



The International Foreign Language Honor Society, Inc.

## Phi Sigma Iota

Member of the Association of College Honor Societies

### MEMBER HANDBOOK

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#### History

Phi Sigma Iota was founded in 1922 at Allegheny College in Meadville Pennsylvania by Dr. Henry W. Church, members of his department of languages, and advanced students who were meeting to discuss linguistic and literary matters. PSI became a national society when Beta Chapter was established at The Pennsylvania State University in April 1925. Less than a year later, Gamma Chapter at the College of Wooster followed them. With these three chapters as the nucleus of the national organization, the first convention was held in May 1926, at Allegheny College.

At a National Convention held in Bloomington, Illinois in November 1935, Phi Sigma Iota merged with Alpha Zeta Pi, a similar society west of the Mississippi organized by Dr. Etienne Renaud and his associates in the Department of Languages at the University of Denver in 1917.

In 1949, Phi Sigma Iota was voted membership into the U.S. Association of College Honor Societies, the first language society to receive that honor.

In 1978, under the Presidency of Dr. Santiago Vilas, the Society expanded into the National Foreign Language Honor Society Phi Sigma Iota to honor outstanding achievements in any foreign language including Classics, Philology, Applied Linguistics, Comparative Literature, and Bilingual Education.

In 1982, the Society became the International Foreign Language Honor Society by installing its first Chapter in a foreign country at Universidad Regiomontana, Monterrey, Mexico.

## Insignia



The Insignia of the Society was adopted in 1935 and was created by Dr. Robert E. Dengler (1893-1973) Professor Emeritus of Greek at Pennsylvania State University. The words PHI, SIGMA, and IOTA may be understood, respectively, as *Philotes* (Friendship), *Spoude* (Zeal for languages), and *Idioma* (Research and Individuality).

The Key and Pin of the Society were adopted in 1935. They were also designed by Dr. Dengler and are comprised of the following elements:

1. A chaplet of ivy, in honor of the birth of Horace (b.65 B.C.), the Roman poet at the height of Augustan literature who was a model for subsequent versification;
2. A stem at the bottom of which the foliage “grows;”
3. A five-point star standing for the five languages originally recognized by the Society;
4. The Greek letters PHI SIGMA IOTA imprinted over the five-point star.

The shield or coat of arms of the Society is comprised of a summary of the colors and designs of the shields of the language areas mentioned in Section 1, b (3) above.



## Membership

Membership in the Society is open to qualified candidates including persons with disability, without regard to age, color, gender, national origin, race, religion, and/or sexual orientation.

New members are recruited by invitation only from established Phi Sigma Iota chapters. Nominations of candidates for collegiate membership shall be made by the Chapter Advisory Council or a qualified faculty advisor. Nominations of professional and honorary members may be made by a chapter. The slate of candidates for membership shall be affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the chapter.

**A. Active Members** Collegiate or professional members who pay the national initiation fee shall be active members of the Society.

1. **Collegiate Members.** At the time of initiation, Collegiate members shall be students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs and pursuing a curriculum with a major/minor in:

- Foreign Languages, including Classics and ESL
- Comparative Literature
- Foreign Language Education
- Linguistics
- Second Language Acquisition
- Other interdisciplinary programs with a significant foreign language component.

a. Undergraduate students shall be enrolled in the institution represented by the chapter, have completed at least one course in a foreign language at the third-year level or its equivalent (fifth semester or seventh quarter), have completed 45 semester hours or its equivalent, have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, and rank in the top 35% of their class. If the institution does not calculate class rank, advisors must either make the calculations, or use a minimum GPA of 3.3 on a 4.0 scale as eligibility criteria. In cases where an institution does not offer a third-year course in a less commonly-taught language, the student may substitute a third-year or higher course in English on the target culture(s), such as history, cultural history, or literature in translation.

b. Graduate students shall be enrolled in a graduate program in one of the aforementioned fields, have attained a high degree of competence in at least one foreign language, have completed 12 semester hours of graduate work or equivalent, and have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

2. **Professional Members.** Alumni of collegiate chapters shall be professional members. Others meeting the following criteria may be elected to professional membership: have made a distinctive contribution to the profession and

- (a) earned one or more degrees in foreign language and ranked within the top 35% of the class as undergraduates or 3.5 as graduate students and not been previously initiated into the Society,
- (b) earned one or more degrees qualifying them to work in the field and rank in the top 35% as undergraduates or 3.5 as graduate students, or
- (c) faculty of the university, after one academic year of teaching in that institution and having shown remarkable ability in their field as well as demonstrating support of the ideals of the Society .

**B. Honorary Members** Honorary members shall be persons outside the field, excluding those who are employed in the field, who have made distinctive scholarly and research contributions to the study, use, or promotion of foreign languages and the ideals of the Society.

Active members shall have the right to vote, hold office, be elected as delegates to conventions, be elected or appointed to committees of the Society and the chapters to office, or serve on committees. Honorary members shall have all the privileges of active members except the right to vote, hold office, or serve on committees.

A member desiring to resign from the Society shall submit such resignation in writing to the Administrative Director. Any member having resigned from membership may be reinstated upon application to the Administrative Director and upon meeting such uniform terms and conditions as may be established by the Executive Board.

Membership in the Society may be suspended or terminated by the Executive Board for just cause. Sufficient cause for such suspension or termination of membership may be violation of the Bylaws or any lawful rule or practice adopted by the Society or other conduct deemed by the Executive Board to be prejudicial to the best interests of the Society. A statement of the charges shall be sent by registered mail to the last recorded address of the member, accompanied by notice of the time and place of the meeting at which the charges are to be considered. At least thirty days notice shall be given, and the member shall have the opportunity to appear in person or to be represented by counsel and to present any defense to such charges before action is taken by the Executive Board. The Executive Board may adopt such rules as may be necessary to assure due process to the member. The decision for suspension or termination shall be by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board. A member suspended or terminated for just cause shall not be entitled to return of dues.

### **Dues**

The amount of any national dues, fees, and assessments for any class of membership in the Society shall be established by the Executive Board. The dues year shall coincide with the academic year. New members pay a one-time Initiation fee of \$35 for Lifetime Society membership.

### **Roster of Chapters**

See the list of Chapters in the Chapter Locator at <https://phisigmaiota.org>.

### **Scholarships**

Phi Sigma Iota offers several scholastic grants to its members based on available funds.

The first scholarship was established in 1939 in memory of the founder and first National President, Dr. Church.

In 1970, another scholarship was established in memory of Dr. Anthony S. Corbiere, who for nearly thirty years was National Historian, Editor of the Newsletter, and Executive Secretary of Phi Sigma Iota.

In 2000, two additional named scholarships were inaugurated, one to honor Dr. Cleon Capsus, professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of South Florida, and one to honor the years of devoted work on behalf of PSI by former National President Dr. Santiago Vilas.

The Dr. Marie-France Hilgar Scholarship was established to honor former President Dr. Hilgar.

In September 2015, the Phi Sigma Iota Executive Committee members voted to establish a scholarship to honor the memory of Dorothy I. Mitstifer, former President of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS), for her dedication in promoting high standards for all honor societies, as well as her instrumental stewardship of, and invaluable counsel to Phi Sigma Iota during a difficult period of transition.

Other scholarships may be offered to qualified applicants as funds become available. Past awards have included:

The PSI Founder: Dr. Henry W. Church Scholarship  
The Dr. Cleon W. Capsas Memorial Scholarship  
The Dr. Santiago Vilas Scholarship  
The Dr. Marie-France Hilgar Scholarship  
The Phi Sigma Iota Scholarship  
The President's Scholarship  
The Editor's Scholarship  
The VISA Scholarship

### **Current National Officers**

for the most up-to-date list, visit <https://phisigmaiota.org/executive-committee-policies/>

<b>President</b>	Kajsa Larson Northern Kentucky University
<b>First Vice President</b>	Kristen Hetrick NC State University
<b>Second Vice President</b>	Hildegard Rossoll Kent State University
<b>Secretary</b>	Heather Allen University of Mississippi