



## Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
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**FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND BASILEUS**



January 24, 2021

Dear Brothers:

Since this pandemic started in March 2020, we have been patient and deliberate in allowing science and facts from the CDC, The Office of the Surgeon General, our International Medical and Health Initiatives Committee, the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Covid-19 Task Force, the NPHC Covid-19 Task Force, our International Risk Management Committee, and The Office of the Grand Counselor to drive our decision making. I issued a Fraternity-wide prohibition on all in-person meetings and social activities because of the rapidly increasing infections and deaths due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That meant cancelling in-person district meetings for the second year in a row, cancelling an in-person Grand Conclave, and cancelling in-person Founders' Day programs. Regarding the prohibition of social activities and events, the risk and consequences of creating a super spreader event outweighed any potential benefit of just having fun. We have lost many good brothers to this pandemic. Many are fighting for their lives as I type these words. Many have survived Covid-19 but are now regarded as long haulers as they continue to fight the long-term aftereffects of Covid-19. We pray for all of our chapters and brothers who have had to say their last goodbye to a brother, to a friend, and to a family member during this time. Psalms 124 says "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side.....the waters would have engulfed us."

Because God was on our side, we successfully conducted our business virtually. We successfully executed our mandated programs virtually. Those we did in person, we did so in small groups, wearing masks, standing six feet apart, washing our hands, and/or using hand sanitizer. We successfully accomplished fatherhood and mentoring initiatives. We led the Divine Nine in registering voters, educating voters about issues and down ballot candidates, protecting the polls, and getting out the vote in the November election and the January runoff. Because of your efforts, more black people voted in this election than ever in the history of the United States. We did wellness checks on one another. And yet, the pandemic continues. Even though we have two vaccines and two more coming on line very soon, as we move into 2021, there are predictions that the death toll may reach 500,000 within the next month.

Therefore, we will continue to wear masks, stand six feet apart, and wash our hands and/or use hand sanitizer. We will also continue to make the decisions that make the most sense and provide our membership with safety and certainty in uncertain times. With that in mind, I am cancelling the 2021 Moses C. Norman, Sr. Leadership Conference and the 2021

International Undergraduate Summit that was scheduled for July 2021 in Nassau, Bahamas. Since these meetings are not mandated by our Constitution and Bylaws, we will not conduct these meetings virtually. However, IHQ will provide some of the most highly rated trainings from these international meetings virtually between now and July 2021. IHQ will also plan virtual celebrations of scholarship winners, service award recipients, and achievement week winners. The prohibition of in-person social activities will continue through May 31, 2021. We will reexamine this policy at that time. Mandated social action projects and events should be done virtually but can be done in person in small groups adhering to the aforementioned guidance of the CDC and state and local officials. Chapters should continue to seek advice and approval from their district representatives for such events. We will continue to conduct Membership Selection Processes with education classes being conducted virtually and the initiation being conducted in person in accordance with the aforementioned guidance of the CDC and state and local officials.

In my conversations with Dr. Jerome Adams, the immediate past U.S. Surgeon General, and the incoming U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, we may return to “normality that is close to where we were before” by the end of September 2021. Brothers, be safe. Be smart. May God bless each and every one of you and your families and may God continue to bless the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Marion, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" at the beginning.

Dr. David Marion  
41<sup>st</sup> Grand Basileus