



To: All Chapter/Colony Presidents
From: Michael Mayer, Chief Executive Officer
CC: All Chapter/Colony Executive Officers
All Chapter/Colony Advisers
All Chapter/Colony Advisory Boards
All Alumni Corporation Officers
Official Family
Date: March 12, 2020
Re: COVID-19 Updates

Dear Brothers,

The health, safety, and well-being of Theta Chi Fraternity's members is of the utmost importance. We continue to carefully monitor ongoing developments related to COVID-19 and its effects on our Fraternity. On behalf of the Grand Chapter and the International Headquarters staff, please know that Theta Chi is committed to supporting each of our members and chapters during this time. We encourage you to remain informed and to consider these recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization:

Guidelines to Protect Yourself from Becoming Infected:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Stay home when you are sick, except to receive medical care
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Guidelines to Prevent the Spread of Germs in Chapter Houses:

- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the chapter facility, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. Wipe down doorknobs and other common surfaces at least daily, twice a day or more if possible
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down by members before each use.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the chapter facility and ensure that adequate supplies are maintained
- Consider performing a deep clean during spring break or times of inactivity in the chapter facility

Please visit the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) for additional information and guidance on COVID-19.

As noted in yesterday's email, the decision of many colleges and universities to extend of spring breaks, suspend in-person courses, or institute a temporary closure of the institution may have dramatically affected chapter operations. At the time of the publication of this memorandum, more than 130 Theta Chi chapters/colonies have been impacted by such closures. We continue to advise all chapters and colonies to follow the guidance provided by your college/university and public health officials. They are best positioned to advise as to the situation on your particular campus and community. If you have concerns about a particular directive, contact the headquarters to discuss.

Decisions related to the chapter house rest with the alumni corporation/landlord. We suggest the landlord to take into account all information and advice provided to them by the college/university and public health officials when making decisions related to the status of the housing facility.

The remainder of this memo provides additional suggestions on chapter operations and functions.

International Headquarters Staff

The International Headquarters currently remains open and our staff stands ready to support your chapter in navigating these unique circumstances. You may contact the International Headquarters during regular business hours at 317-848-1856 / ihq@thetachi.org. Should you have an urgent situation that cannot wait until the next business day, contact the after-hours emergency line at 602-888-1856.

As of March 12, 2020, we have instructed the Field Staff to complete their current chapter or colony visit and then return to the headquarters. The Field Staff will be offering and conducting both video and voice conferencing consultations in order to provide continued resources and support. As the situation with COVID-19 develops, we will assess future redeployments of the Field Staff as timing and circumstances permit.

If your chapter, chapter advisory board, or alumni corporation is in need of assistance, you are more than welcome to call the International Headquarters at any time at 317-848-1856 or schedule a time to speak with a specific staff member:

- Specific questions related to chapter operations may go to your Field Executive or to Director of Chapter Development Mitch Nolan at mnolan@thetachi.org
- Specific questions related to chapter finances may go to Chief Financial Officer Jim Powell at jpowell@thetachi.org
- Specific questions from chapter advisers or chapter advisory boards should be directed to Senior Director of Training and Development Zack Brown at zbrown@thetachi.org

- Specific questions from alumni corporation officers or general housing-related inquiries should be directed to Chief Housing Officer Bill Russo at bill@thetachi.org
- For general inquiries, please write ihq@thetachi.org

While there are no immediate plans to suspend in-person operations of the International Headquarters, should a closure be necessary, provisions have been made for staff members to continue their duties remotely. Should a closure of the International Headquarters be necessary, notice will be provided to all chapters and colonies on how to contact the staff remotely.

Chapter Meetings

Chapters are encouraged to follow the guidelines issued by your college/university regarding regular gatherings for student organizations. If your school recommends canceling all in-person meetings/gatherings, we encourage you to remain in contact via phone, email, and text as possible. Video conferencing and conference calls may be used as an alternative to conducting in-person chapter/executive board meetings. Plans should be made to resume regular chapter meetings when advised by your college/university.

Chapter Activities and Events

The Fraternity advises that you follow guidelines made by your institution regarding social engagements, philanthropic events, fundraising events, and gatherings (including fraternity/sorority formals). Check your chapter's calendar to review what scheduled activities you may have in place for the remainder of the semester. Will anything need to be postponed or rescheduled? While vendors may not be able to guarantee refunds, you may want to contact any venue that may have been reserved to discuss rescheduling options and a possible refund. Chapters are also advised to be mindful of the possibility of event cancellation before entering into any new contracts during this time.

Founders Day/Alumni Events

Many chapters plan to host events and activities to celebrate Founders Day. As you consider how to best proceed, please consider the following:

- All Founders Day/Alumni Events should be treated situationally, factoring in recommendations by the host institution, public health officials, and the CDC
- The decision to continue or cancel/postpone a Founders Day/Alumni Event should be made by the key organizers. If organized by the chapter, be sure to consult with your campus administrators and the International Headquarters staff
- Chapters are advised to adhere to all guidelines provided by the college/university and be prepared to cancel or postpone the event if necessary or directed to do so
- Examine all contracts for reserved spaces to review any "act of god" clauses and, if need be, plan to develop steps to otherwise mitigate costs
- Consider rescheduling rather than cancelling events outright. Some venues/providers may be willing to waive or reduce cancellation fees if rescheduled

In the case your chapter continues the event as planned, consider the following modifications:

- Avoid handshakes and excess contact outside of normal interactions

- Avoid self-serve dinner options
- Work with your venue/providers to ensure all appropriate precautions are taken
- Contact your college/university for further precautionary measures to be taken leading up to and during the event

Recruitment

The majority of chapters have completed recruitment for the 2019/2020 academic year. Chapters are expected to report their recruitment results, register their new pledges on OmegaFi, and maintain their rosters. It is critical that we have contact information on all pledges to ensure they will be able to receive important Theta Chi messages that we may need to send in the future.

If you have not yet completed and/or are looking to conduct a second round of recruitment this semester, please make sure you are adhering to the expectations of your college/university and public health officials while taking all precautionary measures for events.

Pledging and Initiation

Many chapters are in the middle of the pledging process. For chapters facing in-person meeting restrictions, we encourage chapters to consider holding *The Resolute Journey* educational sessions remotely, via video conference or otherwise where possible. Chapters are encouraged to continue or resume *The Resolute Journey* in-person when advised by your college/university and as they are able.

Given the large number of campuses that have ceased in-person operations, shipments of pledge buttons, manuals, and badges from the International Headquarters have been suspended. If your chapter is able to meet and is in need of these materials, please contact Membership and Database Coordinator Alicia Ikerd at 317-848-1856/aikerd@thetachi.org and shipments will be sent on an as-needed basis to a specific address. Arrangements will be made to resume shipments of these items upon the resumption of regular operations for a substantial number of colleges/universities.

Per Article V, Section 18 of *The Constitution and Bylaws of Theta Chi Fraternity, Inc.*, all pledges are to be initiated within eight weeks following the formal commencement of his pledge status. Given the current extenuating circumstances, the Grand Chapter has authorized the Chief Executive Officer to grant exemptions to this bylaw for chapters affected by campus closures. If your chapter needs an exemption to the eight week limitation on pledging, please email your request to Membership and Database Coordinator Alicia Ikerd at 317-848-1856/aikerd@thetachi.org. In your request, please explain the rationale for the delay and your intended date of initiation.

Chapter Finances

Your chapter should continue to collect dues as planned in order to cover any fixed expenses. Invoices and any payment plans made for the Annual Programming and Benefits Fee continue to be due as scheduled. Please contact Chief Financial Officer Jim Powell at 317-848-1856/jpowell@thetachi.org or Assistant Director of Business Services Keelie Souders at 317-848-1856/ksouders@thetachi.org if you have additional questions.

Awards

The deadline for all Theta Chi awards remains April 10, 2020. Please contact Administrative Assistant Amber Ray at 317-848-1856/aray@thetachi.org if your campus closure impacts your chapter's ability to complete your awards packet.

Scholarship Applications

The deadline for applications for Sherwood and Janet Blue Memorial Scholarships and/or the Victor Simon Memorial Scholarship remains March 29, 2020. Please contact Chief Development Officer John Berghoff at 317-848-1856/jberghoff@thetachi.org if your campus closure impacts your ability to complete your scholarship application.

Housing

Final decisions regarding the chapter house rests with the owner of the property. All Alumni Corporations are encouraged to communicate with their college/university and public health officials to learn more about any recommended precautionary measures or steps as well as other policies and procedures that might affect access, resources, and support.

In the case that an individual within one of your housing facilities is feeling ill and/or is diagnosed with COVID-19, immediately follow the recommendations made by your college/university and/or public health officials for next steps.

Individuals should not be quarantined in a chapter house, nor would it be allowed if there was a known case of COVID-19. Local authorities will be in the best position to provide guidance as to where members should/could be quarantined.

Should the coronavirus be present in any facility, the facility needs to be properly decontaminated prior to approved re-entry.

Review all contracts and contact your vendors (food service, cleaning, etc.) to understand your obligations and with any concerns or questions regarding scheduling impacts due to COVID-19.

If the college/university has taken steps to remove students from campus, contact college/university officials for clarification and/or direction regarding chapter house facilities. We suggest that all chapters and house corporations follow the guidance provided by the college/university and public health officials.

- Alumni Corporation officers are responsible for making the decision to modify operations or close a chapter housing facility
- After consulting with college/university officials, determine if it is appropriate for students to remain in the facility if classes are canceled or moved to online platforms. Also determine housing options for students who are not able to return home
- If closing the house, work to ensure the safety and security of the facility, referencing seasonal reminders for [housing security](#)
- If necessary, work to provide students the opportunity to retrieve personal property before returning home

- Review rental agreements/contracts and begin to develop a plan for collections and vendors in the event of a long-term closure
- Review any relevant or related insurance coverages
- Prior to reopening the property, ensure proper cleaning and regular opening procedures

Additional housing related questions may be directed to Chief Housing Officer Bill Russo at 317-848-1856/bill@thetachi.org.

164th Anniversary Convention and 39th School of Fraternity Practices

As we approach Convention, the Fraternity will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation, track updates, and follow guidance from the federal government, the Centers for Disease Control, and the World Health Organization. **Convention is still scheduled to be held July 17-21, 2020, in Lexington, KY.** Registration is open via your myThetaChi account. Each chapter is required to attend and has the ability to register two members at no cost. For more information visit www.thetachi.org/convention.

Brothers, I hope that you find this information helpful as we enter an unprecedented time in the history of our Fraternity. The Fraternity is monitoring this rapidly evolving situation and will provide additional updates and resources as appropriate. If you have any additional questions or are in need of specific support, please feel free to contact the International Headquarters any time. If you are unsure which staff member to direct your inquiry to, please utilize our general phone line/email address at 317-848-1856/ihq@thetachi.org. You will be directed to the appropriate staff member for any assistance we are able to provide.

This is a time for judiciousness, patience, and cool, calm, and composed leadership. This is a time for Resolute Men. I wish you the best, and know the Helping Hand is here for you.

Faternally,



Mike Mayer
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