



Theta Tau Fraternity

Forming an
Alumni Club

To the Alumnus

This Manual was prepared in response to the Theta Tau alumnus's question: "How can I remain active in the Fraternity now that I am no longer a student member?" This is an appropriate question from one who understands that membership is for life but who does not have the opportunity to join an existing Alumni Club. The truth is that the alumnus could become the founder of an organization that would enrich the lives of many members of Theta Tau for years to come.

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Overview

What is an Alumni Club?

Any group of alumni that meets regularly is considered an Alumni group. The purpose of the group can be either professional or social.

An Alumni Group becomes a formal Alumni Club when it has registered with the National Alumni Club or Executive Director. An Alumni Club must have at least four members, meet at least once annually, and have a Point of Contact (POC) with whom the fraternity can correspond. There are no geographic or chapter restrictions on the formation of an Alumni Club.

What is the purpose of an Alumni Club?

A Theta Tau Alumni Club is similar to a chapter because it creates a social atmosphere to develop the professional and/or social ideals of the Fraternity. A club gives alumni opportunities to participate in community activities, create and maintain friendships, develop business contacts and information resources, and gain a national sense of the Fraternity since members of all chapters are invited to participate in activities.

Who can be a member of an Alumni Club?

Membership is limited to alumni members (including honorary members) of Theta Tau who are currently in good standing and who can prove themselves to be members of the fraternity.

What kind of Alumni Clubs can form?

Alumni Clubs can form locally or nationally for either professional or social purposes. For example a club can be based on location such as the Colorado Alumni Club or on a common interest such as the Scuba Diving Alumni Club.

How much time is associated with an Alumni Club?

An alumnus's relationship to an Alumni Club is voluntary in nature, but a few committed alumni will be needed to organize the efforts of forming and maintaining a successful club. All events should be fun, convenient, and beneficial to the members. Therefore, the amount of time associated with an alumni club is entirely dependent on what the members and especially the organizers hope to get out of their voluntary participation.

What are the financial obligations associated with Alumni Clubs?

Dues are left to the discretion of each club. It is common for an alumni club to operate on a small dues structure or on a "pay as you go" basis per event.

What are common goals and objectives of an Alumni Club?

The specific short-term and long-term goals of an alumni club are decided by its members, but some of the goals of a club may be:

- Coordinate local or national alumni activities and events
- Promote membership in the Club
- Assist local chapters through scholarship opportunities
- Provide career networking opportunities for alumni

Starting an Alumni Club

Getting Started

The first step in organizing an Alumni Club is forming a core group of alumni who are willing to create and become members of the club. These can be people you know or people you contact through the resources of the fraternity like the Central Office or .NET website membership databases. Contact the Executive Director at the Central Office in Austin who will provide you with the information you need to use these resources.

The next step is contacting other alumni that you want to form your club with and who you think might be interested. Send them a personal invitation by mail, email, or call them by phone. Coordinate a meeting time and place to get together to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the members in forming an alumni club. Determine the level of interest and purpose of the group at that meeting. If at least four people want to begin a club then they must designate a Point of Contact (POC) and register the club!

Alumni Clubs can register by mailing, faxing, or emailing a registration form to the Central Office or filling that same form out on the .NET website. Once this is done the club has been officially created! Don't forget that this step must be done once each year in order to maintain club status with the Fraternity.

Types of Clubs

When starting a club it is important to define the type of club you are creating. Clubs can be broken down into professional or social organizations. Though clubs can have elements that are both professional and social, the interest of the membership usually defines one or the other as the primary purpose. It is recommended, but NOT required, that a professional club write and submit bylaws and elect officers. These steps are not necessary for social clubs. The only officer a club needs is a dedicated POC with whom the fraternity can correspond. Bylaws are unnecessary for most social clubs and can be cumbersome to write.

Professional clubs are usually focused on participating with the Fraternity nationally whereas social clubs are usually based on a common social interest or activity. A professional club might have members that run professional development or community service events and participate on national committees or as national officers. Social clubs might have members from across the country who meet once a year for a specific activity like scuba diving, concerts, or just for fun.

Both types of clubs have representation nationally through the National Alumni Club.

Membership in a Club

Membership is strictly limited to alumni or honorary members of the Fraternity. However, membership in any alumni club may change with time. This should be expected. The club should relate to the National Alumni Club or Central Office the members of their club when registering. However, the club may use the resources of the .NET website to track membership as it changes over time. Members can use this resource to in order to change club affiliation.

Planning & Advertising Events

After creating a club it is important to plan events to meet again. Schedule your first three events at several different times: early evening on a week night, Sunday afternoon, or for lunch on a weekday. This will give alumni with various life styles a chance to participate from the first. You can assess the attendance at each of the times. Select locations that are well-known, safe, and easy to find. Do not feel obligated to pay for each event—gather at restaurants or places where each member can pay for the event himself.

In scheduling the first events, think of activities too interesting to miss. What is the biggest event in your community? How can Theta Taus participate in it together? Never allow Theta Tau alumni club events to be thought of as "just another thing to do"—find out what alumni in your area enjoy and create ways for them to enjoy those interests and happenings with their Brothers.

Now that you have a calendar of events, prepare your first mailing—make it stylish! Include the news that a Theta Tau alumni club is being formed, invitations to or notifications about the first three planned events, the names, addresses, and phone of the POC and any officers, and a membership information questionnaire.

Professional Alumni Clubs

Become an Alumni Club

As you have your first events and generate interest in your Alumni Club, it is recommended that you make time to adopt bylaws, elect officers and collect membership dues. A sample set of bylaws is provided in the Appendix of this manual. It is wise to set membership dues based on projected expenses. Many clubs choose to have events on a “pay as you go” basis so attending members are responsible for their own expenses.

The officers can plan the rest of the year for the Alumni Club, create an official budget, and register the club with the National Alumni Club or Central Office in Austin. The membership roster for the first year should include all alumni who attended one of the three first events. Other names can be added as they attend activities or meetings. Include all these alumni in mailings or other notifications.

Assign Officer Responsibilities

President – The club president presides at all meetings and appoints committee and program chairmen—yet his role extends further. He is THE alumnus representing the alumni members of his club. Public relations with alumni and undergraduates are a major function. The president should be kept informed concerning Fraternity activities at the national and local level. The president should strive to generate goodwill toward Theta Tau through programs of interest to alumni and through productive interaction with nearby undergraduate chapters.

Vice President – Many clubs use the vice president as a training ground for the presidency. He assists the president in his duties and sometimes serves as the program chairman for meetings.

Secretary – The duties of the secretary may seem routine, but they are critical to the effective operation of the club. The secretary should be responsible for submitting club information on activities/meetings to the National Alumni Club and Central Office for publication in “The Gear”. He should obtain current mailing lists and update information on the .NET website. It is his responsibility to provide for notification of meetings and activities to alumni in the area. Any address changes, which he becomes aware of, should also be forwarded to Central Office. The secretary should keep track of meeting/activity attendance by recording names, addresses, phone numbers, and chapter affiliation.

Treasurer – The treasurer receives and disperses all club funds. Reservations for banquets, etc. that require advance payment should be directed through the treasurer. He should make an annual report to the membership and maintain records of income and expenses. If the club has federal non-profit tax status [a 501c(7) organization], he should file IRS tax form 990 at the end of each fiscal year.

Committees – Overwork can stifle enthusiasm. The workload should be distributed among committees appointed by the president. The president should recruit interested alumni, and a club officer should be assigned as a member of each committee.

Social Alumni Clubs

Become an Alumni Club

As you have your first events and generate interest in your Alumni Club, it is recommended that you make time to talk one-on-one with the members of your club. Unlike professional clubs, social clubs don't need to write and submit bylaws, create a budget, or complete many other tasks which a professional club may do. However, it is recommended to look at these activities as a way to strengthen a club and manage things like club finances.

Assign Member Responsibilities

Though the club may not have officers, it is important to designate tasks of organization to members of the group. The first should be for the POC to submit the registration form for the club to the National Alumni Club or Central Office. Once the club is recognized by the Fraternity it will have representation for the members and support for activities.

The second step is to assign members to plan events and gatherings. This can be as informal as sending out a few emails or as detailed as setting up committees. The club should also designate someone, perhaps the POC, who will write and submit an article to "The Gear" each year.

The Future of your Club

What to Expect

Your club will probably remain rather small at first – it takes patience to grow a large and successful group. The core group that is active will usually remain small (less than 10). You will have others that come and go, but not be part of the core group that is consistently there. Typically the smaller the time commitment, the larger the core group might be. It is important to remind yourself that every brother that attends a club meeting or event is a great success!

Maintaining Your Success

Just like a rocket leaving Earth's atmosphere, the Club will need a great concentration of energy at the beginning and less energy once it has achieved momentum. However, the possibility will always exist for the Club to lose its focus. To keep the Club on track, its leadership will need to focus on these fundamental themes:

- Meet the social needs of your members – Membership organizations survive solely for the benefit of their members. Keep trying to improve upon your successes and always be willing to innovate. If lunch meetings are not working, try breakfast or dinner meetings. Are the members too spread out? Try forming subgroups of the club that meet in different areas. Bring value to the Club's members, and your membership numbers will never suffer.
- Attract and develop new leaders – Continually successful clubs have great leaders and foster the development of future leaders. Utilize new members on subcommittees and teams to assess their leadership abilities. Send Club leaders to the Leadership Conference. Identify successful alumni who can bring their leadership talents to the Club.
- Communicate often, clearly, and consistently – The Club will be competing for the attention of its members and must be diligent in keeping the Club and its activities in the forefront of their minds. While four color glossy newsletters would be nice, the Club can keep its communication pieces as simple as a one-page letter as long as the Club is communicating often, clearly, and consistently.
- Keep revenues higher than expenses – A healthy bank account most often reflects a healthy Club. Since the laws of the free market apply to the Club, its leadership should use diligence and prudence when dealing with financial decisions.

Event Ideas

Alumni Clubs are required to meet at least once a year. Some clubs might meet twice a year while others meet every month. The type of events and their interval is entirely up to you and your club members.

Social Events

Plan events to encourage alumni participation and create a strong bond of fraternal fellowship within your club.

Ideas for smaller, social events include:

- Picnics
- Outing to an athletic event
- Informal gatherings
- Barbecues

Ideas for major Alumni Organization events that require more planning include:

- Founders Day banquet
- Special Organization Anniversary
- Holiday dinner-dance

Professional Events

Include events to develop and maintain a high standard of professional interest among your members.

Ideas for professional events include:

- Tours
- Hosting speakers
- Outing to an arts activity
- Participation in Regional and National Meetings

Community Service

Connect with your community as you continue to bond with your brothers.

Ideas for community service events include:

- Participation in a charity walk
- Philanthropic events
- Participation in a canned food drive
- Sponsor events during National Engineers Week
- Be a judge for a local Rube Goldberg competition

Events with Nearby Chapters

Share your experiences with a chapter.

Ideas of ways to be involved with nearby chapters include:

- Attending a chapter-sponsored event—rush, social, or professional
- Speak to the pledges about what Theta Tau means to you. Speak at a Chapter-sponsored professional event. Contact a local chapter, and let them know that you would be willing to speak to the pledges, the chapter, or all engineers about your area of expertise.
- Participation in an initiation or installation ceremony. Contact a local chapter, and let them know you would enjoy participating in their initiation ceremony or would be willing to speak at a dinner following the ceremony.
- Help organize a student-alumni event. Plan an event for Homecoming, Founders Day, or Chapter Anniversary. Help plan a professional event.

No chapters near your club? Help establish one!

Fraternity Resources

Computerized Member Information

As a service to our members, the current names and contact information for members of the Fraternity are available through Central Office or the .NET website. You can request electronic files or even mailing labels if that will help you.

Publicity

As a Theta Tau Alumni Club, your organization's name, contact information, and website information can be listed on the Fraternity's website for all alumni, students, and friends of the Fraternity to view.

Through the Fraternity's official magazine, *The Gear of Theta Tau*, you'll also be able to submit photographs and articles chronicling your Club's events and progress. You are encouraged to submit updates on the members of your club to share with your brothers across the nation.

Advisement

Although every Alumni Club is unique in its particular activities and goals, the Theta Tau national officers and other Fraternity members want to do everything possible to help the establishment of your organization. Past experience indicates that ones who are already involved in organizations of Theta Tau can be of great help in advising those who aspire to found new clubs. They can be most helpful when they are kept informed as to the progress being made, and they can answer questions you may have as your Organization progresses. Email contact is the easiest way to get in touch.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – Sample Bylaws for Theta Tau Alumni Club*

Article I – Name, Purpose, and Extent

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Dallas-Fort Worth Alumni Club of Theta Tau.

Sec. 2. The purpose of this organization shall be to increase the values of alumni membership in Theta Tau for the members in this area through:

- a) Uniting its members in a strong bond of fraternal fellowship.
- b) Maintaining a high standard of professional interest among its members.
- c) Welcoming alumni new to the area, and
- d) Furthering the interests of the Fraternity by helping to establish new Chapters, cooperating in the activities of the Fraternity and of present and future Chapters in this general area.

Sec 3. This Alumni Club is intended to serve alumni members of Theta Tau living in the area included in the following description: Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

Article II – Membership

Section 1. Membership shall be limited to alumni members (including honorary members) of Theta Tau who are currently in good standing and who can prove themselves to be members of the Fraternity.

Sec. 2. All Theta Tau alumni known to live in the geographical area described in Article I, Section 3, shall be included on the mailing list, but only those whose dues for the current year are paid shall be “members” eligible to vote, hold office, or to represent the organization at Fraternity affairs.

Article III – Officers

Section 1. The officers of this organization shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall constitute the Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. Each officer shall be elected by majority secret vote of all members (as defined in Article II, Sec. 2) present or represented at the Annual Meeting.

Sec. 3. Each officer shall hold office for one calendar year, or until his successor has been elected.

Sec. 4. The President shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees and non-elective officers, render an annual report in triplicate to the Grand Scribe of Theta Tau (including activities of the organization, engineering opportunities, etc.) and fulfill such other obligations as may be imposed upon him by the organization.

Sec. 5. The Vice-President shall take the place of the President when he is temporarily unable to officiate.

Sec. 6. The Secretary shall keep the organization’s records; keep minutes of all regular and special meetings; maintain on file with the Grand Regent and with the Grand Scribe, a current copy of the organization’s Bylaws, and with the Editor of the THE GEAR OF THETA TAU and with the grand Scribe, a current list of the names and addresses of the officers of the organization; maintain an up-to-date mailing list of all Theta Tau alumni living in the area described in Article I, Section 3; distribute to all local alumni notices of meetings, statements of annual dues, and copies of proposed Bylaws amendments; submit at least annually for publication in THE GEAR an article on the organization’s activities; and perform such other duties as prescribed by the President or by the organization.

Sec. 7. The Treasurer shall keep the organization’s funds and financial records, collect dues, make a written report each meeting listing members with dues paid, and make disbursements from the organization’s treasury.

Sec. 8. Vacancy in any office shall be filled temporarily by appointment of the Executive Committee, and then regularly by election at the next meeting after such vacancy occurs.

Article IV – Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings shall be held.....(detail the number of meetings per year, and so far as possible, the date, time, and place of meetings).....

Sec. 2. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of members present at a meeting.

Sec. 3. The(insert ordinal number, month, or other designation of a specific meeting).....each year shall be denoted the “Annual Meeting” at which officers shall be elected, and at the close of which the new officers will assume their duties.

Sec. 4. A quorum shall consist of three-fifths of the dues-paying members present in person or represented by other member(s) holding their written proxies.

Sec. 5. ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER shall govern the parliamentary procedure at meetings.

Article V – Financial Matters

Section 1. Each member shall pay in advance dues in the amount of \$.....per calendar year.

Sec. 2. Dinners, parties, etc. shall be financed through charges made of the members participating.

Sec. 3. Special assessments may be levied by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting.

Article VI – Miscellaneous

Section 1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a meeting. Proposed Bylaws amendments must be submitted in writing and distributed to members at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which they will be considered.

Sec. 2. Between meetings, the Executive Committee may act for the Club on matters of immediacy so long as such actions are in accord with these Bylaws and the laws and customs of Theta Tau. All interim actions must be presented at the next meeting for possible ratification by the membership.

Sec. 3. Upon becoming a member of this organization, each member agrees to obey all parts of these Bylaws.

* Alumni Club Bylaws should be considered in view of the national Fraternity laws governing alumni organizations with which they must not conflict.

APPENDIX B – Theta Tau Constitution and Bylaws

Constitution:

Article IX – Alumni Clubs and Associations

Section 1. Alumni clubs may be authorized by action of the Grand Regent, who shall have the power to issue a letter of authorization to four or more alumnus members who apply for it.

Sec. 2. The application for an alumni club must contain the proposed time and place for meetings, which must be held at least once each year.

Sec. 3. Alumni clubs shall have no legislative power in the Fraternity.

Sec. 4. An alumni club, after two or more years of successful existence, may petition the Executive Council for an alumni association charter. Such petition must be presented by not fewer than seven alumni who have attended a majority of alumni club meetings for at least one year prior to the presentation of the petition. The petition shall be in the form prescribed by the Executive Council.
[1968]

Sec. 5. No alumni association charter shall be granted to any group of alumni which has not previously existed as an alumni club.

Sec. 6. No alumni association charter shall be granted to petitioners in any city or area where an alumni association has previously been established by charter, and exists, without first obtaining consent from such alumni association.

Sec. 7. Each alumni club or alumni association shall be governed by its own bylaws which must not be contrary to the laws of Theta Tau, and a copy of which must be filed with and approved by the Executive Director. [2000]

Sec. 8. An alumni association, to hold its charter, must hold regular meetings, and render an annual report to the Executive Council. The Executive Council is empowered to decide whether or not an alumni association is acting in conformity with the requirements of this section.

Sec. 9. The Executive Council may suspend the charter of any alumni association if meetings are not held for two consecutive years, or if the association is guilty of the violation of any of the Laws and Customs of the Fraternity.

Bylaws:

Chapter VIII – Alumni Associations

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the President of each alumni association to render an annual report to the Executive Director covering the activity of the association, engineering employment opportunities, etc. [2000]

Sec. 2. If a charter of an alumni association is suspended as provided for in the Constitution, charges against individual members of said association can be brought as provided for in the Bylaws. Charges should be filed with the Executive Council or a Convention.

Sec. 3. An alumni association shall have the right to defend itself before the Executive Council or a Convention by personal representation or by proxy, but only by members of this Fraternity.

Sec. 4. An honorary member may represent an alumni association as Delegate, or in any other official capacity.

Sec. 5. To have a voting representative at a Convention, an alumni association must have at least seven members, hold meetings at least once a year, and must comply with Section 1 during each year of the previous biennium it has been in existence.

Sec. 6. Delegates from an alumni association shall be elected by not less than a three-fifths vote of all members attending the meeting at which such election takes place. The names of possible Delegates shall be mentioned in notices of meeting. All members of the association must be notified of such meeting. Their written vote or proxy shall count as if they themselves were present.

Sec. 7. When an alumni association has been requested to vote upon any matter the vote must be returned to the Executive Director within a thirty day period. If such an association does not send in a vote within a thirty-day period the right to vote shall be considered forfeited. [2000]

Sec. 8. Membership in alumni associations is strictly confined to alumnus or honorary members. Membership in any alumni association shall be open to initiates of any chapter who reside in the area served by that alumni association.