

*Member Handbook  
For  
Phi Sigma Iota  
International Foreign Language  
Honor Society*



*Founded 1917-1922*

*Member of the Association of College  
Honor Societies*

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

The 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

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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.

## *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.

## Dues

The first three years of dues are included in the initiation fee. To maintain active status in Phi Sigma Iota beyond the initial three years, annual national dues of \$20 are required. This money is used to support scholarships, the printing of *The Forum* and the maintenance of the international organization.

## Roster of Chapters

See the list of Chapters on the website  
[www.phisigmaiota.org](http://www.phisigmaiota.org)

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participate in award contests held by the Society, receive *The Forum*, and wear the insignia of the Society.

### 2. Alumni Members

- a. All students and faculty who have been Active members of PSI become Alumni members when they graduate or leave the institution hosting their chapter.
- b. Alumni enjoy the same privileges as student and faculty members.
- c. Members maintain Active status if they maintain annual national dues.

### 3. Honorary Members

- a. Persons not eligible for regular membership but who have distinguished themselves in the study, use, or promotion of foreign languages and linguistics and the ideals of Phi Sigma Iota. The electing chapter shall forward to the executive office the

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In 1949, Phi Sigma Iota was voted member-ship 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.

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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 (3) above.



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## 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* (Research and Individuality), and *Idioma* (Zeal for languages).

The Key and Pin of the Society were adopted in 1935. They were also designed by

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## Membership

Classes of membership:

### 1. Student members and faculty

- a. Those selected are superior undergraduate and graduate students of foreign languages, together with faculty teaching those languages.
- b. To be chosen as an undergraduate member, a student must be at the third- or fourth-year-level pursuing a curriculum with emphasis in foreign languages or linguistics.
- c. Students must have a 3.0 GPA average in their entire college course of study up to the date of consideration for membership, including all courses transferred for degree credit, as well as a 3.0 or above in all foreign language courses.
- d. Students must have completed at least one course in a foreign language at

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same documentation and fees as for elected regular members.

- b. Honorary members may be nominated by any Active PSI member.
- c. They have the same privileges and rights of Active student and faculty members, except to vote and hold office.

### 4. Life Members

- a. Active members who (1) contribute to the Society the amount of \$130 or who (2) have made valuable contributions in support of Phi Sigma Iota become Life Members.
- b. They shall have the same rights and privileges as Active students and faculty Members.
- c. Life members are exempt from any future payment of dues for life.

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the third-year level or beyond;

- e. Be enrolled at the institution which has selected him/her for membership;
- f. Rank in the top 35% of their class in general scholarship.
- g. Graduate students are eligible for membership upon completion of at least one full semester of foreign language graduate work at the institution which selects them, and have earned at least a 3.5 GPA in all graduate courses.
- h. Faculty Members of colleges and universities with an active chapter of PSI are eligible after one academic year of teaching at that institution.
- i. Students and faculty members remain active if, after their first three years of membership, they pay annual dues. The first three years of dues are included in initiation costs.
- i. Active members may hold office,

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