

PHI SIGMA TAU A Short History

Phi Sigma Tau was founded at Muhlenberg College in 1930 as Alpha Kappa Alpha, with chapters at colleges in Maryland and Pennsylvania. It remained in this regional status until October of 1955, when it was incorporated as **Phi Sigma Tau**, a National Honor Society in Philosophy. Its essential purpose was and is to promote ties among philosophy departments in accredited institutions and students in philosophy nationally. Both on the local and national levels, **Phi Sigma Tau** considers its organization as instrumental: a means for developing and honoring academic excellence as well as philosophical interest. In addition to providing a means of awarding distinction to students having high scholarship and interest in philosophy, the Society also promotes interest in philosophy among the general collegiate public. Under Internal Revenue Service regulations, Phi Sigma Tau is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

GROWTH

In 1955, **Phi Sigma Tau** included twelve chapters in Ohio, Tennessee, Maryland, Washington, D.C., New Mexico, California, and Louisiana. By 1958 ten additional chapters had been added, including those which had formerly constituted Alpha Kappa Alpha; and the date of the latter's founding was taken as **Phi Sigma Tau**'s founding date. In 1958 the Society was admitted to full membership in the **Association of College Honor Societies** (ACHS), and by 1969 its chapter network included 55 chapters in 32 states. The Society became international in 1991 with the installation of its first Canadian chapter; and, as of August, 2008, its chapter network includes over 200 chapters.

GOVERNMENT

The National Officers consist of President, Vice-President, and Executive Secretary. The PST Executive Council consists of these three National Officers, plus four Area Council Representatives.

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Local chapters retain a high degree of autonomy, and are often associated with philosophy clubs on their college campuses. Chapter membership is open to qualified graduate and undergraduate students, teachers of philosophy, and those who qualify as honorary chapter members. At the national level the Society has also established a **Laureate Chapter** (whose members are distinguished philosophers throughout the world), and a **National Alumni Chapter** (for graduated PST members who wish to continue their affiliation with the Society).

INSIGNIA

The Society's emblem is a pentagon with the letters *Phi Sigma Tau* at the center. Each of the angles contains a word representing one of the five streams of world thought: Chinese, Indian, Islamic, Hebrew, and Greek. The seal of the Society is the reverse side of the Athenian silver tetradrachma (B.C. 480-400), which bears the owl, olive spray, and small crescent. The margin of the seal carries the legend, *Phi Sigma Tau, 1930*.

PUBLICATIONS

Beginning in 1930, annual meetings were held at which student papers were read and discussed, then published in an annual volume entitled **Philosophy**. Since 1956, the Society has published twice yearly an official journal, **Dialogue**, publication in which is open to all students in philosophy. **Dialogue** appears in October and April of each academic year. The 2007-08 academic year marked the appearance of Volume 50. The **PST Newsletter**, which appears two or three times yearly, had its 123rd issue in 2008.

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

The headquarters were originally at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., moved in 1959 to Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, in 1970 to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in 2005 to Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.