



Pi Sigma Alpha

The National Political Science Honor Society founded 1920

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What is Pi Sigma Alpha?

Founded in 1920 at the University of Texas, ΠΣΑ is the national honor society for undergraduate and graduate students of political science, with over 460 chapters established in colleges and universities in the United States.

Benefits of Membership

Membership in an honor society is a worthy distinction in itself, and as a measure of academic achievement can provide a tangible advantage in a competitive world. All ΠΣΑ members, regular and honorary, receive a certificate of membership and permanent enrollment in the society's membership rolls, maintained by the National Office. Upon request, the National Office will provide letters verifying membership to prospective employers or graduate schools. Because ΠΣΑ is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies, the United States Office of Personnel Management guarantees a higher entry-level grade to ΠΣΑ members entering government service. Members are entitled to wear the ΠΣΑ key at any time or the medallion with cap and gown at graduation and on other official occasions.

Pi Sigma Alpha gives students the opportunity for valuable administrative experience as chapter officers or organizers of chapter activities. Chapters can compete for the Chapter Activities Grants awarded each year by the National Office. Members are also eligible to compete for the ΠΣΑ Graduate Scholarship, the Graduate and Undergraduate Best Paper Awards, and a one-year student membership in the American Political Science Association, funded by the National Office for one student selected by each chapter each year.

For information about your chapter's activities and initiation process, contact your Chapter Advisor or see your department chair.

Qualifications for Membership

The purpose of Pi Sigma Alpha is to stimulate scholarship and interest in the subject of government by providing tangible recognition to students who have excelled in the field. Minimum standards for admission, established by the national constitution, are:

For juniors and seniors --

- completion of at least fifteen quarter-hours or ten semester-hours of work in government, political science, international relations or public administration including at least one course not open to students in the first two years of collegiate work

- maintenance of an average grade of B or higher in all political science courses

- an overall academic standing in the upper third of the college class.

For graduate students --

- completion of at least nine hours of graduate work in political science

- maintenance of an average grade of B or higher in all political science courses.

Individual chapters may adopt higher scholastic standards in their by-laws than these national minimum requirements. Membership is possible only through local chapters.

Programs

The life of the honor society is carried on mainly at the chapter level with coordination by the National Office. The National Office also administers the following programs:

Programs for ΠΣΑ Chapters and Students

- Annual Chapter Activity Grant Awards
- Annual Scholarships for Graduate Study in Political Science
- Student membership in APSA (1 per chapter per year)
- Best Chapter Awards
- Best Chapter Advisor Awards
- Best Graduate Student Paper Award
- Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award

National Programs

- Publication of *Pi Sigma Alpha Newsletter*
- Franklin P. Burdette Award, for the best paper presented at the APSA Annual Meeting
- ΠΣΑ Best Paper Awards, for the best papers presented at the regional political science association annual meetings
- ΠΣΑ Lecture at the APSA Annual Meeting
- ΠΣΑ Lectures at the regional and state political science