

# Phi Upsilon Omicron® Virtual Initiation Advice- 2020

**Submitted by: Dr. Amy Richards, Beta Sigma Chapter Advisor, The University of Tennessee at Martin and Samantha Peebles, Gamma Nu Chapter Public Relations Officer, Loma Linda University**

“If Beta Sigma is not able to conduct an in-person initiation this fall, we will conduct a virtual initiation. We would use Zoom which is easy to set up and a link can be sent to the Phi U officers, the initiates and their guests to join. The waiting room function would be enabled in Zoom to match up the list of the initiates and their guests to prevent uninvited people somehow slipping into the Zoom meeting and disrupting it.

For my chapter, I as chapter advisor would have control over the Zoom session so I could take charge if something went amiss and also because the officers will be busy completing their roles in the initiation. We would hold at least one practice session on Zoom (probably two and possibly three--so that the members leading initiation would have practice from start to finish and both they and I felt we were ready to conduct it smoothly in a virtual format). We usually need to practice in person initiation at least twice to help newer members that are taking on key roles be well prepared.

After welcoming everyone (either I or the president) and introductions (including guests) and providing some needed directions to the chapter initiates and guests, the president would then begin initiation. Each Phi U officer will take turns reading her/his portion of the script and will hold up corresponding symbols when it is their turn to read the script. I will probably mail (or have someone at the university if I am not on campus) the symbols to each member to use during initiation and include a postage paid return envelope/box for them to mail them back. However, more simple representations of our symbols could be used (a nice photo for example). We will likely use the electric candles rather than have the president lighting candles are her home without the rest of us there to help keep an eye on them.

At the completion of the initiation, I as advisor will lead the charge to new members (and a guest could be present to present as well) and then each officer will take a turn sharing information with the new initiates about her/his role in the organization and tell about the various activities that the chapter does during the year.

Meeting times would be announced (virtual if we won't be able to meet in person) and upcoming chapter activities (which will likely be more individualized this coming year--with members each taking on pieces of projects individually for a collective project such as each adopting three shut-ins in the area where they live to correspond and help out as needed).

We wouldn't have our normal reception with cake, fruit/veggies/nuts and punch/tea/coffee--but I will consult with the Beta Sigma members to see if they want to have a virtual reception afterwards in which everyone would have the opportunity to hold up a glass of punch or tea for a virtual toast.

Hope this helps. I will be interested in hearing how others are conducting their virtual initiations as well.”

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“In prepping for this virtual ceremony, the executive board wanted to make it as “normal” as possible via Zoom. We prepared for any technical difficulties, and if they were to arise, we would do our best to fix them quickly. Here are some of our tips:

1. Continue the ceremony as usual (as much as you can!). Although we conducted the ceremony via Zoom, we had our ceremony and followed standard procedures as much as possible. We continued with lighting our candles, reading our ceremony traditions, inducting the initiates, incorporating an ice breaker activity, and presenting who we are - Phi Upsilon Omicron Gamma Nu Chapter and what we have achieved this academic year (2019-2020). The only thing that we decided not to do was our celebration dinner following initiation.

2. Go visual! We had two PowerPoint Presentations for our initiates. The first PowerPoint included visuals that we presented throughout the ceremony (candles, colors, and pins). Our second presentation explained and illustrated our chapter's accomplishments, our Professional Project, member meetings and what they consisted of, social media, and volunteer service from this academic year (descriptions, pictures, videos and social media).

3. Consider how Zoom works and always create a backup plan. The executive board decided that if one of the officers were having technical difficulties, another officer would continue with the reading to make it as smooth as possible. Additionally, our Treasurer (Anne Atkinson) was in charge of lighting candles. She had to continue talking while lighting the candles in order for everyone to view her on speaker view. Our President (Emily Harima) adjusted her icebreaker game to ensure it would work better virtually.

Please let me know if you have any other questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you!"

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