relationship with the dues-paying member.
- F. All Candidates shall be current in their membership dues and other fees that may be owed to Sigma Epsilon. Any Candidate not meeting this requirement shall be excluded from the election.
- G. The Nominating Committee shall present a list of the nominated Candidates to the Administrative Board a minimum of two weeks before the Candidates are announced to the General Membership. Any nominated candidate that is objected to by two-thirds of the Administrative Board shall be removed from the list and will not be eligible for election.





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- H. Voting in elections shall be done by secret ballot, either written or electronic. Specific details of how this shall be accomplished shall be according to a procedure agreed to by the Administrative Board. Ballots shall be opened and counted by two members of the Administrative Board appointed by the President that are not running for a position in the current election.

No member shall be entitled to vote for any candidate unless current in membership dues and other fees that may be owed to Sigma Epsilon at the time the vote is cast.

- I. Members of the Administrative Board must be members who regularly participate in Sigma Epsilon meetings and functions. Any Administrative Board member unable to attend at least six Sigma Epsilon meetings during a fiscal year will be relegated to Advisory Board status following a review of attendance by the Administrative Board. Reinstatement to the Administrative Board for any unexpired term shall be by a vote of two-thirds majority of the Administrative Board.
- J. Appointments to specific officer and other Administrative Board positions are for service during a single fiscal year only. During the first month of each fiscal year the Administrative Board shall meet (either in person or electronically) and vote on assigning individual Administrative Board members to the specific officer and other positions for the fiscal year. All positions expire on the date of that first Administrative Board meeting of each fiscal year. All Administrative Board members may succeed themselves in the same position any number of times, if the Administrative Board votes them into those positions. Those not continuing in the same position will continue to serve as members of the Administrative Board, unless they: resign from the Administrative Board altogether, discontinue their membership in Sigma Epsilon, or are removed from the Administrative Board by reason of Paragraph VIII. F.

### **IX. ADVISORY BOARD**

- A. The Advisory Board exists to provide advice and guidance to the Administrative Board on all matters concerning the organization. It is a valuable resource that should be consulted with periodically and whenever unusual situations arise that may have been dealt with in the past or whenever major changes in the organization are being considered. Membership of the Advisory Board shall consist of all past serving board members that are still Sigma Epsilon members. Members of the Advisory Board shall bring to the attention of the Administrative Board any concerns they may pick up from the general membership that do not seem to be already addressed.
- B. There is no formal organization to the Advisory Board.

### **X. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

- A. The business and social year (fiscal year) of Sigma Epsilon shall be January 1 through December 31 of each year.
- B. Meetings shall be held monthly from January through December of each year and at other such times as the membership may decide. The President may call special business meetings at any time.
- C. The Administrative Board shall meet in January of each year. Additional Administrative Board meetings may be scheduled as necessary or at the request of any Board member, as long as it is concurred with by the President.
- D. Any issue requiring an Administrative Board vote must be distributed in writing to each Administrative Board member within a reasonable time prior to the next scheduled Administrative Board meeting.
- E. If, in any event, it becomes necessary for an Administrative Board member to exercise proxy then that vote shall be submitted to the President, in writing and signed by the respective Administrative Board member.

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It will then be incumbent upon the President to read and present this signed document to the Administrative Board thereby constituting a valid vote.

- F. Official Administrative Board meetings shall be chaired by the current President. If the President is absent, the meeting shall be chaired by the Vice President, unless the President has specifically appointed another Administrative Board member to chair the meeting. Meetings shall be conducted in a businesslike manner. The person chairing the meeting shall determine what rules of order apply.
- G. Business may be conducted by Email instead of face to face at board meetings. When business is conducted in that manner, the ordinary rules of order used in face to face meetings do not apply. The results of votes taken in this manner shall be recorded by the Secretary in the minutes of the next face to face board meeting or in a summary of decisions made.

### **AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS**

- A. These By-Laws of Sigma Epsilon may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of Administrative Board members in good standing. The General Membership must be advised in writing of any amendments.

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### ADDENDUM

#### SIGMA EPSILON SECURITY GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

##### Please Review the Following Prior to Attending Your First Meeting or Applying for Membership

***We welcome all cross dressers and their spouses, partners or family members who are 18 years or older to our meetings.***

The Sigma Epsilon guidelines are written and enforced to protect the privacy and security of all members and guests who attend our meetings. You will be required to identify yourself in order to participate in our activities; however, your true identity will be held in strict confidence and shared with no one in the group except the leadership. You are known only by your “Femme” name. Your spouse or significant other who attends meetings may also wish to adopt a “meeting name” as well. We expect you to display the same care and respect for the privacy of other members and their guests as well.

The purpose of our meetings is to provide support and guidance as well as to encourage participation in scheduled social activities. We offer our members the opportunity to develop and express the feminine side of their personality. We expect our members to dress and conduct themselves as ladies, in the company of other ladies. Sexual activity of any kind is not permitted. If you are looking for friendship, camaraderie, guidance and support in a secure environment— you are welcome to join us.

#### Our Guidelines

- A. Never tell a third party the location of any meeting. If you wish to bring a guest, contact an Administrative Board member first. Only guests, who have been approved by the Administrative Board, are to be informed where and when we meet.
- B. Minor children (*Under the age of 18 years*) are not permitted to attend our meetings or events, except when accompanied by their legal parent(s) or guardian(s) and only if prior approval has been obtained from the President of Sigma Epsilon.
- C. While dressed “En Femme”, Sigma Epsilon members or guests must adhere to the contractual agreement with the current host hotel for use of the hotel’s pool, recreational facilities, or any of the hotel’s restrooms. Consult an Administrative Board member to determine the restrictions to hotel facilities.
- D. Except during an Administrative Board approved event, alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the Hospitality Suite. Smoking is never allowed in the Hospitality Suite.
- E. The hotel welcomes and supports us. We, in turn, must respect the rights of their other guests and management. As our hotel has many families with children as guests, we must respect their need to remain family-oriented.
- F. No one is ever required to dress at any meetings. Your initial goal should be to become comfortable with the group and its support. However, when you do dress “En Femme” you must dress ladylike.
- G. Our meetings must maintain a respectable atmosphere and decorum. Therefore, no obscene, erotic or sexual activities, articles, exhibits or items of this nature shall be allowed, in any form, during the

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meetings. Any member found to be soliciting any other member or meeting guest for sexual activity of any kind shall be subject to immediate and permanent dismissal from membership in Sigma Epsilon.

- H. We meet in public places such as the hotel and restaurants. We expect members and guests to dress appropriately and act accordingly. Conservative ladylike attire is best for daytime activities and dinner/cocktail dresses are fine for dinner. Provocative, fetish, sexy or androgynous (partial male/female) attire costume is never acceptable.
- I. Our meetings include a support discussion/session where topics pertaining to cross-dressing are addressed. Specifics of the discussions are strictly confidential and must remain private.
- J. Never divulge to a third party the identity, telephone number, e-mail address or other information considered private to a member or a guest without the express permission of that person. If you are asked for anyone's telephone number, take the number of the party making the request and pass it on to the member in question. Any member or guest who divulges information about another person to third party is not welcome.
- K. Photographs may be taken at our meetings or events to document our chapter's growth. However, please do not photograph anyone -- foreground or background -- without his or her prior permission. Additionally, if you do not wish to be photographed -- inform the photographer. Take special care not to photograph anyone "en drab". Never share your photographs unless you first obtain the permission of all who are included in the picture.
- L. Please immediately report any Security Guideline violations or other problems to a Sigma Epsilon Administrative Board Member. Allow them to handle any situations, which may arise concerning privacy and security issues.

We have all experienced that feeling of deep concern that our secret will be discovered and the possible harm this would cause to either our loved ones or ourselves. Your acceptance of and adherence to the above rules will assure everyone's continued security and comfort.

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*