

## **SAMPLE INDUCTION CEREMONY**

The following sample induction ceremony may be adapted for use on your campus; for example, many chapters include favorite and meaningful literary references as part of their induction ceremony.

### **Sample Induction Ceremony**

Arrange audience-seating in two sections, one side for current members, and one side for non- members (including inductees and their guests). Chapter officers should be seated at a table in the front of the room.

The Secretary (or another officer) should have a membership certificate and Society pin for each inductee. A recognition ribbon in the official Society colors of cardinal red and black also may be provided. These membership materials should be on a small table in front of or next to where all the officers are seated.

The President will open the meeting and introduce current chapter officers and the Chapter Sponsor(s). If there are special guests (e.g., the department chair, a dean, department directors), they may be introduced at this time and thanked for attending the meeting.

**PRESIDENT:** (standing) “On behalf of the members of the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at [school name], we welcome you to this special meeting to induct new members.”

“Will the Historian (or another officer) please provide a brief history of Sigma Tau Delta and our local chapter.”

**HISTORIAN:** “Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society, was founded in 1924 at Dakota Wesleyan University, to confer distinction for high achievement in English language, literature, and writing; and to foster literacy and all aspects of the discipline of English. With over 850 chapters in large and small, public and private, colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad, Sigma Tau Delta is the most active honors organization in our field and one of the largest members of the Association of College Honor Societies.

In addition to the prestige of membership in an international honor society, there are many other benefits of affiliation: thousands of dollars in scholarship and award opportunities, regional and national conferences, and internship and publication possibilities. One especially noteworthy benefit of membership is that students are invited to submit papers for presentation at Sigma Tau Delta’s annual spring convention, held each year in one of the Society’s six regions of the country. Students selected to present their work in this national venue also have the opportunity to win convention writing awards and to attend presentations and workshops by nationally recognized authors such as Neil Gaiman, Ursula Le Guin, and U.S. Poet Laureates Natasha Trethewey and Kay Ryan. In summary, Sigma Tau Delta is about recognition and opportunity, and is dedicated to making a real difference in the life of each and every Sigma Tau Deltan.

Our local chapter, the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, was founded in \_\_\_\_\_.” [Provide a brief history of your chapter, including chapter activities and convention participation (if applicable). Note any Society awards, scholarships, and other honors received by your chapter, chapter members, or Chapter Sponsor(s).]

**PRESIDENT:** “We will now move on to the induction of our new members. Will the Vice President please present the candidates for induction?”

**VICE PRESIDENT:** (standing) “M\_\_\_ President, I have the honor of bringing before you and our chapter [number of candidates] candidates seeking membership in the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta.”

To the candidates: "When I call your name, please come forward to be recognized."

(The VP reads candidate names as submitted to the Central Office; candidates come forward as their name is read and as a group they remain standing, facing the audience.)

"Candidates, upon careful examination of your academic accomplishments in the field of English, in recognition of what you have already done, and in hopeful anticipation of what you will continue to do, I present you to this assembly, to our Chapter Sponsor(s), and to our chapter officers."

**PRESIDENT:** (to Treasurer) "M\_\_\_\_Treasurer, have these candidates satisfied all of the requirements for membership?"

**TREASURER:** "Each has satisfied all chapter requirements for membership." **PRESIDENT:** (to

Secretary) "M\_\_\_\_\_Secretary, are their membership documents in order?"

**SECRETARY:** "Each has membership documents in order."

**PRESIDENT:** (to candidates) "Candidates, each of you has been recommended as a person of good scholarship and with enthusiasm for English language and literature. Having been presented by the Vice President and verified by the Treasurer and Secretary, are you ready to take upon yourselves the honors and obligations of membership in the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. If you are ready to do so, answer, 'I am ready for membership.'"

**CANDIDATES:** (in unison) "I am ready for membership."

(Secretary and Treasurer move to position themselves by the table holding the membership materials. Inductees remain standing, facing the audience.)

**PRESIDENT:** "Only persons of high scholarship in English are admitted to our fellowship. We join with others from across the country and abroad in celebration of all the fields of English. To complete your induction into the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, please come forward when your name is announced and accept your membership certificate and official Society pin."

(If membership certificates and Society pins are present, distribute them. Otherwise say, "Please step forward as your name is called and receive a recognition ribbon in the official Society colors of cardinal red and black. The international Society will provide your membership certificate and pin within a few weeks.")

**PRESIDENT:** "[Inductee name] accept this certificate of membership as an outward symbol of membership, not only now, but in the years to come." (This statement is repeated for each inductee, who is then directed to proceed to the Secretary to receive the Society pin.)

**SECRETARY:** "This pin displays our Society emblem as an outward symbol of membership, not only now, but in the years to come. To acknowledge and celebrate your new membership, I charge you to wear it daily for the next week." (This statement is repeated for each inductee, who is then directed to return to remain standing, facing the audience.)

When all the inductees have received their membership materials, the President addresses them:

**PRESIDENT:** (to inductees) "I now declare you to be members in full standing in the [chapter name] Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. We welcome you to the fellowship of this chapter and to the larger fellowship of the international Society. (turns to audience) "Will everyone please join me in welcoming our new members?" (applause)

**PRESIDENT:** (to inductees) "Please be seated among the other members of our chapter." (Inductees now sit on the members' side of the room.)

**PRESIDENT:** "Will all members, new and old, please stand. As our new members affirm their membership for the first time, let all members join them, thus reinforcing our own commitment. Everyone, please repeat after me:

I shall endeavor . . . to advance the study . . . of the chief literary masterpieces . . . to encourage worthwhile reading. . . to promote the mastery of written expression. . . and to foster a spirit of fellowship . . . among those who specialize . . . in the study of English language and literature . . . ever keeping in mind our international motto: . . . Sincerity, Truth, Design."

Members are then seated.

**OFFICER or SPONSOR:** "As we prepare to draw this ceremony to a close. " (Here there may be final words, an invitation to share in refreshments, and any other part of the ceremony the chapter has prepared--in keeping with individual school policy and tradition. The meeting should then be adjourned in the normal manner.)

### **Sample selections that may be inserted in the ceremony and read by any of the officers, the Chapter Sponsor, or visiting official(s):**

**Sigma Tau Delta Regents** recommend that chapters select quotations exemplifying *Sincerity, Truth, and Design* that are locally meaningful and that are directly connected to the department's curriculum and values. Here are a few other quotations that chapters use.

#### **Sincerity**

Leslie Marmon Silko: "I know the voices of the storytellers, and I know that if you tell their truth and don't try to be self-serving, they aren't dangerous -- in fact, they bring great protective power -- *great protective power.*" from *Conversations with Leslie Marmon Silko*, ed. Ellen L. Arnold, University of Mississippi Press, p. 139 [Reprint of *Speaking of the Short Story: Interviews with Contemporary Writers*, ed. Farhat Iftekharuddin, Mary Rohrberger, and Maurice Rice (University of Mississippi, 1997).

#### **Truth**

There is greatness in the truth,  
A dignity to satisfy our wish,  
A solemn tone to make us still,  
A sorrow to fill our hearts,  
A beauty and a vision in the truth

From "The Blue Meridian" (ll. 760-764) in *The Collected Poems of Jean Toomer*, ed. By Robert B. Jones and Margery Toomer Latimer. London, 1988, pp. 50-75.

## **Design**

Toni Morrison wrote about design in the sense of creation when she wrote, "If you find a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." Speech to the Ohio Arts Council, 1981, reported by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Sun. September 27, 1981, p. 106.

### **Additional Optional Quotations:**

Henry David Thoreau once said, "It takes two to speak the truth--one to speak, and another to listen.' As members of Sigma Tau Delta you understand the importance of communication, the value of listening, and the significance of expression. You have proven yourselves capable of comprehending the English language and of pursuing the truth in works of literature or in your own creative expressions of poetry or prose. Being a member of this Society, and of the English community as a whole, requires that you continue these efforts and prepare yourselves to take into the world the truths you have found here, sharing with others your joy and appreciation of our discipline. Truth cannot exist in a vacuum. Like art, it must be shared to be understood."

William Shakespeare, in his play *Henry V*, wrote:

As many arrows, loosed several ways  
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;  
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea . . .  
So may a thousand actions, once afoot, End in one  
purpose, and be all well borne Without defeat.

### ***A possible end of the ceremony:***

New members, in honor of your accomplishments and in anticipation of your bright future, I end this ceremony with these words by Emily Dickinson. Please commit them to yourself as you grow in our Society, in our community, and in our mutual dedication to a life of letters:

We never know how high we are Til we are  
called to rise  
And then, if we are true to plan Our statures  
touch the skies

"Congratulations to you all. Our ceremony is concluded."