

Phi Alpha Chapter Service Award Chapter Report Form

Honors Scholarship

I. Students Initiated 2010 - 2011

During the 2010 - 2011 academic year, 35 students (undergraduate and graduate) were initiated into Phi Alpha Honor Society at the annual spring banquet.

II. Activities to Recognize Students for Academic Achievements

The primary activity that promoted the recognition of Phi Alpha members for their academic achievements was the annual spring banquet held at the University's Faculty Club for the initiation of new Phi Alpha members, the recognition of outstanding service by members, the recognition of outgoing officers and the installation of newly elected officers. The annual spring banquet also served as a celebration of the upcoming graduation of student members. In addition, the banquet provided a venue for reviewing the year's accomplishments by students through a PowerPoint photo presentation of the year's activities (also presented at the last faculty meeting of the year). This year's banquet was held on Saturday, April 9th, and was open to all social work students, their families and friends, and faculty and staff. This past spring there were over 70 persons in attendance.

In addition to this annual banquet, graduating Phi Alpha members are recognized at the University's Student Organization Council's banquet at the end of the fall and spring semesters. This event honors the accomplishments of members of all of the University's honor societies.

At the University's graduations in the fall and spring, the graduation program recognized all honor societies and listed the names of the graduating members of each society in the program. Graduating Phi Alpha members in good standing (grade point average and service points) were also eligible to order the Phi Alpha Honors Stole and the Phi Alpha medallion to wear at graduation.

III. Activities to Further Academic Achievement of Social Work Students

There are two student organizations in the School of Social Work at Florida International University (FIU): the Student Social Work Association (SSWA) and Phi Alpha Honor Society. While each organization has its own elected officers and executive board and each is responsible for the lead sponsorship of different events, the two organizations

work closely together to promote the social work profession and its values and ideals and contribute to the personal and professional growth of social work students. SSWA is open to all social work students and does not have any academic or service requirements for membership. Phi Alpha membership requires the minimum grade point average prescribed by the National Office in addition to a service requirement of a minimum of seven (7) earned service points for each semester (with a minimum requirement of two active semesters for membership). These distinctions between the two organizations are important because students in Phi Alpha are also required to maintain membership in SSWA. This results in preventing a two-tiered student organization system with one organization being perceived as more “elite” than the other and it also serves to encourage students in SSWA to strive for academic excellence in order to join Phi Alpha.

In addition to serving as mentors and role models for the programs’ (BSSW and MSW) students, to further the academic achievement of social work students, the Phi Alpha chapter at FIU sponsors workshops and speakers throughout the year. Prior to service events, presentations are made at the Phi Alpha meetings to prepare students for the populations they will be serving at their upcoming events. For example, prior to participating at the Veterans Administration Hospital’s Winter Wonderland, a presentation on the current social and psychological needs of returning veterans was provided to the students in order to prepare them for the socialization aspect of the event. Similarly, presentations were made to students prior to the People First Dance event for disabled adults, as well as the Valentine’s party for the elderly. These presentations were open to all University students as were the events.

In March, a speaker was invited from the NASW Florida Chapter to discuss the legislative process in Florida, lobbying techniques and the upcoming bills for NASW Lobby Day in April. Phi Alpha sponsored the event and all social work students were invited to attend this presentation. Following this presentation, Phi Alpha members visited both undergraduate and graduate classes to speak to all social work students about the importance of Lobby Day and about the bills that NASW was supporting. These presentations to classes also included material on advocacy and the process of passing bills in the Florida legislature.

IV. Activities to Help Florida International University

All of the Chapter’s events, both on campus and in the community, assisted the University, most especially in serving as positive representatives of FIU and of the School of Social Work in service activities. In addition, Phi Alpha members have participated in several on-campus events to assist the University. Officers and members participated at both of the School’s orientations for new students, the Student Organization Council’s Fair, and the fall orientation for all new entering freshmen. Members’ roles in these events varied from making presentations to new students to working and assisting at registration and check-in tables for the events.

Phi Alpha members have also volunteered and served as student members of the University Grievance Committee and the School's Student Review Committee. These ad-hoc committees meet when a student issue has arisen and the committees are composed of faculty and student representatives.

Phi Alpha officers also serve on the Dean's Student Advisory Committee for the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work. Their role on that committee has been especially crucial since the College is currently completing its reaccreditation self-study and student input is important.

In addition, Phi Alpha members have also volunteered to assist the School with the First Annual Continuing Education Program held in the fall. Phi Alpha members were there to assist with the registration table, handle check-in at each of the workshops and collected the evaluations and CEU forms from departing participants. They also assisted the Office of Field Education during the two-day training of field instructors. Phi Alpha members assisted at the registration and check-in tables and participated on student panels discussing their experience in the field and with supervision. The 42 new field instructors attending this year's training were very positive in their comments about our students' contribution to the overall 16-hour training.

Phi Alpha Mission, Goals and Objectives and the Social Work Profession

I. Activities to Promote Core Values of Social Work Profession

All of the Chapter's activities promote social work and its core values. Through its many community service activities, the Chapter promotes the value of service as well as that of the importance of human relationships and the dignity and worth of the person. These community service activities include such events as: sponsoring a team in the Relay for Life, participating in a VA Hospital event for returning veterans and organizing and sponsoring a dance for physically and developmentally disabled adults (People First).

In addition, this past year Phi Alpha members maintained its chapter of Becca's Closet and participated throughout the year in sponsoring and coordinating a drive to collect dresses and accessories for the local spring high school proms. To increase the number of donations for Becca's Closet this past year, Phi Alpha members once again asked the local unit of NASW (Miami-Dade Unit) to partner with them in collecting donations. During a fall luncheon meeting of NASW, Phi Alpha members set up a table to collect dresses and accessories for local high school students, including those in foster care, unable to purchase outfits for their proms. Dozens of dresses, as well as countless numbers of accessories, were collected by the Phi Alpha chapter members.

Through their attendance and participation in Lobby Day, Phi Alpha members supported the values of social justice, integrity, and competence. Phi Alpha members rallied on the steps of the Florida Capitol for children's causes as well as for mental health issues.

II. Activities to Strengthen the Phi Alpha Chapter

Our Chapter's membership believes that to become a member of Phi Alpha requires more than just a high grade point average; that it also requires commitment to the organization and service. Therefore, all of the activities and events sponsored by Phi Alpha also serve to strengthen the Chapter.

The monthly meetings strengthened the Chapter by bringing the members together to plan and discuss upcoming events or to discuss needs they would like to see addressed. Social events served to promote networking and provided members with support systems in the program. Several times during each semester the Chapter members sponsored social events such as dinners or parties that brought social work students together in an informal atmosphere. At the end of the fall semester, students organized a "Casino Night" that provided a wonderful opportunity for students to celebrate the end of the term together.

They also participated in University events as a group. For example, Phi Alpha members set up a tent for a tailgate party at Homecoming. Members also attended movies held on campus and participated in other University social and sports events as a group.

Service events provided opportunities for students to reach outside of their "comfort zones" and participate in activities and events that they normally would not do. For example, participating in a social event for physically and developmentally disabled adults (members of People First Organization) was not comfortable for all of the students but once there they were able to join in with the People First members in socializing and dancing. Speaking to state legislators and their aides and participating in advocating for social service issues was also outside of the "comfort zone" for many students but the experience provided them with greater enthusiasm for the profession and greater understanding for the role of advocacy.

Members of Phi Alpha also volunteered for a local community agency, Care Resource, and assisted in the promotion of GLBT events including a pride parade, walkathon, and fundraising event. Members also participated in the Susan Komen Cancer Walk as well as a Dance-a-thon to raise money for the local children's hospital.

This year Phi Alpha members were once again actively engaged in fund raising for Lobby Day. Bake sales were held in order to pay for a charter bus to Tallahassee for the two-day event. The students raised nearly \$800 and in the process formed a stronger bond among the members.

III. Activities to Promote Achievements of Professional Social Workers in the Area

This year two members of Phi Alpha represented their fellow students on the advisory board of the local NASW Miami-Dade Unit. Their participation on the board included making decisions on local unit activities as well as being part of the selection committee for the Unit's Social Worker of the Year, Student Social Worker of the Year, Educator of the Year, and Public Servant of the Year.

At the annual dinner held by the local NASW unit in March in celebration of Social Work Month, the Unit selected Phi Alpha member and the president of the Phi Alpha Honor Society, graduate student Kesia Vazquez, as the Student Social Worker of the Year. The officers of Phi Alpha, along with their faculty adviser, faculty members, and other members of Phi Alpha, were in attendance at this annual event in order to support and promote the achievements of the social workers being honored by NASW.

In March of this year, Phi Alpha hosted an on-campus event for the NASW Florida Chapter as a pre-lobby day training and rally for lobby day. In addition to students, the event was open to local social workers and field instructors.

IV. Activities to Help Students Learn About Professional Social Work Practice

The Chapter has participated in several activities that promoted the social work profession to other students. Members participated in new student orientations each semester and promoted the Chapter and its activities and in doing so they also shared with other students about the profession. They also participated in an annual new student event sponsored by Housing. This involved students from many organizations sponsoring booths to promote their organizations and majors.

In addition, the School's Student Services Coordinator frequently asked Phi Alpha members to accompany her to recruitment events and fairs. Chapter members served as wonderful recruiters when they shared their experiences in the social work field. Student members also sent representatives to the bi-weekly Student Organization Council meetings held at the University. This provided Phi Alpha members with opportunities to share their experiences with students from other majors. Phi Alpha members visited all social work classrooms (undergraduate and graduate) throughout the fall and spring semesters to promote upcoming events and to promote social work and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Honors Service by Promoting Humanitarian Goals and Ideals in the Community and University

I. Activities to Help People Living in the Community

Phi Alpha members are consistently involved in numerous service activities and events that promoted humanitarian goals and ideals both in the South Florida community and the

University. One set of events involved members signing up and participating in University sponsored service projects. This past year these included walking in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Walk, the walk for AIDS Awareness, the walk for suicide prevention (Out of the Darkness) and the Walk to Cure Autism.

Another set of service events involved members planning, organizing and implementing a project or event that assisted people living in the community. This year these events included a Valentine's party for the elderly at a local adult daycare program (Palmer House). The Chapter members decorated the hall, provided refreshments, played bingo, provided prizes, and took Polaroid pictures of the daycare participants with a Valentine's backdrop and gave them to the daycare members as a remembrance of the day.

In an-going event, members collected prom dresses and accessories throughout the year. As a chapter of Becca's closet, Phi Alpha members assisted young women in the foster care system as well as other needy young women to fulfill their dreams of attending their high school proms in memorable dresses.

One of the most important events of this past academic year was the annual dance sponsored for the members of an organization called People First (physically and developmentally disabled adults). This event involved Phi Alpha members decorating the University ballroom with this year's "Tropical" theme, preparing and serving refreshments, hiring a disc jockey, and selling tickets as a fund raiser for People First. At the event, student members served the food and drinks, danced with People First members, organized dance contests and crowned the "King and Queen" of the dance. The event was very successful both in terms of raising funds for People First and in creating an atmosphere where everyone was very comfortable in dancing and having fun regardless of their disability. As in previous years, faculty who attended the event were quite touched by the students' involvement with the People First members.

This year's Phi Alpha members also participated in several other drives/collections to assist people living in the community. One of the drives consisted of collecting clothes and toiletries for a local homeless shelter.

II. Activities to Help Social Service Agencies in the Community

The Chapter has assisted community social service agencies in several ways. This year the Chapter partnered with the Family Resource Center, a local agency that works with families and children at-risk, to assist them with several events. A food drive was held in early fall for Thanksgiving, a toy drive was held in December and an Easter event was held in April for foster youth.

Abriendo Puertas, a local program that serves the needs of immigrants in the inner city of Miami, once again asked for assistance in sponsoring a Thanksgiving dinner for its volunteers to both thank them for their help and to share an American tradition with them. Our Chapter provided the dinner, decorated, served, and participated with the agency in rewarding its volunteers with this event.

The Chapter organized a team for the Relay for Life that was held on campus to assist in fund raising for the American Cancer Society. Members set up their booth, stayed on the relay course throughout the event, fund raised by soliciting donations and selling popcorn and snacks. Not a surprise that Phi Alpha members maintained their spirit and commitment to service throughout the event and demonstrated their strong bonds in addition to going beyond their set fundraising goals.

The Chapter also participated in numerous other functions to assist local social service agencies. The VA Hospital benefitted from the assistance of Phi Alpha members with their December Winter Wonderland event. Members decorated, served food, and socialized with returning injured veterans. Chapter members assisted Care Resources (community agency) in several of their events including assisting at a major fund raiser (White Party) and participating in the walkathon.

III. Activities to Support and Help the State and/or Local NASW Chapters

For both the State NASW chapter and the local Miami-Dade unit, Phi Alpha was very involved in supporting the March Lobby Day events. In March, the Phi Alpha members hosted the Florida NASW staff, local social workers and social work students for a lobby day training. Chapter members contacted the legislators in the South Florida region in order to meet with them on Lobby Day and present the issues supported by NASW. After Lobby Day, the Chapter members stayed current by tracking the bills and supporting NASW's call for action in making follow-up calls to the legislators. This year 20 students and two faculty members made the nine hour drive to Tallahassee to participate in Lobby Day.

The two student representatives to the local unit's advisory board were active in attendance at meetings and events and have also served as a liaison to the School and to the student organizations. They brought information on unit events to social work classes and encouraged students to attend NASW meetings and events.

IV. Activities to Help Local Decision Makers be More Aware of the Needs of Local Residents

Attending Lobby Day in Tallahassee was the major activity for student advocacy on behalf of the community and the needs of its residents. Tallahassee is a nine hour bus ride from Miami and required major fundraising to cover the transportation costs. Chapter members fundraised by holding bake sales. As a result, the cost for attending Lobby Day, including chartering the bus for two days, hotel rooms for one night and dinner as a group, was kept to a minimum. The entire process was coordinated by the officers of Phi Alpha. Additional funding for the bus was provided by the University's Student Organization Council as a result of the high service activity of Phi Alpha Honor Society.

During Lobby Day, students attended additional training, rallied with all the social workers at the Capital, and divided themselves into groups of four or five students to visit the offices of legislators. Prior to attending the event, Phi Alpha members called the offices of the State Legislators and made appointments for Lobby Day. Whether meeting with the legislators or their aides, each group presented the bills being supported by NASW and the importance of each bill in meeting the needs of the citizens of South Florida. Follow-up calls and e-mails to the offices of the legislators further assisted in making sure that the local decision makers were aware of local needs. In addition, several Phi Alpha members visited their legislators in their Miami offices to follow-up on the Lobby Day visit.

Encourage Professional Development, Achievement, and Activities that Promote Interest in Social Work

I. Activities to Promote Students Going into the Profession

Chapter members assisted the office of the Student Services Coordinator in attending career fairs that serve as recruitment tools for the School of Social Work and therefore the profession. They participated as speakers during recruitment events such as presentations to psychology majors or new students entering the University.

At new student orientations, Phi Alpha members spoke to students about entering the social work profession while promoting the service activities of the chapter. Power Point presentations were made at these orientations in order to demonstrate the level of activity and the engagement of the social work students and faculty in service to the University and community.

Through its service activities on campus and in the community, the high activity of the Chapter and its members has resulted in Phi Alpha receiving the highest participation points for on-campus student organizations. This has translated into higher funding from the University's Student Organization Council as well as recognition as one of the most active service organizations at the University. This recognition has assisted in the promotion of social work to all University students.

II. Activities to Improve the Image of the Social Work Profession in Local Area

All of the Chapter activities served to improve the image of the social work profession in the local area. Through the service activities that the Chapter provided to the community, social workers were seen in a positive light. Through the Chapter's sponsorship of on-campus events, other students in the University saw social work in a positive manner. Through contact with state legislators, the roles of social workers and of the profession were also perceived in a more positive image. The video promoting social work in a

“new light” that was created last year by this year’s Phi Alpha president, Kesia Vazquez, was once again used this year as a recruitment tool.

III. Activities to Recognize Accomplishments of Local Social Work Practitioners

Phi Alpha members worked closely with the local NASW unit to recognize the accomplishments of local social work practitioners. Student members participated in the annual recognition dinner as well as in other NASW unit events that recognized the important work of local social workers. In addition, the students recognized the accomplishments of local social workers through postings in the social work student project room (housed in the library), on bulletin boards outside the project room, and through e-mails for students.

This year the School of Social Work created a new award for the “Field Instructor of the Year”. Phi Alpha members participated in nominating individuals for the award and sponsored the award winner and his spouse at the spring banquet.

For National Office Only

Report # _____ Date received _____