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INTRODUCTION

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Meeting the Challenge of Education Excellence in International Studies

Much has been written about the challenges facing higher education today in terms of its mission to society to develop an educated and engaged citizenry, to the problems of vocational training, the relevance of liberal arts and the humanities in a technologically-based society, as well as the impact the globalization of most of social and economic dynamics has on our jobs, welfare, and prospects for the future. It may be a truism that the demand for individuals who possess skill sets that can be transferred across occupations in the public and private sector is increasing, but it is an empirically valid as evidenced by contemporary corporate hiring practices. To be competitive in today’s world young people must integrate technical skills (writing ability; computer and database management; electronic presentations), analytical skills (the “compare and contrast” skills of English; mathematical or statistical skills; theoretical and applied economics), and facility in a foreign language—all anchored by a strong program of study that has both breadth and depth. When we succeed in this—either from a programmatic perspective or when an individual student leaves college in possession of these intellectual and cognitive abilities, we can take pride in our work and accomplishments. But man, being a social being functioning in organizations that demand a means of segregating talent and identifying its best and highest achievers, seeks a means to validate these characteristics. Colleges and universities do this through the credentialization process and the awarding of degrees. In addition, academic honor societies came into being to build a visible community of scholars and students with a shared interest in promoting their field of study and to the recognition of the very best among those in that community that exhibit excellence in academic achievement, service to the community, and promotion and advancement of the field of study in question. Sigma Iota Rho serves this purpose for the community of students and scholars in what is variously described as international studies, international affairs, global studies, or international relations.

American higher education has faced a particular problem in the organization and administration of interdisciplinary fields and degree programs in general, but in international studies the problems have been exacerbated or magnified by the bureaucratic organization of the university and the historical embeddedness of the traditional disciplines within those structures. There are good reasons for this. The development of our field is rooted in the major international events of the 20th century. International relations primarily developed as a distinct subject in Great Britain and the U.S.—largely for reasons of the position these nations assumed in the major historical events of the twentieth century that have shaped human destiny: both World Wars, the Cold War, the expansion of transnational interactions in trade, finance, education, tourism and the consequent burgeoning interdependence of nations and peoples now referred to by the shorthand of “globalization.” More importantly, the environment of higher education in these countries facilitated the adaptation of new approaches and techniques as democratic traditions permitted the principle of academic freedom to be enunciated and elaborated in them long before it migrated to the Continent and subsequently, around the world.

Membership in Sigma Iota Rho is intended not only to enhance the credentials of its members, though public recognition of the best and the brightest students in international studies is one of
our main purposes, but is meant to encourage a life-long devotion to a better understanding of the world we live in and to continuing support for and engagement in education, service, and occupational activities that reflect the mission of Sigma Iota Rho. In that way we do not limit ourselves to once-a-year pats on the back during the induction of new members, but internalize the belief that our purpose for studying international affairs is not only to position ourselves to succeed in a globalized society, but to make the world we live in a better place through our contributions in our work and day-to-day life. This work begins in our local chapters on the campuses where Sigma Iota Rho has a presence. In this regard we hope you will “think globally, act locally” now and in the year’s ahead.

HISTORY OF THE HONOR SOCIETY

The Origins of Sigma Iota Rho
By William Olson, Past President pro-term, Professor of Political Science, School of International Service

Background Rationale
While the question of whether “IR” is an academic discipline may remain unresolved, international relations has been around as a separate subject since the end of the First World War. And while most majors in the subject continue to be located in political science, consensus remains that this subject can best be understood from an interdisciplinary perspective. The intellectual demands of the IR discipline account for its appeal to only the best students. Recognition of this field calls for special attention.

Formation of the Society
In 1983, the dean of the School of International Service at American University in Washington, D.C., observed during an initiation service for Pi Gamma Mu, the national political science honorary society, that a high proportion of the new inductees were actually IR majors who had taken enough courses in political science to qualify for membership. A degree program in IR had been offered since 1958, but no society existed to recognize achievement of honors. Informal consultation among honor students and faculty agreed that a new Society for International Relations would be useful.

The dean sought the assistance of Professor Theodore Couloumbis to designate the appropriate Greek letters standing for three basic qualities of the study of international relations. Sigma stands for “synesis,” the Greek word meaning prudence, iota for “ideodoi,” meaning ideals, and rho for “rhomi,” meaning power. The School of International Service at American University endorsed this development with enthusiasm.

On the basis of the standard similar to those of Phi Betta Kappa, students with outstanding academic records were invited to become the first twenty members of Sigma Iota Rho. The first inaugural dinner for twelve students was held in Washington on May 9, 1984, with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, alumni, staff and faculty, including the founding dean, in attendance. The society was certified as a “recognized organization of the American University” by the Advisor for Organizations/Greek Life, Gwendolyn P. Miller, on August 22, 1984.
Presentation to the International Studies Association
The next logical step was to present the idea to an informal gathering of the International Studies Association. The annual meeting of this group of teachers and other practitioners from diverse disciplines, although mostly from the political science field, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel located in Washington, D.C., in 1985 provided the opportunity. Roughly twenty-five people took part in discussion which revealed considerable interest. A striking feature of the comment from faculty members from various colleges and universities was that IR students tended to be among the most outstanding, but they possessed little sense of identity with the field of international studies. It was generally agreed to take the idea to form a society back to respective campuses for reaction, with plans to report at the next meeting of the ISA whether any interest was shown in Sigma Iota Rho.

By the time of the 1986 ISA annual meeting in California, some had already taken steps to form Sigma Iota Rho chapter. Attendance at the second informal discussion concerning the new honor society was nearly double that of the previous year. A formal organizational meeting was held April 16, 1987 in the Palladium Room of the Omni Hotel in Washington. Roger Coate of the University of South Carolina was elected unanimously as the President of the meeting. Dean William Olson, also from the University of South Carolina, was chosen as Director of Sigma Iota Rho. Grant T. Hammond was selected President-elect. Twenty-six colleges and universities presented petitions for the establishment of local chapters.

On April 8, 1989, a Certificate of Incorporation was presented by Anne Piorkowsky to Angela Ford, Notary Public in the District of Columbia, who certified its acceptance.

Sigma Iota Rho Active Chapter Geography, January 2004
Since 1987, 69 chapters were established in 32 states with new inquiries continuously reviewed on a rolling basis. Currently (4-14-05), 49 chapters are officially recognized as active.

**SYMBOLISM BEHIND THE CREST**

The crest of the society draws heavily on the meaning behind the three Greek letters that form its name. Sigma stands for “synesis,” meaning prudence, iota for “ideodoi,” meaning ideals, and “rho” for “rhomi,” meaning power.

**Colors:** black – knowledge and discretion necessary in the study of international affairs; blue – loyalty and sincerity that the scholars have towards the respective theoretical paradigms; red – magnanimity and ferocity, attributes of many international actors.

**Branches:** laurel (left) represents honors and distinction, as the society aims at recognizing outstanding achievement in the field of international studies; oak (right) stands for lasting friendship that the society hopes to create among its members.

**Symbols:** shield represents preservation of academic freedom, world map stands for focus in international affairs; spider, falcon and lightning correspond to the qualities of prudence, ideals and power.

**Banner:** expands the letters Sigma Iota Rho on the top of the crest into “synesis,” “ideodoi,” and “rhomi”, emphasizing once again prudence, ideals and power, the three basic qualities of the study of international affairs.
**First Steps**

**Endorsement and Support**

The energy of a Chapter’s life hinges on the commitment and dedication of the Faculty Advisor and the student body. However, without appropriate resources, enthusiasm alone can only take you to a certain point. Thus, it is crucial to enlist endorsement and support of the college or the university to ensure the success of Sigma Iota Rho on your campus.

In the past, Chapters have successfully garnered endorsement and support of the following patrons: Dean of the department or college, Department Chairs, Dean of Student Life/ Affairs, Office of International Programs, related departments (political science, economics, regional and area studies). Many chapters have granted the honorary membership status to some of the faculty, and work closely with their collaboration on special events, speaker series, etc. Upon notification of the National Office, certificates for honorary members are available – all fees are waived in grateful recognition of their commitment and contribution.

The Chapter can also benefit from an institutional account, as it simplifies transactions with the National Office and helps with local budgeting.

**Aligning Goals and Strategy**

It is entirely up to you, how active and engaging you make your chapter and how much will it benefit its members and the community. Please keep the Sigma Iota Rho mandate in mind, when you are planning the academic year’s programs and activities. The purpose of the society is to promote and reward scholarship and service among students and practitioners of international studies, international affairs, and global studies and to foster integrity and creative performance in the conduct of world affairs.

Outreach activities may help you engage in your community and facilitate better understanding of the world at large. Newsletter, communication with other chapters may help you establish benchmark and seek advice from other chapters and the National Office. Make use of the **National Chapter Directory** to improve communication with the National Office, as well as communication with other chapters.

Whatever path you may chose to follow, we would encourage you to keep records of chapter activities, in order to make future brainstorming sessions more productive and establish precedent and procedures for new student leadership to follow. A binder with subheadings for different categories of events maintained by the secretary is often the easiest and the simplest way to alleviate potential problems with succession.

You may find it helpful to decide on a few events during an organizational meeting in the beginning of the year and map out a timeline. Often, as the student executive committee participates in the decision making, it helps creates a degree of accountability and commitment to the events. Use the creativity of your student body and align with the temporal and budgetary constraints that you face.

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ROLES AND STRUCTURE

FACULTY ADVISOR

The role of the Faculty Advisor is of prime importance to the successful operation of a Chapter. As student membership changes yearly, the Faculty Advisor provides the stability necessary to bridge the gap between the old and the new members. However, it would be unrealistic to expect Faculty Advisors to be the driving force behind SIR on campus beyond a few years after establishing a chapter.

The key is identifying capable and interested student leadership, delegating much decision making authority to the executive committee, establishing clear guidelines for succession and providing advice and expertise when necessary. The knowledge and the network that a Faculty Advisor brings to the table is unique and should be his/her differential contribution.

If you would allow a metaphor, the Faculty Advisor is a coach, whose responsibility is to ensure that the athlete is in the appropriate condition for the race. Student members of SIR are the athlete, and it is up to them to run the race.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student leadership is essential in the success of the SIR chapter on your campus. It is up to them to generate interest in the SIR among students, engage new members, and inspire their future replacements. Of course, they do not have to do this alone. Advice and support is always available from the Faculty Advisor. The executive committee should rely on each other to shoulder responsibilities and delegate effectively to their student body. If people feel that they have a stake in the event, that their contribution makes a difference, they would be much more enthusiastic in planning and participating.

Generally, the executive committee takes the following shape:

President is responsible for the overall direction and supervision of the Chapter and acts at the liaison with the host program and with Faculty Advisor. The President calls General Meetings, overseas sub-committees (Events; Public Relations; Alumni, etc) and leads planning, outreach and program development for the organization.

Vice-President shares the responsibilities of the President and fills-in for the President as needed in the President's absence. The Vice-President has the special responsibility (in coordination with or in conjunction with the President) of serving as a Liaison with the National Office to help promote outreach and shared activities with the national office and other SIR chapters nationally. As with all Executive Committee positions the Vice-President assists in the oversight of the sub-committees.

Secretary is responsible for recording minutes of meetings and for maintaining the archival record of the year's events and activities. The Secretary is responsible for providing oversight to the Public Relations Committee and has primary responsibility for the production of notices, flyers, advertising and other publicly disseminated information.
The Secretary is also responsible for creating, maintaining, and updating materials to be passed on to student leadership in subsequent years.

**Treasurer** works closely with the budgeting and business offices to ensure funding for SIR events. The Treasurer serves as liaison with the host program office to help audit application and payment of dues. The Treasurer also works with the host program on matters of financial support and for developing cost estimates (along with the sub-committees) for SIR activities.

The most important aspect of organizing your student leadership is planning the succession. As the students change, so may the quality of events and the level of enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it would be rather counterproductive to reinvent the system every time the leadership lapses.

In an ideal situation, there should be at least as many juniors as there are seniors. Hopefully, the juniors would be inspired by the leadership of their soon-to-be-graduating classmates and would know what to expect and how to perform the duties of an executive committee-member. The issue of early engagement and active participation becomes crucial for the experience transfer, resulting in a successful change in student leadership. Encourage people early to think if they would be interested in taking a leadership role during their senior year, so they can start absorbing relevant information early.

Student organizations invariably succeed or fail depending upon their organizational abilities and follow through. We would strongly encourage you and your student leadership to keep a record of the minutes from the meetings, event planning, and contact information of the college or university officials who have helped your Chapter in its work – this way, a truly outstanding group could inspire many others that would follow. One goal is to create an “officer’s manual” for your chapter’s own use that can be passed on each year, so that new leadership can “hit the ground running.”

**SUBCOMMITTEES**

In order to engage others in the life of the Chapter, various members volunteer or are asked to serve on a committee. One of the responsibilities of the executive committee is oversight of various committees, because the board cannot do everything on their own. A general list of committees usually includes:

**An Executive Committee** consists of all the officers in the chapter. The primary responsibility of the board is to provide leadership to the chapter, engage students and advance the mission of Sigma Iota Rho in the way they see appropriate for the local chapter. Since the executive committees handles budgeting for the events and directly and frequently interacts with the Faculty Advisor, the board oversees the work of subcommittees. Generally, the board has a meeting separate from the general meeting of the chapter to prepare the agenda for the semester and address upcoming issues.

**An Events Committee** along with the executive committee works on generating ideas for events, appropriate preparation and implementation. Often times, the executive
committee is the events committee, if there are not enough students interested in serving on a committee or too many students that are indifferent to the type of future events.

**A Public Relations Committee** works closely with the events committee and the chapter Secretary to generate publicity for the upcoming events, as well as creation and dissemination of all public information about the Chapter. The PR committee is responsible for providing publicity during the events as well. In order to stimulate student interest and give credit to the members of Sigma Iota Rho on your campus and increase the recognition of the organization in the community we recommend having a SIR banner or a poster on display during the events.

**An Outreach and Service Committee** is responsible for organizing events that would benefit a wider audience, like the type listed in the ‘Community’ section of the “Suggested Events” chapter. The outreach and service may take different forms, from working with a public school in your area to organizing something with other chapters in your state; however, the committee chooses to define its mission.

**An Alumni Committee** usually organizes professional or career events by enlisting help of the alumni; see more in the “Suggested Events” chapter. The committee usually draws much enthusiasm from the students as it may be a good aid in job-hunting and networking. The committee may put together both professional and academic events as it sees fit. An alumni directory for your chapter would be a wonderful project for the committee.

**Ad hoc** is probably the most active subcommittee as it is formed around student initiatives, ideas and events.

Depending on the level of engagement of your chapter, the organization may range from a more rigid one with formal committees, meetings, etc., to a more flexible one with an executive committee and multiple ad hoc committees to do the job.

**INTERACTION WITH THE NATIONAL OFFICE**

In order for you to be up-to-date with the developments and the resources that are available to you through the national office, it is imperative that we have accurate contact information.

In the **beginning of the year, and no later than October 1st**, please, contact the National Office with the following information:

- Faculty Advisor Name and Title
- Host Department Name
- Mailing Address
- Email, phone, fax.
- Student President
- Email and Graduation Year

Midyear, we would like to hear from you with an activities log or a short article that you would like to share with the other chapters through the SIR newsletter. Also, we would like you to start preparing for the induction and allow yourself and us as much lead time as possible. Please send
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us the list of inductees as soon as possible. At the end of the year, we would like to get a one to two page report of activities and major events for the chapter, as well as your assessment of the health of the chapter. Please, do not hesitate to contact us with any procedural or substantive questions you might have. Suggestions and recommendations are always welcome. We want to know how we can serve you better!

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MEMBERSHIP SELECTION

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP & CRITERIA

(a) **Adjunct membership** (proposed)

Adjunct membership is proposed in response to the need to recognize the outstanding contribution and interest of some sophomore students in our chapters. Unlike other types of memberships that are lifetime, adjunct membership is limited to sophomore and junior students only. Adjunct members do not qualify to run for an office. In order to be considered for adjunct membership, students must meet the following criteria:

- Have completed course work in international studies including courses in relevant subject areas of anthropology, economics, foreign languages, geography, history, political science, and other related disciplines.
- Have attained a sophomore standing and completed at least twelve (12) hours of course work towards International Relations major or minor.
- Have demonstrated interest in Sigma Iota Rho through active participation in the Chapter activities.
- Plan to attain full membership upon qualification.

(b) **Undergraduate membership**

Undergraduate members are the driving force behind the success of the chapter. It is their energy and commitment combined with the experience of the faculty advisor that help fulfill the mission of Sigma Iota Rho. In order to qualify for undergraduate membership, students must meet the following criteria:

- have completed course work in international studies including courses in relevant subject areas of anthropology, economics, foreign languages, geography, history, political science, and other related disciplines;
- have attained a junior standing and completed at least twenty-one (21) hours of course work toward the International Relations major or minor, including at least two courses at the 300 or 400 levels;
have attained a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher in all courses, and a grade point average of at least 3.3 in international relations courses;

- must maintain full-time student status of at least twelve (12) hours to be a voting member or hold an office.

(c) Faculty membership

Faculty membership is an important guiding and directional force in the life of the SIR chapter. Any interested member of the faculty involved in the teaching of courses giving credit in International Relations may be elected to faculty membership by the local chapter, subject to approval by the national office. Faculty members shall possess all the privileges of membership except for voting and holding office in local chapter.

(d) Honorary membership

Any person of recognized ability and achievement in the field of international relations, or who made an outstanding contribution to Sigma Iota Rho may be elected to become an honorary member. No more than two such members may be elected in any one academic year. Honorary members shall possess all the privileges of active membership except that of being an officer or council member of the corporation.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

The participation requirement is an attempt to enforce the mission of Sigma Iota Rho and encourage student engagement. The National Office wants to limit the use of SIR simply as an addition to one’s resume. SIR is a forum for students to engage in the study of International Relations, advance the understanding and awareness to global issues, and to create lasting and productive relationships between fellow students and faculty.

The requirement stands as follows:

- attendance of all general meetings, with only one absence per semester (two per academic year), as determined by the Chapter’s executive committee;

- attendance at all meetings of subcommittees of which one is a member, with only one absence per semester (two per academic year);

- participation in the work of at least one subcommittee.

The purpose of the Society is to promote and reward scholarship and service among students of International Relations, and to foster integrity and creative performance in the understanding of world affairs. It is our hope that the discretionary enforcement of the participation requirement by local chapters will help us better serve this purpose.
METHOD OF SELECTION

1. Nomination

You may consider the following strategies in identifying and recruiting qualified members to join Sigma Iota Rho.

- Examine the transcripts of your majors (Juniors and Seniors) and identify those who meet the GPA requirement. Send out a letter of invitation, suggesting that a student is qualified to join the Honor Society for International Studies, along with the description of benefits and a way to apply (contact information of the Faculty Advisor or Student President).

- If your major has an academic honors program, consider those who meet the criteria and send out a letter similar to the one described above.

- Send out a blanket correspondence to juniors and seniors in your major indicating the requirements for Sigma Iota Rho and offering them a chance to self-identify themselves by obtaining an application and contacting either the Faculty Advisor or the Student President.

- Encourage existing members to nominate individuals who are known to them and who they believe meet the membership criteria.

2. Application

A template of an application is provided in the Appendices section of the Handbook. Please feel free to edit or amend the application in accordance with the needs and structure of your local chapter.

3. Decision

Once the applications are received, examine the accuracy of information and notify the students of their acceptance into the Honor Society. As privacy provisions of your school allow, engage current student leadership in the selection process (typically they can see cumulative grade point average that appears on the application, but not a student’s entire transcript).

4. Local Chapter Adjustments

Local Chapters may increase the GPA requirement above the standards set by the National Office. In addition, local chapters may lower the required number of courses for induction to no less than five (5). However, we strongly encourage the Chapters to adhere to seven (7) course requirement mentioned in the sample constitution. Please, use your best judgment in determining the threshold of serious interest in International Studies.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

Weeks prior to ceremony
10 plus weeks prior

Set membership criteria and determine the nomination procedure. Decide on the procedures for review of applications or nominations.

8 weeks prior

Prepare and send letters for nomination and application. Publicize the information on application and procedures. Engage current members in the process. Invite honorary members, if any.

6 weeks prior

Nomination deadline. Membership committee reviews nominees/applicants and selects potential members.

5 weeks prior

Send letters of invitation to potential members and an invitation to attend the Induction Ceremony (include reception information, if planned). Please include a form to collect the dues and initiation fee with the invitation to join.

4 weeks prior

Deadline for nominees’ acceptance of membership and payment of dues must be in advance of the Induction Ceremony in order to conduct business properly with the National Office.

Notify the National Office about the induction at least four weeks prior to the ceremony to ensure receipt of certificates, lapel pins, etc., and submit the information requested in the induction memo:

- Date of the ceremony
- List of inductees
- Inductees’ contact information: Name/Address/Email/Phone
- Inductees’ GPA in major
- Single institutional check made out to the TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (no personal checks will be accepted)
- National dues of $25 per member for 2004-2005 academic year (expected to be $30 for 2005-2006)

As soon as the National office receives the check, membership benefit packages will be mailed.

2 weeks prior

Final review of plans for Induction.

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SIGMA IOTA RHO - CHAPTER HANDBOOK
INDUCTION

PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

In preparation for the induction ceremony you may wish to consider the following factors:

- **level of student engagement** (will determine the acceptable level of complexity of the logistics and sophistication of the event)
- **size of the inductee class** (will determine the venue and the style of the reception for the event)
- **time** (most inductions happen in the middle or near the end of the academic year, departmental logistics often determine that)
- **program** (will be determined by budgeting and time restrictions)

Some chapters combine the SIR induction with the general honors ceremony in the major. Others chose to have a separate induction ceremony. It is up to you and your student leadership to determine the option that is right for you. A typical induction involves a guest or keynote speaker. If they are of significant stature, the chapter may wish to award them with honorary membership in Sigma Iota Rho. A reception usually follows.

THE CEREMONY

After inductees have been announced and certificates distributed, we encourage you to pronounce the elevation of students to SIR members officially. Please see the text below for suggestions:

“I, __________, in my capacity as the Faculty Advisor of the __________ Chapter of Sigma Iota Rho at the __________ University (or __________ College), by the power vested in me by the Sigma Iota Rho President hereby install you as a member with full privileges and the attending duties and obligations that membership confers, in Sigma Iota Rho, the National Honor Society for International Studies. I confirm your membership based on the affirmation of your interest in the promotion of the study of world affairs testified to by your academic record and participation in Sigma Iota Rho activities on this campus. Congratulations on your achievement!”

You may recognize your keynote speaker with honorary membership. Please, see the suggested text below:

“According to the by-laws of SIR, honorary membership may be bestowed upon any person of recognized ability and achievement in the field of International Studies or who has made an outstanding contribution to Sigma Iota Rho. Honorary members receive the same rights and privileges as active members of the society and may wear SIR insignia and graduation regalia at appropriate ceremonies. Tonight, on behalf of the National Office, I am pleased to extend an Honorary Lifetime Membership in Sigma Iota Rho to our honored guest, __________.”

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SIR JOURNAL

OVERVIEW

The SIR journal, *The Journal of International Relations*, provides a unique opportunity for undergraduate students in the field of international studies to publish their work in a nationally distributed scholarly publication. The journal is organized and published by Sigma Iota Rho, the Honor Society for International Studies, and is entirely authored, produced, and published annually by the students membership. In the past the submissions have covered topics in politics, economics, history, and area studies. Papers covering topics outside of these guidelines are considered gladly as long as they apply to international relations. The Journal was published by the Epsilon chapter of SIR at the University of Pennsylvania since 1998, and became a national publication in 2004.

The latest electronic version of the Journal is available @ [http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~irusa/sir/](http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~irusa/sir/)

SOLICITING SUBMISSIONS

As SIR Journal is entirely student run, the quality of the journal largely depends on the quality of the submissions that the Journal receives. The Journal presents a unique opportunity for publishing in a nationally distributed scholarly journal for undergraduate students and it is the hope of the editorial board that flexible content standards will draw many papers of great quality. Encourage your students to get involved and send submissions.

EDITORS AND PEER REVIEWERS

Please be alert for the call for papers from the editorial board near the end of the calendar year. However, there are other ways for the students to become engaged. The editorial board always welcomes peer reviewers, and editors from other chapters.

Contact information is provided at the end of the handbook for those of you who wish to become involved with the journal.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR EVENTS

MILESTONES

Welcome Back BBQ – bring former SIR members together for a barbeque to welcome them back on campus. Make the event open to other students in the major to create opportunities for enlisting new members. Free food is an offer many college students simply cannot refuse.
New inductee’s reception – following the induction ceremony or during an induction ceremony create an opportunity to celebrate the achievement of the new members. Make the event as formal as your students would like. Bring an interesting speaker to keynote the occasion. A great opportunity for all SIR members to get together and to get to know each other!

End of the year luncheon – capstone the year with a trip to a foreign policy research center or get together within the International Studies department. Go over the academic year worth of most interesting international events and then, events organized by your Chapter. Recognition of the student leadership with some symbolic awards would inspire new and upcoming executive committee.

ACADEMIC

“Coffee Chats” and Dinners with Faculty – bring together students and faculty for a discussion in a more intimate setting. There are often a few required courses in the major that are taught in a big lecture. A coffee chat is an inexpensive and simple to organize event that bridges the gap between the teachers and the taught. Students can also put together a potluck dinner at low cost or organize a more formal “no host” event at a restaurant. The chat may have a topic or be an informal ad lib conversation. When it comes to ask for recommendations for graduate schools, students are less hesitant to approach the faculty, and the faculty has more information for a more meaningful recommendation.

International Studies Movie Night – organize a series of movie showings with light refreshments provided around geographical or subject areas. Offer a documentary or a drama that promotes better understanding of historic events relevant to International Studies. If possible, have a brief introduction and/or a Q&A session with a faculty member.

Topical Speaker Series – in cooperation with other departments organize a speaker series around such topics as security questions, regional studies, current events, health issues, economic development, etc. Big speakers attract big crowds, which would be an excellent opportunity to engage students, and promote the study of world affairs and Sigma Iota Rho.

Majors’ fair representation – if your school organizes a fair for students to gain better understanding of a particular major and to speak to others involved in a major, have some representation from Sigma Iota Rho. Such event will help advance the study and understanding of world affairs and provide and opportunity to recruit new members.

Hostage crisis/peacekeeping simulation – is a great investment on behalf of your program, as the training module provides an exciting activity for students of international relations, security and members of Sigma Iota Rho. Please contact SIR Lifetime Member Bruce Newsome (BruceNew@yahoo.com) at Consequence Consulting with inquiries.

‘Corner of the World’ presentations – use the international students on your campus to create international atmosphere on campus. Encourage and sponsor them to organize a presentation about current events, culture, traditions in their home countries, individually or as a regional module. Personal experience is the best way to communicate diversity.
Final Exams study break and open house – during the stressful exam period offer some free late night coffee and advice to fellow majors. It is a great opportunity to students to meet SIR members and gain a better understanding of a given topic. Employ a conference room in a department and make the gathering informal.

National Journal of International Studies – the journal published by Sigma Iota Rho is a great opportunity for students to publish their worthy thoughts. For more information, please see the SIR Journal section of the handbook.

**PROFESSIONAL**

Trips to graduate schools – organize a trip to a graduate school so that students have a chance to speak with the admission officers about the application process and other issues related to pursuing advance degrees. Prepare a workshop about applying for graduate schools prior to the trip, so that students are able to ask intelligent and useful questions.

Reception for graduating seniors – acknowledge the achievements of graduating seniors and ask them to offer some job-hunting advice to juniors. Split the room into different sections and talk about jobs in the government, business, international opportunities, etc. Seniors will be glad to talk about the jobs they are about to start and juniors will be eager to listen.

Foreign Service exam preparation workshop – organize a workshop that would discuss the Foreign Service exam, as it is very different from other tests. Talk about the opportunities in the State Department and the career progression, and ask the Department of State to provide a speaker/recruiter to visit your campus. Many of the government agencies dealing with global events are expanding due to recent events. The topics are relevant and the time is opportune.

**SOCIAL**

Mentoring/peer-advising sessions – host an informal session organized by SIR for current or prospective students in the major. The topics could range from “why I study International Relations” to “what I can do with my major;” from “how-to structure a term-paper” to “how SIR can help me realize my academic/career goals.” Turn to existing SIR members for help in identifying student needs that such sessions could address and a good time to hold one.

Get to know SIR social – during the early fall, when new students choose among the variety of extracurricular activities, organize a social that would help introduce SIR to newcomers. In order to reach a more targeted audience, have the social near the end of the spring semester and invite sophomores who are interested in international studies. SIR social may help them decide on the major to declare and whether to join your chapter of Sigma Iota Rho.

Majors’ reception – welcome new students into your major with an SIR organized reception. Invite a keynote speaker and have a short address form the SIR student president inviting others to join the chapter.
COMMUNITY

Local School Outreach – collaborate with local schools and help them in raising awareness and assessing importance of international events. Offer help with model UN, presentations by international students, overview lectures on topic in international studies. Focus on middle or high schools and vary your content and presentation accordingly. Such outreach helps the image of the school in the community and advances the SIR charter. Furthermore, it provides good practice in public speaking for SIR members in a non-evaluative setting.

Awareness weeks – join NGOs and research institutes in organizing awareness weeks for any variety of topics ranging from global footprint of AIDS to international development to regional issues (Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America, etc.). Put together a few educational lectures, presentations, bring a speaker, have a fundraiser if appropriate.

Global issues in a local setting – relate global issues of poverty, deceases, and development to the situation in your neighborhood. Organize a community service event that tackles one of the issues and start solving global problems from your own back yard.

* * *
APPENDICES

NATIONAL OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

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255 S. 36 Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305

Telephone:  215.898.0452  
Facsimile:  215.573.3207
**List of Chapter and Designations**

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### SIGMA IOTA RHO - CHAPTER HANDBOOK

#### SIR CHAPTER WEBSITES

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APPLICATION TEMPLATE

ΣIP
Sigma Iota Rho
The Honor Society for International Studies—___ Chapter

Application Deadline: MM/DD/YYYY
Please submit this application to the _____________ Department Office at ____________ along with $___ of local dues

The Honor Society for International Studies, Sigma Iota Rho, ___ Chapter, was established primarily as a means by which to honor those students who have excelled academically and who have shown extracurricular achievement. The purpose of the Society is to promote and reward scholarship and service among students of International Relations, and to foster integrity and creative performance in the understanding of world affairs.

Your acceptance to Sigma Iota Rho carries with it the obligation to participate fully in the activities of SIR and to promote the study of International Relations both at the University of Pennsylvania and throughout your career.

SIR desires only members who are eager to participate in the Honor Society. Given other demands on your time, please only continue with this application if you are willing to contribute to the maintenance and growth of the Epsilon Chapter of SIR.

To Apply:
- You must be an ____________________ major or minor
- Have completed (or will have completed by graduation) 21 hours in your field of study
- You must have either Junior or Senior standing
- Fill out this application by the deadline
- ______________________________

To Be Inducted:
- You must achieve and maintain GPA of: 3.2 overall and 3.3 in the major
- Pay national dues of $25.00 (due a month before the induction)
- You must fulfill participation requirements:
  - Active participation on at least one committee, including executive committee
  - Attendance at meetings
  - Attendance at a minimum of one event per semester

Please keep this sheet for your records.
Application for Sigma Iota Rho, __________ Chapter
The Honor Society for International Studies

Date__________________________
Name ________________________________________
Current Address _______________________________________________________________
Permanent Address _____________________________________________________________
Email Address _________________________________
Phone Number _________________________________
Year in School _____________ Other Schools/Majors/Minors_________________________
GPA in the IR Major ______ Overall GPA _______

Extracurricular Activities (attach additional sheet if necessary):
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Circle which committee(s) in which you are interested:
- Events
- Public Relations
- Outreach and Service
- Alumni
- Executive committee
- Other (please specify your idea)

One idea for an SIR event you would like to see: __________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________.
Please answer the following questions with concise yet complete responses. No maximum limit is imposed, but responses should comprise at least one short paragraph.

You may use this paper, or attach separate sheets. If you choose the latter, make sure to put your name on any additional sheets.

1) Briefly describe why you chose the IR major.

2) Please give a brief statement of your career goals. They need not be polished or finalized, but you should describe the general trajectory that you would like them to take.

I agree to do my best to meet the requirements of the ________ Chapter of Sigma Iota Rho, and understand that failure to do so may result in the revocation of membership.

Signature:____________________________________                 Date: _______________
Welcome Letter, Benefits

Dear Colleague:

I hope you will take this small information packet back to your institution to share with the department Chair and student leaders to consider chartering a chapter of the Sigma Iota Rho National Honor Society for International Studies (S.I.R.) on your campus. This packet will guide you through the process of establishing a nationally-sanctioned chapter of the honor society on your campus, and presents the benefits that come with Sigma Iota Rho membership. One of these benefits, the opportunity for student publication in The Journal of International Relations, is addressed specifically in an enclosed “Call for Papers.” Please take note of the deadline for submissions and make use of the provided examples for soliciting submissions by email and flyer.

Establishment as a chapter of Sigma Iota Rho requires submission of the following:

- a letter stating your interest to establish a local chapter of S.I.R.
- a draft constitution or by-laws (available on request)
- a copy of your school’s international affairs major requirements
- designation of the person who will serve on the national council as your representative (this is typically the Faculty Advisor to the chapter)
- designation of the student who will serve as the student chapter President
- a $150.00 payment to establish the chapter

In addition, each student who joins your chapter will be required to contribute a $25.00 fee for member inception (we anticipate these dues will be raised in the coming months to bring them more in line with other national honor societies and to reflect expanded membership benefits). This fee includes the Sigma Iota Rho Certificate upon induction, a SIR lapel pin, graduation regalia (honor cords are included—stoles inscribed with “ΣΙΡ” are available for an additional $10.00), a copy of S.I.R.’s Journal of International Relations, occasional newsletters, and access to professional networks. As a national recognized chapter you will be allowed to determine separate local dues that you deem appropriate.

We will review your application packet usually within a week’s time. Best wishes in completing the charter process and we look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Frank Plantan, Ph.D
National President
Sigma Iota Rho


SIGMA IOTA RHO - CHAPTER HANDBOOK

SIR SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION [SAMPLE]

SIGMA IOTA RHO
THE HONOR SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

ARTICLE I - NAME

Section 1. Name.

The Society shall be known as the ___X__ Chapter [to be determined] of Sigma Iota Rho, Honor Society for International Studies at the School Name.

Section 2. Symbol.

The letters SIR stand for the following Greek words:

SIGMA (Σ) for “synesi,” meaning Prudence;
IOTA (Ι) for “ideodοι,” meaning Ideals; and
RHO (Ρ) for “rhοmι,” meaning Power.

These three words signify some of the most important values studied by those in the field.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this organization shall be to promote and reward scholarship and service among students and practitioners of international studies, international affairs, and global studies and to foster integrity and creative performance in the conduct of world affairs.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Classes.

Sigma Iota Rho is an interdisciplinary honor society specializing in the interdisciplinary field of international affairs. There shall be three classes of membership: student, faculty, or honorary.

Section 2. Undergraduate Membership

Election to undergraduate membership shall be by a local chapter from among such juniors and seniors of the institution who meet or exceed the following qualifications.

(a) Have completed course work in international studies including courses in relevant subject areas of anthropology, economics, foreign languages, geography, history, political science, and other related disciplines;
(b) Have attained a junior standing and completed at least twenty-one (21) hours of coursework toward the International Relations major or minor, including at least two courses at the 300 or 400 level.

(c) Have attained a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher in all courses, and a grade point average of at least 3.3 in international relations courses.

(d) Must maintain full-time student status of at least twelve (12) hours to be a voting member or hold an office.

Section 3. Faculty Membership.

Any interested member of the faculty involved in the teaching of courses giving credit in International Relations may be elected to faculty membership. Faculty members shall possess all the privileges of membership except for voting and holding office in local chapter.

Section 4. Honorary Membership.

Any person of recognized ability and achievement in the field of international relations may be elected to become an honorary member. No more than two such members may be elected in any one academic year. Honorary members shall possess all the privileges of active membership except that of being an officer or council member of the corporation.

Section 5. Subsequent Service.

All persons duly elected to membership (other than honorary) by a local chapter who are subsequently enrolled as students or are serving as faculty members in a different institution at which a chapter is located shall be deemed members of the chapter.

Section 6. Selection.

Selection to membership shall be by procedures determined by the local chapter, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. Membership will not be restricted on the basis of sex, race, national origin, or handicap.

Section 7. Initiation Fee and Dues.

Each member shall pay such initiation fees and annual dues as may be prescribed by the local chapter, which includes any national fees applying at that time.

Section 8. Pins and Keys.

The members shall receive certificates of membership and may purchase pins, keys, and other symbols of membership as may be available from the National Director of Sigma Iota Rho on such terms and under such conditions as the National Council may determine.
ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT

The chapter shall have full control of its individual affairs, subject to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Society.

Section 1. Officers.

The student officers of the chapter shall be elected by the student membership in the spring for the next academic year from the active members of the chapter. Officers of the chapter may be removed from office, and membership of a member may be revoked by a ¾ vote of all members on the membership list and at least one half of the other officers. An officer may be removed from office or a member’s membership may be revoked if he/she loses full-time status or is unable to adequately fulfill his/her duties.

(a) President - An elected President will preside at all meetings of the Chapter. He or she will maintain the power to appoint all committee chairpersons and shall present all motions to the Chapter.

(b) Vice President - A Vice President shall be elected whose duties shall be to preside at all meetings and functions that the President cannot attend and assist the President in directing the affairs of the Chapter.

(c) Secretary-Treasurer - A Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected whose duties shall be to handle all dues, accounts, new members, rule observances, etc. at all stated meetings and protocol, and conduct such other duties as are assigned by the President. The Secretary-Treasurer shall maintain all financial records, and shall counter-sign all financial transactions with the President or Faculty Adviser.

(d) Executive Committee - The three officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Chapter, which will direct the affairs of the Chapter with the assistance of the Faculty Adviser. The Executive Committee shall have the power to make decisions for the organizations between regular meetings. All actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported promptly to the members of the organization.

(e) Replacement - In the event of a vacancy in any office, the Executive Committee shall elect a replacement, to serve until a new officer is elected by the general membership at the next regular business meeting.

Section 2. Nominations and Elections.

(a) Nominating Committee - The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee not less than sixty (60) days prior to each biennial meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the three most recent past Presidents able and willing to serve thereon and more than two additional members designated by the President. If there are not three past Presidents available, the President may appoint a sufficient number of other members to complete the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall present nominations for officers and at the biennial meeting of members.
(b) **Nominations by Members** - Additional nominations may be made from the floor by any member at the time the Nominating Committee makes its report.

(c) **Voting** - All nominations shall be voted on by separate vote for each office. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes of each office shall be declared elected and shall thereupon take office.

**ARTICLE V - ADVISER**

The Chapter Adviser shall be the Director of Undergraduates Studies of the International Relations Program, or a faculty member teaching courses in the major. The adviser will assume those responsibilities as outlined in this constitution. The adviser may be removed from his/her position by a ¾ vote of all members on the membership list and at least one half of the other officers. The adviser may be removed if it has been determined that he/she is unable to adequately fulfill the position.

**ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution must be submitted in writing at a regular or special meeting of the organization. Said amendments will be voted on at the subsequent meeting. Amendments may be adopted by a ¾ vote of the active members or by a 2/3 vote of the active members and a majority vote of the Chapter Executive Committee. All amendments must be submitted to the Syracuse University Office of Student Programs.

The same amendment may not be proposed more than once during any academic year.

**ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS**

Section 1. Member Meetings.

General meetings shall be held at a prescribed day and hour as decided upon by the chapter in its first special meeting.

A quorum consists of a simple majority of the membership plus at least one officer. *Robert’s Rules of Order* (newly revised) shall govern all meetings.

**ARTICLE VIII - RATIFICATION**

The Constitution shall become effective upon approval by the membership, the Commission on Student Services, and the President/National Director of Sigma Iota Rho International.