

Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key Program Overview and History

For 100 years, the Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key has been awarded each spring to the graduating student with the highest cumulative academic average toward a degree in business administration or economics, regardless of fraternal affiliation.

The Scholarship Key was created just five years after the Fraternity was founded in 1907, when Alpha was still the only chapter in the Fraternity. Delta Sigma Pi has always placed great stress upon high scholastic achievement among its own members, and when several brothers suggested that an award be given annually by the Fraternity to the senior who had the highest scholastic record at graduation, the plan was readily adopted.

A monetary award was suggested at first, but many felt the money would be soon spent and nothing would be left to remind the winner of his scholastic achievement. The scholarship key idea was adopted, and the first key was presented to Brother Vincent G. McGuire, *New York*, in the spring of 1912.

When Beta Chapter (Northwestern- Chicago) joined the chapter roll in 1914, it was decided that each chapter may award one medal per year. The separate chapters had the power to individually regulate the rules governing the awarding of the medals. H. G. "Gig" Wright was the first scholarship key recipient from Beta Chapter.

Later in December 1920, when the chapter roll rose to seven chapters, the National Fraternity realized that allowing individual chapters to regulate the rules of awarding the keys made the awards inconsistent. The Fraternity created new rules, which are still followed today, in order to make the award uniform throughout all chapters.

Also in 1920, the diamond stone which appeared in the original keys was replaced by an amethyst stone to save on costs and because of the greater symbolic significance of the amethyst. (The amethyst can also be found in the Fraternity's badge).

The original Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key, while of exactly the same design as the present key, was much larger because the idea was to wear it on a watch fob, which was popular when the award was created. When people started wearing a watch chain from one vest pocket to another, it was necessary to reduce the size and weight of the key in 1923.

The key was awarded to both male and female students for the first 15 years, when it was restricted to male students only in 1927. When membership regulations allowed women to be initiated in 1977, the male-only restriction on the award was also dropped.

The Scholarship Key—now funded by the Delta Sigma Pi Leadership Foundation—is provided without charge to each college or university where there is an active Delta Sigma Pi chapter. In those cases where students tie for the highest academic average, two or more Scholarship Keys are presented.

The keys are presented at a convocation or honors event of each university or chapter's choice and the recipients are listed on each chapter's scholarship key scroll. Older scholarship key scrolls measure 17 x 23 inches in size and were framed in a specially designed molding that featured space

for the name of the university and panels for the names of thirty local winners. The key on the scroll was reproduced in gold, embossed and illuminated. Chapters installed today are now given plaques that can be engraved locally each year.

The Scholarship Key is a timeless tradition of Delta Sigma Pi and the Fraternity will continue to honor scholastic achievement for many years to come.

Quick facts about the Scholarship Key

Purpose

Since 1912 the Delta Sigma Pi Scholarship Key has been awarded annually at each college or university where the Fraternity maintains an active chapter. The Key is presented to the graduating senior(s) with the highest grade point average in the school of business or its equivalent.

Eligibility

- Member or non-member of Delta Sigma Pi
- Graduating in May or June of the current academic year
- Highest grade point average in the school of business or its equivalent