Board of Directors Questionnaire John Barger, Epsilon Eta, '91

1) Articulate your vision for the Fraternity in the next 5 – 10 years.

In five years, I envision our fraternity:

- Filling chapter advisor positions as part of a comprehensive mentorship program
- Recruiting and retaining men in chapters that provide a supportive home fostering fellowship & growth into manhood.
- Returning to, and growing on, campuses where we've been without disrupting support for our existing chapters.
- Sustaining superb programs which assist our brothers with chapter operations, fellowship, professional development, and personal growth.

2) Explain what you believe is the most exciting opportunity for the Fraternity. How should Sig Tau prioritize this opportunity?

While it is true that Sigma Tau Gamma will be committing more resources toward chapter and member support, I believe our most exciting opportunities lie with member engagement.

Our alumni talent pool is essentially untapped when you consider many of our alumni possess deep affinities to their home chapters. Couple this fact with the knowledge that our strongest chapters are blessed with the support of alumni advisors and mentors. Unfortunately, many chapters lack (more than) one advisor to assist, mentor, coach our undergraduate men through most struggles. For most chapters, we have failed to tap into the alumni volunteer pool capable of providing deeply needed mentorship for (at minimum) each of the director positions in the "Exec Board".

The pairing of worthy mentors with chapter leadership helps young leaders avoid common chapter pitfalls (unnecessary debt, hazing and bullying, and many ethical/moral challenges). In sum, advisor mentorship stabilizes our chapter culture which can, in turn, improve chapter retention. Thusly, our chapters increase in size which both increases their available funding, as well as offers some protection against ill effects associated with small follow-on new member classes.

3) Explain what specific skill set(s) and career experiences have you had that would most beneficially contribute to the deliberations and decisions of the Board?

My volunteer, career, and life experiences specially qualify my desire to serve at the highest capacity. I have just completed the 2022-2024 term with the Board of Directors. Before that, I had served as a Foundation Trustee from November 2019-June 2022. My board experiences enlightened on with ongoing fraternity operations, Carver Policy Governance, collaboration with different CEOs and staff members, and the importance of Boards' (WPN, Foundation, Board of Directors') synchronization of vision and effort.

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My military and civilian careers offer unique crisis management, problem solving, and leadership skillsets. As an ARNG Engineer officer, I have commanded and led through Battalion levels, and led/served through many combat, disaster, and emergency situations home and abroad.

I am a Past-President of the National Guard Association of Kentucky and represented more than 8,500 serving Army and Air National Guardsmen. I was elected in Aug 2023 to represent all ARNG Engineers as the National Guard Association of the US Engineer Task Force Chair. This Task Force represents 60+% of all US Army Engineers, and dutifully captures all states', territories', and industry partners' equipment, personnel, and resource needs.

I gained extensive knowledge on Sigma Tau Gamma member programs at the ground level by serving as a chapter advisor at Zeta Beta chapter (Cincinnati) from 2017-2021 and Endeavor Conference, Webb Academy, and Nobleman Institute facilitator between 2014-2022. I helped establish our Alumni Association and served as its President. As an undergrad, I was a Chapter President, chapter founding father, and Webb Academy attendee.

4) Explain what you believe is the most critical external challenge faced by the Fraternity? How should Sig Tau position itself to successfully deal with this challenge?

It's well documented that male populations on most college campuses are dropping. This situation threatens 'the old way' of fraternity business and will devastate organizations that fail to evolve. Hence, the drop in worthy, recruitable men represents the key external threat to our organization.

This is a complex problem when you consider that fraternities are more critical for young men now than ever. The solution lies within one of our oldest ideals against this threat: *provide a sense of belonging*.

There are numerous studies that document how young men struggle to find their place of worth in society. Young men lack role models, a sense of purpose, and/or know where their sex belongs in their communities or society. We can combat this epidemic by providing belongingness to our members.

Sigma Tau Gamma must give our members a home where they can safely grow as men together (i.e. brotherhood) which increases self-esteem and worth. Members that enduringly sustain connection with each other will stay with us through their college career and beyond.

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5) With undergraduate enrollment expected to decrease and as generational preferences evolve, how can Sig Tau strategically enhance its membership experience to attract new members, stay relevant, stand out from the competition, and keep existing members engaged?

We can enhance the undergraduate experience through mentorship and positive chapter culture. This is achieved through stabilizing chapters through placement of worthy mentors in vacant volunteer positions at the chapter level.

The advisors serve as mentors, role models, and lifelong friends which help our brotherhoods grow and thrive in all aspects of life. Advisor mentorships help executive board members retain lessons learned and focus on chapter goals. Focused chapters allow the membership to be young men enjoying some of the best years of their lives. This builds a culture which, when observed by outsiders and potential new members, glows when stacked against peer organizations.