



2013-2015 Biennium Chapter Bylaws Form

Effective for Chapters, At-Large Chapters
and Alumni Chapters
November 2013 - December 2015

Chapter Greek Name: Omicron Alpha

Institution of Higher Education:

SUNY Upstate Medical University College of Nursing

Chapter #: 359 Region: North America 11

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ARTICLE I. NAME, KEY AND SEAL

The name of this chapter of the international honor society of nursing is the Omicron Alpha Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International, Incorporated, located at SUNY Upstate Medical University at Syracuse College of Nursing. It shall use the official key and seal of the Society.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSES

The purposes of this Society shall be to:

1. Recognize superior achievement.
2. Recognize the development of leadership qualities.
3. Foster high professional standards.
4. Encourage creative work.
5. Strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession.
6. Provide support, including funding, to other organizations exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
7. Assist and engage in any other activities which are permitted to be carried on by organizations exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE III. STATUS

Section 1. Nonprofit Organization

This organization is a nonprofit corporation and does not contemplate the distribution of gains, profits or dividends to the members.

Section 2. Limitation of Activities

No substantial part of the activities of this chapter shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the chapter shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Categories of Membership

- a. Regular Member

Section 2. Qualifications for Regular Membership

- a. Sigma Theta Tau International does not discriminate. Candidates are qualified for membership so long as eligibility requirements are met.
- b. Student candidates shall have demonstrated superior academic achievement, academic integrity and professional leadership potential.
- c. Regular Member
 - 1) Students in Basic Program
 - a) Definition – Basic program is defined as an accredited baccalaureate or equivalent nursing degree program that leads to the first professional nursing degree.
 - b) Academic Achievement – Students in basic programs shall be eligible for membership if they have achieved excellence according to the standards approved by the Society.
 - c) Rank in class – Basic students who are elected shall rank not lower than the highest 35 percent of their class in scholarship.
 - d) Curriculum – Students shall have completed at least one-half of the required nursing curriculum.
 - e) Exceptions – Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the chapter’s governance committee following the guidelines adopted by the International Board of Directors.

- 2) Students in Graduate Programs

- a) Definition – Graduate program is defined as an accredited program of graduate study in nursing

- including master, post-master, doctoral and post-doctoral.
- b) Academic Achievement – Students in graduate programs shall be eligible for membership if they have achieved excellence according to the standards approved by the Society.
- c) Curriculum – Students shall have completed a minimum of one-quarter of the required graduate curriculum.
- d) Students in graduate programs who are registered nurses, legally recognized to practice in their country and have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree or the equivalent in any field, shall be eligible to be considered as a nurse leader at any point in the program.
- e) Exceptions – Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the chapter’s governance committee following the guidelines adopted by the International Board of Directors.

3) Nurse Leader

A nurse leader, who is a registered nurse, legally recognized to practice in his/her country with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree or the equivalent in any field and who has demonstrated achievement in nursing, shall be eligible for membership.

Section 3. Selection of Members

- a. Regular Members
 - 1) Student member candidates are required to be enrolled in an institution of higher education where the chapter is located to be considered for membership in that chapter. If there is no chapter at the institution of higher education in which the student attends, student member candidates may be considered for membership in another chapter.
 - 2) The nurse leader candidate may be selected for membership by any chapter.

Section 4. Membership Status

Members may be designated as active or inactive. Members may also formally request to discontinue membership. Active members pay annual chapter and international fees. Inactive members have not paid annual chapter and international fees but shall become active at any time by paying current renewal fees.

Section 5. Rights and Responsibilities of Active Members

- a. Regular Members
 - 1) Active regular members shall make a commitment to the purposes of the Society.
 - 2) Active regular members shall receive:
 - a) official Society publications;
 - b) priority for education programs; and
 - c) priority for research funding.
 - 3) Active regular members at the chapter level shall:
 - a) receive all communications and announcements;
 - b) be able to attend meetings;
 - c) be able to participate in activities;
 - d) be considered for awards;

- e) be eligible to vote; and
 - f) hold elective and appointive office as outlined by the chapter bylaws.
- 4) Active regular members may hold membership in more than one chapter by remitting multiple chapter fees and the Society fee annually.
- 5) Active regular members may transfer from one chapter to another.

Section 6. Revocation of Membership

Membership in the Society may be revoked at any time by a chapter to which the member belongs for just cause and after due process. Revocation of membership shall be determined at a meeting of the chapter, at which a quorum is present, by at least three-fourths vote for revocation by those present.

ARTICLE V. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. Organization

This chapter is a constituent of the organization of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, Incorporated. It shall function under bylaws, policies and procedures which are not in conflict with those of the Society.

Section 2. House of Delegates

- a. There shall be two (2) official delegates to represent the chapter at the House of Delegates of the Society. If the chapter is represented by only one (1) delegate, that delegate shall have two (2) votes. If the chapter has a nominee for an officer in the Society, it should consider sending this individual as a delegate to the House of Delegates. A delegate is required to be an active member of this chapter.
- b. The term of the delegates shall be from the opening of convention for which the delegate is selected to serve until the opening of the next convention.
- c. Electronic voting
 - 1) Chapter delegates may vote electronically on Articles of Incorporation and chapter charter applications and revocations.
 - 2) The procedures and time limitations for electronic voting shall be set by the International Board of Directors.

Section 3. Chapter Responsibilities

Chapters shall fulfill the following requirements:

- a. Support the purposes of this Society.
- b. Observe the provisions of these bylaws and comply with the Society's policies and regulations.
- c. Participate in the biennial convention House of Delegates and other business brought forth before the House of Delegates during the term.
- d. Select and induct eligible members a minimum of one time annually.
- e. Meet all financial obligations.
- f. File required reports according to established guidelines.

Section 4. Probation or Revocation

- a. This chapter may be placed on probation by the Board of Directors of Sigma Theta Tau International for failure to comply with the Sigma Theta Tau International Bylaws, this chapter's bylaws, or Society policies and regulations.
- b. Upon recommendation of the Sigma Theta Tau International Board of Directors, the House of Delegates may revoke the charter of this chapter.

Section 5. Removal from Probation and Reinstatement of a Chapter

- a. A chapter may be removed from probation by action of the Sigma Theta Tau International Board of Directors.
- b. A chapter may be reinstated following revocation of its charter by meeting all the requirements of a newly organizing chapter. If approved, the chapter shall receive a new charter but retain its original name.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

This chapter shall have at least one business meeting and will sponsor at least two events or programs that support the purposes and goals of the Society each year. The annual business meeting, where officers and committees present written annual reports to the membership, may be held in conjunction with an event or program.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the president or upon request of six (6) members of the chapter.

ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Membership

The members of the Board of Directors of this chapter shall consist of the elected officers and one or more elected directors (optional). The elected members of the Board of Directors are the voting members.

Section 2. Focus

The elected members of the Board of Directors have the authority and responsibility to manage the chapter consistent with these bylaws and in an appropriate legal manner.

Section 3. Functions

- a. Carry forward the Society's objectives.
- b. Manage the business and fiscal affairs of the chapter.
- c. Monitor the income and disbursement of funds.
- d. Make policies for its own actions and the actions of its committees.
- e. Appoint chairs of elected committees and appoint members and chairs of non-elected committees.
- f. Oversee elected committees, board advisory councils and board task forces.
- g. Supervise and manage the committees and publications.
- h. Act as a liaison between the chapter and school.
- i. Assure appropriate eligibility process for selection of candidates for membership.
- j. Assure that the chapter fulfills the requirements of the Society.

Section 4. Meetings

The Board of Directors of this chapter shall meet as necessary to conduct the business between meetings of the general membership.

Section 5. Removing a Board of Director Member from Office

A member of the Board of Directors who demonstrates behavior, as determined by the Board of Directors, that is not consistent with the mission, values or expectations of the honor society may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the remaining members of the board, provided that notice of the intent to take such action is given to all board members at least 30 days in advance of the regular or special meeting at which the motion to remove is introduced. Such board member shall have the right to be present and to speak on his/her behalf but shall not be allowed to be present during deliberation nor to vote. Voting shall be by ballot, which may be delivered electronically if a face-to-face meeting is not possible.

ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS

Section 1. Titles

- a. The officers of this chapter shall be: president, president-elect (optional), vice president, secretary, treasurer, and counselor.
- b. The president, with the approval of the Board of Directors, when appropriate, shall appoint such other persons as may be necessary to conduct the business of the chapter.

Section 2. Vacancies

The vice president fills the vacancy of president (at-large chapters shall designate a vice president to fill such vacancies); other offices are filled by appointment of the Board of Directors until the next election.

Section 3. Duties

The duties of the chapter officers shall be as follows:

- a. The president shall be the executive officer and shall administer all business of the Society as provided for by the bylaws. The president serves as chief representative of the chapter in inter-chapter activities and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except Leadership Succession Committee.
- b. The president-elect (optional) shall succeed into the presidency at the end of the term of office and shall promote the purposes of the Society.
- c. The vice president shall perform the duties of the president in the president's absence. (In an at-large chapter, a designated vice president shall perform these duties.)
- d. The secretary shall prepare and distribute meeting minutes and correspondence.
- e. The treasurer shall be the custodian of the funds of this chapter and may be bonded in an amount equal to three-fourths of the worth of the chapter. The treasurer shall propose a budget to the board.
- f. A counselor shall be a member of the faculty at the institution of higher education where the chapter is

located, with the exception of counselors in Alumni chapters who oversee Nurse Leader inductions and who are not required to be faculty. The counselor may serve as chairperson of the Governance Committee.

- g. Each officer shall submit a report at each Board of Directors meeting and to members at the annual business meeting and assist in preparing the chapter reports for submission to Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters.

ARTICLE IX. ELECTIONS

Section 1. Elections

Elections shall be held annually by ballot.

Section 2. Positions

Chapter officers, directors (optional) and members of the Leadership Succession Committee shall be elected. Members of the Governance Committee may be elected by the chapter membership or appointed by the elected officers.

Section 3. Vote

- a. A majority vote shall elect officers.
- b. A plurality vote shall elect the non-officer members of the Board of Directors, Leadership Succession Committee and members of the Governance Committee, if elected.
- c. When there are more than two (2) candidates running for the same office, the candidate with the highest number of votes wins the election.
- d. In the event of a tie, the election shall be determined by lot.

Section 4. Terms

- a. The length of the term of all officers is two (2) years.
- b. Terms of office are staggered so that all officers, directors and the Governance and Leadership Succession Committee members do not end their terms at the same time.
- c. A chapter may elect a president-elect for a one-year term. This term shall occur during the second year of the current president. The president-elect shall then succeed to president for two (2) years.

ARTICLE X. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a. The standing committees shall be: Governance Committee, Leadership Succession Committee, and others if desired.
- b. The term of office shall be two years. A member may be reappointed or elected for a second consecutive term, except for members of the Leadership Succession Committee who may serve a maximum of two (2) years and are elected according to Article IX. Elections Section 4.
- c. Each standing committee shall present a report to the business meetings of the Board of Directors and an annual report to the membership at the annual business meeting.
- d. Each committee prepares, reviews and makes recommendations regarding policies corresponding to

its area of responsibility for Board of Directors approval.

Section 2. Governance Committee

- a. The Governance Committee shall oversee bylaws compliance, make recommendations for bylaws changes and oversee member and chapter eligibility issues.
- b. The Governance Committee shall consist of at least three (3) elected/appointed members and the elected counselor. The president shall appoint a chair of the committee from those elected/appointed.

Section 3. Leadership Succession Committee

- a. Mission – The Leadership Succession Committee shall develop members in organizational leadership roles across the span of their careers, mentor members to assume organizational board and officer positions at all levels of the organization. The committee shall select nominees and prepare the ballot. The ballot will be sent to the Board of Directors at least four (4) weeks prior to a scheduled election.
- b. Membership – The Leadership Succession Committee shall consist of three (3) elected members. The president shall appoint a chair of the committee from those elected.
- c. The Leadership Succession Committee members shall not be eligible for any elected office of the current ballot.

Section 4. Additional Standing Committees

Additional standing committees, advisory councils and task forces may be appointed by the Board of Directors if deemed appropriate. The purpose of these groups will be to carry out the work of the chapter.

Section 5. Board Advisory Councils

- a. Mission – Board Advisory Councils shall inform the board of current and future issues, directions and priorities of the chapter.
- b. Membership – Board Advisory Councils shall be appointed by the Board of Directors for a term through the next chapter election unless reappointed.

Section 6. Task Forces

- a. Mission – Task Forces are formed to complete an assigned task within a specified time frame.
- b. Membership – Task Forces are formed by the Board, Standing Committees and Board Advisory Councils. They are made up of members who bring expertise, interest and commitment to complete an assigned task.

ARTICLE XI. FINANCE

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be 1 July 1 through 30 June.

Section 2. Chapter Fees and Assessments

- a. A fee shall be levied on this chapter annually, in accordance with the Sigma Theta Tau International Bylaws, Article XI, Section 2.a.

- b. Special assessments may be levied on this chapter by the House of Delegates, by a three-fourths vote.

Section 3. Induction and Renewal Fee Changes

Adjustments to the fee schedule shall be approved by the chapter Board of Directors. Fee schedule adjustments shall not occur more than once a biennium and shall not exceed the cumulative Consumer Price Index (CPI) percentage rate. Any adjustments, accompanied by rationale, will be provided to membership sixty (60) days in advance of the effective date.

Section 4. Induction Fee

Each new member shall pay a Society induction fee and a chapter induction fee as determined by the chapter Board of Directors. This shall entitle the new member to active membership with all its benefits from the date of induction for one year to the member's anniversary date of induction.

Section 5. Renewal Fee

- a. Membership Status – Following the first year of membership, members are designated as active or inactive. Each member shall pay an annual renewal fee as designated by the chapter board of directors and the society renewal fee as designated by the International Board of Directors for active member benefits.
- b. Retired members and full-time students are eligible to pay half of the renewal fee for regular members.
- c. Renewal Fee Collection - Chapter and Society fees are collected by Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters unless another agreement has been negotiated with headquarters.

Section 6. Chapter Financial Responsibilities

This chapter is an independent, autonomous organization affiliated with the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, Incorporated. The chapter determines the amounts of its fees and assessments. The chapter has control of its income, expenses, contracts, accounting system and internal reports.

ARTICLE XII. QUORUM

Section 1. Membership

- a. A quorum at a chapter business meeting shall consist of three (3) officers and seven (7) members.
- b. In the event of a revocation of membership vote, thirty (30) days' notice of the meeting with the revocation issue announced is required and a quorum shall consist of three (3) officers and 10% of the active membership of the chapter in attendance.

Section 2. Board of Directors

A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of three (3) members.

ARTICLE XIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the most recently published edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern this chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in

which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or special rules of the Society.

ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Section 1. Amendments with Notice

These bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the chapter members present and voting at any meeting of the chapter. Proposed amendments shall be in the hands of the chapter secretary at least forty-five (45) days before the date of the meeting and shall be appended to the call to the meeting sent thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Amendments Without Notice

These bylaws may be amended by unanimous vote of the members present and voting at any scheduled meeting without previous notice.

Section 3. Chapter Bylaws Approval

Bylaws shall be sent to Headquarters and reviewed according to policies set by the International Governance Committee.

Section 4. Sigma Theta Tau International Bylaws Amendments

Any amendments to the Sigma Theta Tau International Bylaws approved by the House of Delegates or editorial changes approved by the Sigma Theta Tau International Board of Directors that are also applicable to the chapters shall be incorporated into the chapter bylaws.

ARTICLE XV. DISSOLUTION

The process for dissolution of a chapter of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, Incorporated, shall be as follows:

Section 1. Initial Action

- a. Chapter officers contact Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters to discuss the process of chapter dissolution or other potential options available to the chapter.
- b. A resolution for dissolution of the chapter is presented at a regular meeting and must be signed by a majority of active (voting) members present at the meeting.
- c. Chapter officers call a special meeting of the chapter to vote on the resolution for dissolution of the chapter. Notice of the special meeting must be provided at least thirty (30) days in advance.
- d. All active members shall be provided the opportunity to vote by ballot, which may be delivered by electronic means. Dissolution of the chapter shall occur if three-fourths of voting members support the resolution.

Section 2. If Chapter Approves Dissolution

- a. The chapter officers shall notify the Sigma Theta Tau International Board of Directors of the chapter's decision and take the necessary steps to conclude the affairs of the chapter in accordance with statutory requirements existing at the date such action is taken.
- b. The chapter's charter and coat-of-arms shall be returned to Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters.

Section 3. Disposition of Chapter Funds

- a. All cash and other assets remaining after the chapter's outstanding debts are paid should be returned to Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters or any other appropriate non-profit organization approved by the chapter board of directors. Or, if a majority of the dissolved chapter's members transfer to the same chapter, remaining funds may be contributed to that chapter. The recipient organization shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue law or the governing law of that chapter's country.)

Section 4. Options for Chapter Members

- a. If the chapter dissolves, all members have the opportunity to transfer their membership to a chapter of their choice. Those members not indicating their choice of where their membership should be transferred will be transferred to a chapter in the area by Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters. Anytime after this transfer by Sigma Theta Tau International Headquarters, these members may transfer to any other chapter of their choice.

Section 5. Reinstatement Following Dissolution

- a. A chapter may be reinstated following dissolution by meeting all the requirements of a newly organizing chapter. If approved, the chapter shall receive a new charter but retain its original name.