

THE OFS FRATERNITY COUNCIL

The council of the local fraternity is comprised of the following offices: minister, vice-minister, secretary, treasurer, and formation director. Other offices may be added according to the needs of each fraternity. The spiritual assistant of the fraternity is part of the council by right.

It is the duty of the council to promote the initiatives necessary for fostering fraternal life, for improving the human, Christian and Franciscan formation of its members. It is essential that all council members attend both monthly council and fraternity meetings.

The council also:

- Decides on the acceptance and admission to profession of new brothers and sisters.
- Establishes a fraternal dialogue with members in particular difficulties and adopts consequent measures to assist them.
- Receives requests for withdrawal and decides on the suspension of a member from the fraternity.
- Decides on the destination of available funds and deliberates on all financial affairs of the fraternity.
- Assigns duties to the councilors and other professed members.

OFS COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Minister

- Calls for, presides at, and directs the meetings of the fraternity and council.
- Develops council and fraternity meeting agendas in collaboration with the council.
- Prepares and submits an annual report for the LaVerna Regional Council after it has been approved by the council.
- Annually attends the LaVerna Regional Chapter Meeting, usually one summer weekend.
- Writes a reflection for the newsletter with a brief monthly report.
- Requests from the Regional Executive Council the pastoral and fraternal visits at least once every three years with the consent of the council.
- Ensures that the council has its own formation needs met through regular monthly gatherings which are both prayerful and productive.
- Collaborates with the council to provide a formation and on-going formation process that will deepen the spirit of St. Francis in all members.
- Schedules the local council elections in conjunction with the Regional Executive Council every three years.
- Utilizes all the gifts of the fraternity to foster a lively and authentic Franciscan, ecclesial and fraternal life.
- Ensures that those professed members who are currently not in fraternity be remembered in prayer and supported, while continuously hoping for their return.
- Increases greater awareness of the regional, national and international fraternities of the OFS with whom they are intimately connected.
- Receives new members and accepts their final commitment to Gospel living in the OFS.
- Exhibits a profound commitment to the Gospel, prays for the fraternity and its members frequently and strives for deeper humility so the members see their minister as one among equals.
- Maintains a fraternity binder documenting rosters, annual reports, agendas, minutes, visitation reports, election results and reports as well as any other pertinent fraternity information for the three-year term.

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Vice-Minister

- Faithfully attends and participates in all meetings, gatherings and activities of the fraternity and council.
- Becomes familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the minister.
- Prepares to assume the duties and responsibilities of the fraternity in the event the minister is sick or absent.
- Attends the annual Chapter Meeting as a delegate for the minister in the event the minister is unable to attend.
- Works to understand the alignment and relationship of the OFS structure: local, district, regional, national and international.
- Assists with pre-inquiry formation as needed.

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Formation Director

- Works in conjunction with the Spiritual Assistant and council, following national and regional guidelines, to minister to the formation needs of all fraternity members, inquirers and candidates.
- Makes available to members the relevant Church teachings, secular Franciscan statutes, constitutions and Franciscan writings.
- Coordinates the discernment process of the inquirer by meeting monthly for no less than six months, following an established formation guide.
- Coordinates the discernment process of the candidates by meeting monthly, following an established formation guide for a period of no less than eighteen months.
- Informs the council of the suitability of the candidates, prior to profession, regarding their commitment to live according to the Rule.
- Plans the Profession Mass and social.
- Coordinates the selection of mentors/sponsors for each candidate.
- Leads on-going formation at monthly gatherings if necessary.
- Pursues personal on-going formation.

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Secretary

- Compiles the minutes at the council meetings and fraternity gatherings, assuring that they are sent to all members in a timely manner before the next meeting/gathering. Makes sure that all questions are clarified at the meetings/gatherings so that the minutes are accurate.
- Takes attendance at the fraternity gatherings and notifies the hospitality minister of absentees.
- Oversees fraternity correspondence assigned to the secretary, composing letters, notes, or cards.
- Keeps an organized record in a binder of all minutes, agendas and letters pertinent to the fraternity, including treasurer reports, handouts and other communications of the fraternity for the three-year term.
- Keeps a current Prayer and Petition list and sends it to all members.
- Archives the fraternity's past and updates the fraternity's history with the help of another member delegated to be the fraternity historian.
- Updates and preserves all records, noting admissions, professions, deaths, withdrawals and transfers from the fraternity in a record book.
- Keeps track of Funeral Preference Forms.
- Creates a yearly roster of members and calendar.

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Treasurer

- Is in charge of the budget, collecting and disbursing funds as necessary.
- Keeps an accurate record of all donations and expenses, giving a monthly account to the council and fraternity and providing a copy to the secretary.
- Records each receipt in the proper register with the date on which it was given, the name of the contributor, or the one from whom it was collected
- Records in the same register the items of expense, specifying the date and purpose.
- Accounts for the common fund which includes the following:
 - Operating Expenses – all expenses unrelated to the Fair Share, including stipends, books, newsletter subscriptions, stamps, stationery, etc.
 - Fair Share – funds collected at each fraternity meeting that are used in part for the fee for each member that is forwarded quarterly to the LaVerna Regional Office for operating expenses of the region, for the "Tau" newsletter, and for moneys to members applying for assistance to attend retreats, out-of-town meetings, etc.

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Hospitality Minister

- Provides a generous and welcoming presence for our fraternity gatherings, providing the opportunity to welcome Christ in our brothers and sisters and any others who may be inquiring about our way of life in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.
- Encourages all members to greet guests and members with a welcoming spirit.
- Coordinates the sending of birthday, sympathy and get well cards.
- Coordinates gift purchases when necessary.
- Coordinates collection and distribution of non-perishable foods.
- Sets up a contact/visitation schedule for members who are isolated, homebound or inactive.
- Visits homebound members and reports on them at the fraternity gatherings.
- Contacts members who miss a fraternity gathering, determines the circumstances and updates them on the gathering.
- Provides sign-up lists for those providing snacks for the monthly gatherings and for the fraternity's allotted time at the Perpetual Adoration Chapel.
- Provides and leads a prayer before the social portion of the gathering.
- Provides name tags when needed for gatherings and activities.
- Officiates as chairperson for special activities/parties, including coordinating and booking the picnic in August.

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ADDITIONAL OFS COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THEIR DUTIES

On-going Formation Director (Appointed for a one to three-year term)

- Coordinates the on-going formation portion of the fraternity meetings, keeping a current roster of members willing to lead the study for the month.
- Provides a variety of on-going formation experiences through current events, books, articles, CDs and DVDs.
- Attends the council, fraternity and formation meetings whenever possible.
- Assists the Formation Director as needed.

Fraternity Historian/Photographer (Appointed for a one to three-year term)

- Helps the secretary to archive the fraternity's past and update the fraternity history.
- Takes photographs at fraternity functions.
- Maintains the fraternity scrapbook.

Newsletter Editor (appointed for a one to three-year term)

- Creates a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter including a current roster of council members; upcoming dates of local, regional and national events; lists of birthdays, profession anniversaries and deaths; Minister's letter; articles, reflections, poems, etc. prepared by fraternity members; Franciscan Saints/Blesseds of the month; and pictures.