

Malinda's Mailbag 1: Membership Questions

You have asked your questions over the year. You have made requests for topics.

This issue is dedicated to the Brothers who have asked these questions throughout the year. Of course, we know that each Brother who asks a question represents so many others who are thinking the question but aren't picking up the keyboard to write.

These questions focus on various membership status issues that chapters confront. While we end one year, we know that many Brothers will transfer, leave school, restart school, or otherwise change

their present status.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about policies or best ways to proceed, contact me at mmatney@umich.edu. Your work now can prevent a lot of stress and headaches (or worse) later.

Have a great year, and keep those questions coming! If you are in finals right now, best of wishes as you finish the year and head toward graduation!

Malinda

Questions: Am I an alumni member now?

This year, I have received many questions about whether a member (either the writer or someone else) is an alumni member. Let's dig into some common ones.

I have graduated, but have stayed at my university to get a graduate degree. What kind of member am I?

Congratulations on your graduation!! We know that what you are doing is not uncommon. You did terminate your affiliation by graduating, so you can claim alumni status.

Great, but what if I want to be active as a graduate student. Can I be?

Yes. You do need to be in a band, pay your dues – all the things that any other active must do.

What if I want to return to being an alumni member?

If you get part of the way through your graduate program and decide you do not have the time to be active anymore, simply make clear that you are going to use your alumni membership. Don't do this every other meeting – as my mother would say when I was young, "In the door or out of the door."

I left my institution without a degree. I decided to work for a few years. Am I alumni?

Yes. If you made a clear break from your institution, you are alumni. (I write this presuming all of these writers were in good standing with their active chapters prior to these issues happening.)

What if I decided I was leaving in Spring, but then came back for Fall after a "break". I'm alumni now, right?

No. Just leaving for the summer isn't "terminating your affiliation," as our National Constitution would label it. Your institution probably didn't even notice an interruption. Your intent doesn't matter here – what you really did matters.

What if I stop taking classes for a term and take a leave of absence?

Leaves of absence are becoming more common. If this was a leave of absence through some institutional program, it probably was not a termination of affiliation, and you are probably not alumni. Think of it this way – if you were eligible to have conditional membership while away, you didn't terminate the relationship.



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See us at:

www.kkpsi.org

Questions: Can I join?

Just as we have questions about alumni status, we have questions about active status.

I transferred to another institution to pursue a degree program I really, really love. I want to be active in the chapter here, and they seem like great Brothers. What do I do?

Congratulations on finding such a great situation, both academically and Fraternally! What you need to do is join a band, contact the chapter president, and let the president know you are interested in transferring your membership. After checking in with National Headquarters and the chapter sponsor, you'll pay local dues, follow the chapter constitution, and be an active member of that chapter. Enjoy!

I don't have a chapter at my school any longer. Can I be an active member at another campus nearby? No.

An active member must be enrolled at the campus with the chapter. If you terminated your affiliation in good standing and became an alumni

member, you can attend rituals and other events. However, the privileges of active membership are reserved for those enrolled and meeting all the requirements.

When I was in college back a long time ago (perhaps when you were, Dr. Matney), I started joining Kappa Kappa Psi. I want to complete that process, because it is important to finish what you start. Tell me how.

If you are on a campus with a chapter, and you are in a band program, you might make it known that you'd like to be considered for membership.

If you are not in college and not in band any longer, this isn't a viable option for you. Some opportunities do not last, so make the most of the ones you have while you have them.

Do you have high school chapters of Kappa Kappa Psi? No. However, if you work hard on your musicianship, attitude, and service, you will become the kind of Brother we seek when you get to college.

Questions: Duties of membership.

Sometimes we create our own problems. Let's dive in:

I have a very demanding exam coming up, and I really need to study. My chapter insists that I participate in our major service project of the year this weekend. Can I tell them "no?"

Or, let's look at this one:

My chapter has ritual this weekend. I'm not really "feeling" it. As I have been to many rituals (3 or 4 even), why should I go if I have to study?

I get the impression from both of these questions that these events were planned and announced well in advance. It is often easy to look at chapter events and point to them as the reasons you can't study. So, let's ask:

Did you have chapter events every night of the week, or several chapter events this month? Or, were events planned last minute and suddenly made "required?" (If this happened, your chapter may need to reevaluate its planning.)

Did you do other things this semester instead of studying? Often I'll talk with a student, and the student will have spent many hours watching TV (or at the coffee shop, or somewhere else), much more time than the chapter activities themselves took. So why is it the chapter activity that gets short shrift here? I would argue that it isn't the chapter activity that is taking time away from your studies if this is the case. The responsibility is on you to set priorities for how you use your time. Just like money, you do need to budget time to those obligations you know well in advance will exist.

Let's get to that ritual question. Ritual is one of the common ties of our Fraternity. To say that you aren't "feeling" it may indicate that you aren't investing the energy to gain a lesson. Sometimes it is about what is said. Sometimes it is about celebrating our newest members. Always it is about bringing together the whole Fraternal community. The Ritual may well rekindle that feeling.