CHAPTER LEADER EMphasis

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A Note From Liz Madigan

As you all know, we are celebrating the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife in 2020—and what a year it has been. Earlier this year, during what is normally a prime induction and graduation season for many of our members, the world was faced with the reality of a global pandemic. Sigma’s board and staff are immensely proud of the way chapters handled this and that many of you quickly pivoted to provide quality virtual induction ceremonies for incoming members.

Inductions are so much more than the bottom line. While graduating students faced the disappointing news of commencement ceremony cancellations and uncertainty, Sigma chapters stepped in and provided inspiring and supportive virtual inductions. It was uncharted territory for many chapters, but as leaders you bravely stepped up to quickly learn new technology, alter plans, and communicate with inductees. While it may have been simpler to cancel or postpone inductions, Sigma’s chapter leaders recognized the importance of bringing these new members into our supportive community, at a time when it was perhaps needed most.

While we can’t know what the future will hold, we have learned valuable lessons. One lesson is that our members need us. As we all face uncertainty relative to our schools, workplaces, and communities, Sigma can serve as a reliable and helpful community to see each other through.

Now, more than ever, we have to support our membership and help others join us in our mission of improving healthcare everywhere.

Second, we know that we should continue to prepare for virtual interactions. We can continue to explore how to leverage technology to engage and relate to members. From this issue, we hope you take away tips and ideas for planning virtual ceremonies, but you don’t have to stop there. We’ve spoken with many chapters that have planned creative and interactive virtual programs, opportunities, and events that have helped members stay connected. For ideas and suggestions, view our article on page 7 about engaging members virtually.

Please know that we are fully dedicated to supporting our chapter leaders, members, and nurses everywhere. While I’m sure this is not how many of us expected the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife to be, it has truly shown the strength and value of our profession.

You can visit and share our website at SigmaNursing.org/HereForYou to view the resources we’ve put together for all nurses during this time. Don’t hesitate to contact us if you have ideas, suggestions, or feedback for additional ways we can serve you better.

Together we are Sigma nurses on a mission to develop nurse leaders anywhere to improve healthcare everywhere.

Sincerely,

Liz Madigan, PhD, RN, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer
The board of directors met virtually on Thursday, 11 June 2020. Following are the outcomes and announcements from that meeting.

**FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and staff directors prepared an annual budget for the board’s consideration. The board reviewed and approved Sigma Theta Tau International’s FY 2021 budget. Annual budgets for the three subsidiaries (Nursing Foundation, Building Corporation, Sigma Marketplace) have been reviewed and approved by their respective boards.

**ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE**

Dr. Madigan briefed the board on the organizational efforts and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting the interest and downloads for the various educational offerings.

**LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION REQUEST**

President Ricciardi requested board members solicit interested members of the organization for leadership positions and to forward names to the Leadership Succession Committee.

**CHAPTER CHARTERS AND CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

The Governance Committee presented motions for nine chapter charters, three chapter charter amendments, and one chapter division for the board’s consideration. All motions were reviewed and approved via electronic voting.

**Chapter Charters Approved**

- Cumberland University - Lebanon, Tennessee, USA
- Hofstra University - Hempstead, New York, USA and Northwell Health Care System - Hempstead, New York, USA
- King Saud University - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Lee University - Cleveland, Tennessee, USA
- Lindsey Wilson College - Columbia, Kentucky, USA
- Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford - Palo Alto, California, USA and Stanford Health Care - Palo Alto, California, USA
- Sam Houston State University - Huntsville, Texas, USA
- University of Ha’il - Ha’il, Saudi Arabia
- University of South Carolina Beaufort - Bluffton, South Carolina, USA

**Chapter Charter Amendments Approved**

- The Citadel (Charleston, South Carolina, USA) to join Gamma Omicron at-Large Chapter, Charleston Southern University (Charleston, South Carolina, USA) and Medical University of South Carolina (Charleston, South Carolina, USA)
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Dublin, Ireland) to join Omega Epsilon at-Large Chapter, Institute of Technology Tralee (Tralee, Ireland), University College Cork (Cork, Ireland), and Waterford Institute of Technology (Waterford, Ireland)
- Anne Arundel Medical Center (Annapolis, Maryland, USA) to join Pi Chapter, University of Maryland (Baltimore, Maryland, USA)

**Chapter Division Approved**

- Nu Rho at-Large Chapter will retain Nebraska Wesleyan University (Lincoln, Nebraska, USA) and Union College (Lincoln, Nebraska, USA). Bryan College of Health Sciences (Lincoln, Nebraska, USA) will be chartered as a new chapter.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Ricciardi, PhD, CRNP, FAANP, FAAN 2019-2021 President

Safiya George Dalmida, PhD, APRN-BC 2019-2021 Secretary
At convention, join us as Sigma celebrates our 100th anniversary!
Start planning now to make sure your chapter helps us mark this significant organizational milestone.
IMPORTANT REMINDERS

IRS FORM 990 DUE 15 NOVEMBER

All US chapters must submit a variation of the IRS Form 990 by 15 November 2020. Chapters that fail to file for three consecutive years will automatically lose their tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status and may be required to begin paying federal income taxes.

Before submitting the form, US chapters will need the following:

- The organization’s legal name (Example: Sigma Theta Tau, Inc. 482 Phi Delta)
- Any other name the organization uses (Example: Phi Delta Chapter)
- The name and address of a principal officer of the organization
- The organization’s mailing address
- The organization’s employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have your EIN on file, please contact the IRS or email chapserv@sigmanursing.org
- The organization’s annual tax year (also known as the fiscal year: 1 July–30 June)

Chapter treasurers will receive a postcard in the mail in October and will receive additional reminders each month through Leader Lines.

Chapters outside of the US should be aware of any similar financial requirements in your respective countries. For assistance, please email us at chapserv@sigmanursing.org.

OPPORTUNITY TO ADJUST RENEWAL AMOUNTS

Sigma chapters can adjust membership renewal fees one time each biennium. The next opportunity is between 1 January and 15 March 2021.

You can submit revised fees for three separate membership types:

- **Regular Member** – A regular member is any member who is renewing and who is not a new or life member.
- **Life Member** – Life membership was offered at the chapter level until 1976. Every chapter must set this fee to accommodate any life members who may transfer into the chapter in the future. Some chapters choose to make this a reduced amount, but you are not required to do so.
- **New Member** – This gives chapters the option of assessing new inductees a lesser amount at the time of induction to make induction costs more affordable. This amount does not include ceremony or additional costs.

Increases in chapter dues are limited by the Consumer Price Index percentage increase based on your last chapter dues adjustment. This means that the chapter cannot assume a specific increase (i.e., US $10), as it might not be feasible with the CPI percentage increase.

Each member is also charged a US $73.00 international fee, which chapters cannot change. A sliding scale applies to middle- and low-income countries based on the World Bank Classifications.

The dues form will be available 1 January through 15 March in the Chapter Management System at https://Management.SigmaNursing.org. Reminders will be sent through Leader Lines to treasurers and presidents, as well as posted in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup on The Circle.

If your chapter makes changes to the dues, please document your changes and rationale in your Policy and Procedure Manual. This will keep future leaders informed and streamline dues changes in the future.
Showcase of Regional Excellence

The Showcase of Regional Excellence recognizes chapters for their good work in relation to the Presidential Call to Action. This recognition is given at the regional level and spans the biennium.

Accomplishments for the 2019-2021 biennium should represent the Presidential Call to Action which asks you to Infuse Joy through:

three elements of INFUSING JOY

AWARENESS

Awareness includes a clear understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to fulfill our professional responsibilities and achieve our goals. When we are competent, confident, and have mastery over our work, joy can flourish.

BALANCE AND PURPOSE

Achieving balance and purpose requires us to make time for creativity and serendipity, mindfulness and rest, activities that foster health and well-being, as well as gratitude, service to others, and philanthropy.

CO-CREATION

Co-creating includes relationship building, using team science, recognizing interdependencies, having a shared mental organizational model, taking pride in one’s work, and instituting policy initiatives to support a joyful organizational culture. As competent, confident nurses acting with balance and purpose, we can take the next step to infusing joy.

SUBMISSIONS

- Chapters can begin applying for the Showcase of Regional Excellence beginning on 1 March 2021.
- Submission deadline is 31 May 2021.
- Each chapter may only submit one entry.

Recipients of the Showcase of Regional Excellence recognized during the 2019-2021 biennium will receive a certificate and have their name posted on the Sigma website. Recipients will also be recognized during regional meetings at the 46th Biennial Convention in 2021.

For additional information, including links to find ideas for chapters, visit SigmaNursing.org/SRE.
Encouraging Virtual Participation

Many lessons have been learned this year, including the value and necessity of virtual interactions. When meeting in person is not possible, virtual tools and creative ideas have allowed Sigma chapters to remain in contact and provide opportunities to keep members engaged.

We know that now more than ever it's our duty to provide members with resources and support. There are many ways for Sigma chapter leaders to engage members online so they remain connected to the chapter and find value in renewing membership. This article provides tips and ideas to take advantage of the virtual channels available through Sigma and elsewhere, and ways to encourage active participation and build meaningful relationships with members online.
THE CIRCLE AND CHAPTER WEBSITES

The Circle is Sigma’s online member community, where Sigma nurses can come together and interact with one another based on their own interests or career fields. It’s a great resource for chapters to help members take advantage of through training and promotion. There are a variety of communities that members can join to participate in timely and topic-based conversations with nurses from around the world, as well as virtual volunteer opportunities in which to participate.

Members can also connect with their local chapters on The Circle. Sigma provides all chapters with a free website hosted on the platform, where leaders can directly engage with active members via discussions and emails. All active members automatically have access to their chapter’s site, which provides the chapter with an opportunity to create a central hub of information. There are several areas of the chapter website that can be updated and customized by the chapter to provide members with a steady stream of current events and updates.

A VIRTUAL SUCCESS STORY – OMICRON DELTA CHAPTER

Omicron Delta Chapter (University of Phoenix, USA) posted a discussion in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup and shared with other chapters how they used their discussion forum during the pandemic to bring their members together in a virtual membership meeting.

The chapter explained that the purpose of this meeting was to highlight the projects and accomplishments of members. An initial discussion post announcing the meeting was sent to members, inviting them to contribute to the virtual meeting over a two-day period. In the first day, 30 members checked in which resulted in more than 95 responses as members got to know one another on the discussion forum. As the two-day meeting progressed, members shared their special projects and research initiatives. It was clear that members were able to form connections with one another and learn something new during this virtual get-together. Visit the All Chapter Officers Workgroup discussion forum to view the chapter’s post.

Tips for chapter websites

- The **Chapter Welcome Message** provides a space for you to welcome members to your site and invite them to explore more of the information available. Some chapters personalize this space with a letter from the president or with photos of chapter activities so that members and potential members alike can visit the site and learn about what your chapter does and who your members are.

- **Chapter News** is an announcement board that can include information and links to the chapter’s newest and most important information. Provide training to members, explaining this is the area to look when they want to seek out updated information about the chapter. It’s important to keep the website and especially this area consistently updated so members don’t find incorrect or outdated information.

- The **Chapter Events** calendar is another space on the website to help members understand the ongoing value the chapter provides. Include any virtual or in-person meetings, activities, webcasts, etc., in which members can participate.

- The chapter’s **Resource Library** provides the opportunity to store important documents for your members to reference. This could include useful articles or webinar recordings, as well as meeting minutes, newsletters, and other documents about chapter business to keep members informed. Members can also share resources in the library.

- The chapter’s **Discussion Forum** provides an opportunity for chapter leaders and members to have conversations and serves as one of the two email options on chapter websites. Most members will receive conversations from the discussion forum in a daily digest email that compiles all of the prior day’s messages. This area can serve to not only communicate with members, but also encourage active conversation and host meetings and activities.
Chapter activity ideas on The Circle

- Host a short, virtual meeting to demonstrate how to find and join Sigma’s communities of interest. There are a wide variety of community topics to choose from like nurse educators, critical care, and pediatrics. Members can engage in important dialogue related to their fields of interest and find like-minded peers.
- Put together a fun networking activity. For example, challenge members to use the member directory and find five other members who have common interests on their profiles. Encourage them to add contacts and start conversations!
- Ask members to browse the communities of interest and find five discussion threads about a chosen topic. Consider adding an incentive to participate, like mailing a nominal gift certificate to the winner.
- Encourage members to take advantage of Sigma’s virtual volunteer opportunities, ranging from something small like following the organization on social media, to something more involved like serving as a community of interest facilitator or career advisor.
- Create a “to do” list for members, such as adding a bio to their profile, uploading a photo, and joining the Global Member Forum, the open topic community on The Circle. Recognize those who complete the activity with a special call-out on social media or the chapter website.

SIGMA PROGRAMS

Your chapter can generate lively discussions or virtual events using the benefits and programs that Sigma has created for members. In fact, there are many opportunities for your chapter to build programming around these resources in order to engage your chapter and provide ongoing value to your members (see our article on page 12 to learn about Sigma’s newest offerings). Many chapters have found creative ways to utilize them, including:

- Listening “parties” for newly released episodes of Sigma’s new scholarly podcast, SigmaCast. Chapters can organize a time for participating members to listen to the podcast and hold live virtual discussions while listening. Members can also receive continuing nursing education (CNE) credit with each episode.
- Chapters can design programming to help newly graduated members complete the recently revised, free Sigma member CNE program, Surviving Your First Years as a Nurse. Sigma provides a facilitators’ guide to help chapters develop member programming around this program, which is available in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup resource library.
- Sigma has hosted many excellent and educational webcasts this year on a variety of topics and themes, and several chapters have found ways to incorporate them into chapter programming. Organize a virtual event, and play one of the webcast recordings found at SigmaNursing.org/HereForYou. Find a local expert who can spend 15 minutes leading a conversation about the topic after the viewing.
- Hundreds of human interest pieces, articles, and items of research exist on Sigma’s content hub, Nursing Centered (SigmaNursing.org/NursingCentered), and in the Sigma Repository (SigmaRepository.org). Similar to the fun examples of activities on The Circle, chapters can think of creative ways to use all of this content available, including virtual games, scavenger hunts, and more.
- Sigma President Ric Ricciardi’s call to action, Infuse Joy, is an excellent theme for virtual member engagement. Ask members to share what infusing joy means to them in a discussion post or share a selfie of infusing joy at home or work.
SOCIAL MEDIA

The immense popularity of social media should be considered when thinking about virtual engagement. According to Pew Research Center, 72% of the public uses some form of social media, with the number significantly increasing for younger demographics. This opens the door for you to reach a huge audience with your messaging including current members, potential recruits, and community partners.

Social media allows your messaging to reach far beyond your immediate audience. Having a social media profile makes it easier for your members to share what they love about your chapter with other nurses on their personal platforms, and these types of peer insights are among the most important factors to potential new members when it comes to considering the value of a Sigma membership. Engaging virtual ideas on social media include:

- Host a social media chat about a certain topic and use a common hashtag to keep all of the posts identifiable. Twitter is a popular platform to host this kind of activity, and Phi Mu Chapter (Bournemouth University, England, United Kingdom) has hosted several successful activities of this kind. Visit their Twitter profile at @PhiMuChapter.
- Encourage members to use the Sigma profile photo frames on Facebook or create inspirational graphics that are chapter specific for members to display on their profiles and share with others, maximizing the pride they feel to be a Sigma nurse.
- Create a post and ask members to share a photo that makes them proud to be a nurse. This kind of camaraderie is meaningful for developing connections, especially when interactions are virtual.
- Feature a member of the week on social media, sharing a photo and interesting facts or accomplishments.
- Share content from the Sigma headquarters accounts. This is a quick and easy way to keep members informed of new benefits and initiatives without needing to put together the chapter’s own wording and graphics.
- Include #WeAreSigmaNurses in your posts so other Sigma members and partners can easily find, identify, and share your content.

CONCLUSION

Virtual tools have allowed us to do many things this year, from membership meetings, to inductions, to regional events. These experiences have taught us that virtual engagements offer their own, unique types of interactions, whether standalone or supplementing an in-person gathering. Chapter leaders can continue utilizing these tools to further engagement and member satisfaction. For more resources, visit the All Chapter Officers Workgroup resource library.
Celebrate Founders Day

Almost 100 years ago, six nurses founded Sigma at what is today the Indiana University School of Nursing in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. On 5 October, we invite you to celebrate, share your influence, and continue the legacy.

HONOR THE TRADITION

Sigma encourages chapters to celebrate Founders Day by embodying the organization’s founding principles of love, courage, and honor. As we approach Sigma’s 100th anniversary, chapters are challenged to organize an activity to provide 100 minutes of service to your community. Ideas include:

- Host a social media chat and ask members to share positive, uplifting stories related to nursing. Create a hashtag and encourage everyone to view the posts when they need inspiration.
- Advocate or raise money as a group for a worthy cause in your chapter community.
- Ask members to volunteer as career advisors to meet with new or graduating nurses and provide advice during an organized virtual or in-person meeting time.

SHOW YOUR SIGMA PRIDE

Encourage your members to show their Sigma pride by wearing Sigma apparel and jewelry, handing out informational material, and talking to their colleagues about the value and benefit of Sigma. Visit the Sigma Print-on-Demand system at SigmaChapterShop.com or SigmaMarketplace.org to order chapter branded products and more that make great Founders Day gifts!

SHARE YOUR INFLUENCE

With all the many ways you can celebrate this day, infuse joy within them. Be sure to share with Sigma by posting photos on The Circle or tagging Sigma or using #InfuseJoy on social media. Look for headquarters social media content on this day and share it from your own pages.

CONTINUE THE LEGACY

Plan to be a part of an honored tradition on 5 October 2020 and make your Sigma Founders Day celebration truly memorable. For event planning resources, or to share ideas with other leaders, log in to the All Chapter Officers Workgroup on The Circle.
Sigma has been busy developing new projects and initiatives, as well as making upgrades to popular member benefits and services. Read about these exciting updates on the next two pages and promote them to your members so they can take full advantage of what their Sigma membership has to offer. Be sure to also read the article on page 7, “Emphasis On Encouraging Virtual Participation,” for ideas on how to transform them into virtual chapter programs or gatherings.

**SURVIVING YOUR FIRST YEARS AS A NURSE PROGRAM RELAUNCH**

Sigma has updated and enhanced its popular Surviving Your First Years as a Nurse online continuing nursing education (CNE) program. This program is designed to support new nurses as they transition into clinical practice, and has a value of US $105, but is free for Sigma members.

The six-course program includes: Transitioning from Student to Professional Nurse, Legal Risks as a Nurse, Dealing with Disruptive Patients and Families, Advancing Your Nursing Career, Social Media for Healthcare Providers, and Bullying in the Workplace: Solutions for Nursing Practice.

Chapters can promote this program to student members, or members who have recently graduated and will be entering the work force for the first time! Sigma has also developed a facilitators’ guide to help chapters create programming around this member offering. Download the guide from the All Chapter Officers Workgroup.

Sigma provides several free CNE courses for members, and we encourage chapter leaders to communicate this to their members. Visit [SigmaNursing.org/OnlineEducation](http://SigmaNursing.org/OnlineEducation) to take advantage of this revamped course and others.

**EXPLORE THE PROFESSION WITH NEW CNE OPTIONS**

SigmaCast, Sigma’s scholarly discussions podcast, was launched in late 2019 as an audio based resource for nurses to keep up with current events, explore the latest research, find common ground with other nursing professionals from around the world, and discuss the challenges of the nursing profession and how they can affect professional work.

Recordings of past SigmaCast episodes are accessible on [Nursing Centered](http://NursingCentered) and include topics such as Mental Health Interventions for Healthcare Providers, Preprints in Nursing Scholarship, Bullying and Incivility in Nursing, and more! Free continuing nursing education (CNE) is available for members with each episode. Follow Sigma on Facebook or Twitter to see when new SigmaCast episodes are announced.

In addition to SigmaCast, Sigma has partnered with several influential nursing groups and organizations to develop a robust webinar program focused on a variety of nursing topics. Recordings and upcoming webinars are available at [SigmaNursing.org/Webinars](http://SigmaNursing.org/Webinars) and cover topics like NCLEX preparation, nurses on climate change, and nursing self-care. Members can also earn free CNE with most presentations.
SIGMA ACADEMY UPDATES

Sigma has several new academies that members can participate in, customized to serve various segments of nurses both in academia and in clinical practice.

Sigma has academies for both new and experienced faculty members as well as nurses who want to improve their leadership skills. These are 12-month, mentored experiences and include the Nurse Educator Development Academy, New Academic Leadership Academy, Experienced Academic Leadership Academy, and the Nurse Leadership Academy for Practice.

Sigma also offers virtual academies, both short and long term, with topics including writing for publication of a manuscript and development of writing skills for nurses in various career stages.

Visit the Sigma website at SigmaNursing.org/Academies to find more information and see which academy may be right for you. Educate your members on these new offerings soon, as applications for the next cohort are open now!

SIGMA’S NEW RESOURCE CENTER: NURSING CENTERED

Reflections on Nursing Leadership has been renamed, refreshed, and reimagined! Now called Nursing Centered, this resource center combines articles, member stories, videos, webinars, and podcasts to create an engaging experience. This mixed-media platform shares stories and nursing information from nurses and Sigma chapters worldwide, from their view, in their voice. Visit SigmaNursing.org/NursingCentered to catch up on the latest!

DID YOU KNOW?

Sigma has new resources for orienting new members.

WE ARE HAPPY TO PROVIDE:

• A 44-second video listing the top five things new members should do to make the most of their membership.

• An updated PowerPoint presentation that allows you to customize and use it to help educate and engage your new members.

Find these and more in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup on The Circle.

https://TheCircle.SigmaNursing.org
Conducting a Virtual Induction Ceremony

Virtual inductions have been essential this year, not just to keep chapters viable, but most importantly to bring new members into our supportive community of Sigma nurses. While a traditional, in-person ceremony will never lose its value, both chapter leaders and Sigma staff recognize the importance of being prepared to host this kind of virtual interaction.

As we’ve experienced, virtual ceremonies can help when gathering in person is not an option. What many have also realized is that virtual ceremonies can be used to help the chapter serve members in other ways. In addition to an in-person event, several chapters have mentioned incorporating virtual ceremonies throughout the year to help induct more students and nurse leaders as soon as they are ready. Others have reported they will develop a hybrid event for candidates who can’t attend a ceremony due to distance or otherwise, but still want to participate.

There are several resources available in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup resource library to help chapters prepare for virtual induction ceremonies, and many chapter leaders with experience willing to help in the discussion forum. In this article of “In the Loop,” we turned our best tips, advice, and ideas from chapters into step by step considerations for conducting a virtual induction ceremony.
Set up for success

STEP 1 – Choose a platform

All virtual inductions require the use of video conferencing systems that meet the needs of each chapter’s unique induction. Choices will vary based on attendee size and other desired features, but most chapters have reported using common providers like Zoom, GoToWebinar, or WebEx, among others.

When choosing a platform, weigh the costs, capabilities, and support you can expect from the company. Some companies offer free access, generally with time and attendee limits, that may be suitable for some chapters. Likewise, universities or practice settings associated with the chapter may have a service that can be used by the chapter.

Make sure the system has all of the capabilities your chapter needs, like downloadable recordings, allowance for multiple hosts, video and screen sharing capabilities, registration, password access, suitable attendee limits, and whatever else your chapter deems necessary. A good way to organize this is by creating a checklist before researching vendors.

Once the platform is selected and the ceremony has been scheduled in the system, a link will be generated that attendees can use to access the meeting or register (depending on the platform). This link will be used in the Online Induction System, explored later in the article.

STEP 2 – Select a date

Virtual inductions offer flexibility when selecting a time and date for the ceremony. Nontraditional times, like midday breaks, might be a good option so inductees can celebrate with their coworkers. Another important consideration is the length of the ceremony; attention spans are shorter online, so having a shorter ceremony than in-person ceremonies might be a better option.

It’s a good idea to record the ceremony, as inevitably not everyone will be able to attend. New members can also share the recording with friends and family to help celebrate the occasion. For chapters with members in different time zones, some chapters have reported hosting a live viewing of the recorded ceremony during another convenient time.

The most important consideration when selecting a date for the induction is to leave plenty of time for candidates to accept their invitation. Additional reminders and communication with candidates will need to take place as part of active recruitment, and it’s important that chapters leave time for these kinds of interactions. Generally, issuing invitations 4-6 weeks in advance is a recommended timeframe.

STEP 3 – Schedule in the Online Induction System

Once the chapter has a URL for the scheduled event and a date established 4-6 weeks in the future, candidates can be uploaded to the Online Induction System. Aside from student candidates, be sure to invite anyone who can be inducted as a nurse leader, such as faculty, past candidates who did not accept, or clinical nurses working in your community.

In the system chapters will choose “Virtual Ceremony” as the ceremony type, which will populate fields to fill out, including one for a ceremony URL where you can paste the link created by the video conferencing platform.
Communication is key

STEP 4 – Schedule induction reminders

Part of setting up an induction is scheduling communication touchpoints. Strategic communication is very important during this time while candidates are making their decision, and especially if a virtual ceremony is a new format for the chapter.

After filling in the details and uploading candidates to the Online Induction System, the next step is to issue the invitation through the system. Members will receive Sigma’s standard membership invitation via email, and it will also trigger a mailed invitation to be sent to the candidate’s mailing address.

After the invitation has been issued, chapters can select two other options to schedule reminders through the Online Induction System:

• **Standard induction reminder**: This is a standard message that cannot be customized and reminds candidates who have not yet accepted their invitation to do so. Because the text will always remain the same, chapters can consider scheduling it to send 2-3 times during the acceptance period, sending no more than once per week.

• **Customizable email to candidates**: This message allows chapters to send customizable emails to specific groups of candidates (e.g., those who have not yet accepted, ceremony attendees, and more). This would be a great way to communicate details, instructions, and logistics about a virtual ceremony with attendees.

STEP 5 – Plan helpful communication

Chapters will also want to plan communication outside of the Online Induction System. Using other creative means to communicate helps ensure every candidate sees your message and allows the chapter to create excitement, have conversations, and begin developing relationships. Chapters can consider social media, virtual chat sessions, website promotion, ads in campus or employer publications, and more to help accomplish this kind of informal and welcoming style of recruitment.

Think about the last time you attended a virtual event and what information was important for you to know in order for it to be a good experience. Things like date, time, and a web address with instructions to access the meeting are essential and should be communicated multiple times. Think of what questions might come from attendees, like how they will get their membership materials, and try to answer them ahead of time. All of this helps new inductees have a good experience and a smooth start to their membership.

Make it special

STEP 6 – Plan the program

The last thing to do is plan the actual program, incorporating the special elements that make Sigma inductions so meaningful. Chapters have done an exceptional job with this and have identified many ways for virtual ceremonies to be a memorable event for inductees. Fun ideas described by chapters include:

• Invite a keynote speaker or special guest to give a virtual presentation or record a welcome message to play during the ceremony.

• Download and customize the virtual induction script and slide deck from the All Chapter Officers Workgroup.

• After the names of inductees are read, ask inductees to turn on their camera and hold up a homemade sign that says “I am a Sigma nurse.”

• Encourage inductees to invite their friends and family by providing the link to tune in or watching the celebration together.
• Ask presenters and attendees to show their Sigma pride by wearing honor cords and stoles, purple apparel, or items from the Sigma Marketplace.

• Have presenters use virtual backgrounds when they are on camera; special Sigma backgrounds are available in the All Chapter Officers Workgroup.

For more resources about virtual induction ceremonies and programming, visit the All Chapter Officers Workgroup resource library on The Circle at https://TheCircle.SigmaNursing.org/MyGroups.

**Technology tips for a smooth ceremony**

• Use the platform settings to ensure attendees’ microphones are muted upon entering the session. This will help reduce background noise and potential for an interruption.

• Become familiar with the platform and ensure everyone is comfortable using the settings, switching presenters, sharing screens, and using the audio. Hold a practice session to work out any potential issues in advance.

• If you plan to share a video during the ceremony, ensure that the audio will play from your computer so that attendees can hear it. You may have to activate a special setting, since the system will be using a microphone to pick up audio for the attendees and not sharing the sound from your device.

• Most video conferencing platforms provide a setting to have sessions automatically record. This is a good option so it isn’t forgotten and no part of the ceremony is lost.

• To protect your event from hackers, enable a password to enter the meeting or consider having attendees enter a “waiting room” in which they must be manually permitted to join the session.

• Assign a volunteer to help provide feedback for any questions or chats that come from attendees, including help with the technology.

• Build in a bit of extra time at the beginning of the ceremony for attendees or guests who may be running a few minutes behind.

• If attendees will be asked to actively participate in any way, such as show their camera or speak, they should know beforehand. Make sure attendees are prepared and know what to do when they are cued.
How to become a website of the month

Many chapters have been highlighted as Sigma’s website of the month, and earlier this year the Omega Epsilon at-Large Chapter, Sigma’s first chapter in Ireland, received this designation little more than one year after chartering. We asked Elizabeth Weathers, Director and Founding Past President for Omega Epsilon at-Large Chapter, to share the steps the chapter took to develop an impressive website in a short amount of time.

WHAT STEPS DID YOU TAKE IMMEDIATELY UPON CHARTERING IN ORDER TO RECEIVE WEBSITE OF THE MONTH SO QUICKLY AS A NEW CHAPTER?

The chapter board of directors has always been conscious of the need to have a strong online presence, so the website is included as a discussion topic on almost all meeting agendas. Immediately after chartering, two board members attended a training session from Sigma headquarters to learn about managing the website. This helped us to make the website user-friendly and more appealing for our members.

WHICH CHAPTER LEADER POSITION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING YOUR CHAPTER WEBSITE?

The responsibility is shared amongst members of the Public Relations Committee. The Chapter President also oversees the publication of website material. After chartering, the board decided to create a new position at the board level, Social Media Chair. The aim of this role is to develop and enhance the online presence of the chapter via the website and social media.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU UPDATE YOUR CHAPTER WEBSITE?

The website is updated monthly or sometimes more often if there are important updates for members.

HOW DO YOU ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO VISIT THE CHAPTER WEBSITE?

We worked closely with Sigma headquarters after chartering and thought about the layout of the website and what information we wanted our members to see straight away before having to scroll. This planning has definitely helped us engage more members. Also, regular updates to the website and regular emails to members informing them of any important information on the website have been a good way of keeping members engaged. Furthermore, all board members have added a chapter website link to their email signatures in an extra effort to engage members.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER OTHER CHAPTERS THAT WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE WEBSITE OF THE MONTH?

Try to include the website as an item on a future board meeting agenda with the aim of appointing two or more officers to dedicate time to formatting and updating the website. It is also useful to incorporate responsibility for the website into a sub-committee such as a Public Relations Committee.

Nominate your own chapter website for the website of the month recognition by emailing chapserv@sigmanursing.org. To learn more about your chapter’s website, submit a consultation request form to meet with Sigma staff at SigmaNursing.org/Consultations.
Chapter Giving Club

THANK YOU TO THE MOST RECENT CHAPTER GIVING CLUB DONORS!

More than 200 chapters donated to the Sigma Foundation for Nursing in the past fiscal year. Their annual donations provide membership subsidies to ensure nurses can be a part of Sigma regardless of their financial circumstances, as well as research grants for nurse scientists to conduct studies that improve patient care.

Ready to make your chapter’s 2020-2021 Chapter Giving Club donation? Donate online at SigmaNursing.org/Donate or contact Becky Frey at rebecca@sigmanursing.org, 888.634.7575 (US/Canada toll-free), or +1.317.634.8171 (International) ext. 4977.

Chapters listed below donated at the Chapter Giving Club level—US $1* per member—between 1 January and 30 June 2020. A complete list of 2019-2020 Chapter Giving Club donors can be found online at SigmaNursing.org/ChapterGiving.

* US $.40 per member for chapters in middle-income countries and US $.20 per member for chapters in low-income countries.
IMPORTANT DATES

5 October
Sigma Founders Day

8 October
[Webcast] Introduction to the Chapter Management System

15 November
IRS Form 990 due (US chapters only)

9 December
[Webcast] Getting to Know the All Chapter Officers Workgroup

For a complete calendar of important dates, please visit the Events section of the All Chapter Officers Workgroup on The Circle.

CHAPTER LEADER EMPHASIS
is a biannual publication for chapter leaders.