

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 2, 2012
To: Jessica Unger
From: Arielle Carter
Subject: Proposal for manual about presidential position

Introduction

It has come to my attention that Gamma Alpha Lambda lacks a training manual to offer future presidents. Frequently, the brief verbal training new presidents receive is not sufficient for them to understand their roles. In this proposal, I present my idea for addressing the situation: a comprehensive guide to managing Gamma Alpha Lambda as president.

This proposal contains an analysis of the problem and my proposed solution along with a detailed plan for managing the project.

Problem Analysis

This section contains details and background information about the problem in addition to a description of my preliminary design solutions.

Details and Background Information

The president's role in GAL is an important and often intimidating one, particularly if a newcomer was not adequately trained by her forerunner. There is currently no manual for the president to refer to in times of confusion or stress. Although the Chapter Constitution and by-laws briefly describe the duties of the president, the documents fail to give practical advice on accomplishing these tasks.

Lack of information about the role can lead to discouragement for the new president, confusion for the rest of the executive council, and ultimately, disarray for the entire chapter. No organization can run effectively without a knowledgeable, cooperative leadership board. Since the president's job includes running this board, it is of utmost importance that each of your successors understands the position. Every leader becomes confused at times or finds herself in trying circumstances, so each should be given resources that equip her for these situations.

I think a great resource to offer future presidents would be a comprehensive manual about the position. Ideally, each new president will read through the entire manual upon being elected, so the document should be pleasing to look at and fun to read. Readers are likely to return to the document throughout their terms in order to find answers to specific questions. To facilitate this, the information in the document must be organized and easy to find.

Preliminary Design Solutions and Criteria

There will be a significant amount of information to cover in the document, so I suggest using standard letter-size (8.5 x 11) paper. The document will not need to be mass-produced, so GAL can afford to print the document in color. However, we can save several dollars per print by using standard white bond paper for the body pages. The finished document should be spiral-bound to allow easy movement between sections.

The color choices I suggest are somewhat dark shades of purple and green. Since these are the Gamma Alpha Lambda's colors, the manual will be immediately perceived as an official document of the sisterhood. Darker shades of these colors are more pleasant to the eye than bright or pastel shades. First-level headings will be one of these colors, and second-level headings will be the other. If third-level headings are necessary, they will be an intermediate shade of gray. The remainder of the text will be black. Colorful body text is almost always overwhelming to the reader.

My current idea for the general layout of the document is for it to be designed similarly to a newsletter. The main text will be primarily placed in two columns in order to add more white space. A balance of text and white space makes the document look less intimidating to the reader. Particularly detailed or specialized information will be placed in separate boxes throughout the document. This makes pages look more interesting, calls attention to special topics, and separates certain information from the main body of text. Photographs and figures will be used as necessary to supplement the information in the text.

Project Management

To complete this project successfully, I have developed a management plan that contains a course of action, schedule, risk management plan, budget, and list of my credentials.

Course of Action

The following is a sequence of tasks that I will complete throughout the course of the project.

- (1) *Audience analysis:* I will complete background research about the document's audience in order to determine the best design choices. This will include field studies or interviews with leaders in GAL as well as research on the way college students read.
- (2) *Content research:* I will research the content of the document by studying certain sections of the organization's by-laws and by observing you on the job.
- (3) *Content interviews:* To ensure that the information in the document is accurate and relevant, I will interview you and your forerunner, Amanda Pickett.
- (4) *Design research:* I will thoroughly research an aspect of design that pertains to this project. This will increase my knowledge of design so that the document can reach its maximum potential.
- (5) *Content writing:* I will compile the information I gathered about the presidential position in order to write a first draft of the document's text.
- (6) *Preliminary design:* I will arrange the text into a dynamic document according to the principles of design that I have become familiar with.
- (7) *Insertion of graphics:* To supplement the written content and increase visual appeal, I will place photographs and other graphics into the document as necessary.
- (8) *First revision:* I will carefully read through the document to check content, organization, and design. I will fix any problems that I find.
- (9) *Usability testing:* I will present the document to several potential audience members, such as Chelsea Gott, who is planning to run for president next year. Since there may not be enough presidential candidates to select from, I will also present the document to other GAL members.
- (10) *Second revision:* Based on the results of the usability tests, I will revise the document for a second time and fix any problem areas that remain.
- (11) *Final edit:* Once I am satisfied with the content, organization, and design of the document, I will read through it again to check for any lingering grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

- (12) *Final product*: When the document is ready for production, I will have it printed and bound at Copy This.

Schedule

Figure 1 below shows a timetable for the completion of the above tasks.

Figure 1. Project Schedule

	February				March				April				May	
(1) Audience Analysis														
(2) Content Research														
(3) Content Interviews														
(4) Design Research														
(5) Content Writing														
(6) Preliminary Design														
(7) Insertion of Graphics														
(8) First Revision														
(9) Usability Testing														
(10) Second Revision														
(11) Final Edit														
(12) Final Product														

As the chart demonstrates, many of the tasks will overlap. Most of my research will take place during the remainder of February, and I will begin the first draft towards the end of the month. Usability testing will take place during April, and you will receive the final product in May.

Risk Management

As with any project, there are risks that could interfere with the successful completion of the document. I have come up with a plan to deal with several of these situations.

If I become ill or injured before completing the project, I will put my effort into making myself well again. I will resume work on the project as soon as I am able. If there is a family emergency that forces me to leave the area for a time, I will be with my family for as long as necessary and return ready to pick up where I left off.

Other common risks are those involving the failure of technology. To reduce this risk, I will frequently save back-up copies of all of my files to my external hard drive. This way, I will always have two copies of the document and will not have to backtrack significantly if my flash drive corrupts or breaks.

Resource Needs

To complete this project, I will need access to the official chapter manual and by-laws of Gamma Alpha Lambda as well as the opportunity to interview several members. I will be interviewing you and Amanda Pickett for content and two or three other GAL members for audience analysis. I will need to test the document with six to eight members who are interested in running for president or another executive position. Additionally, the project will require spending a small amount of money for printing and binding. My estimated expenses for the project are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Estimated Personal Expenses for Project

ITEMS	COSTS
Print for testing	\$10
Final print and binding	\$20
TOTAL	\$30

My estimated personal expenses for this project simply involve the printing and binding of the document. Since the document will be in color, the final product might seem a little costly.

Credentials

I assure you that I can successfully complete this project for Gamma Alpha Lambda. As a Professional Writing major, I have extensive knowledge of the English language, design principles, and writing technology. I wrote a similar

manual to this one last semester for English 321: Writing II: Beginning Technical Writing. In that manual, I created a comprehensive guide to GAL's vice president of rush position. That experience, combined with the knowledge I have gained since, makes me a great candidate for completing the project.

Additionally, I have great interest in the success of the project since I would very much like GAL to be the best it can be. A manual for the presidential position will yield greater continuity between terms, a more cooperative executive council, and ultimately, more satisfied members. I am confident that the sisterhood is as important to me as it is to you, so I will work hard to make the document a success. For a further listing of my credentials, see my résumé.

Closing

Since a lack of thorough training for new presidents can lead to inconsistency and confusion for the entire organization, Gamma Alpha Lambda would greatly benefit by having a training manual for this position. I would enjoy the opportunity to use my design and writing skills to make this idea a reality. By collaborating on this project, we can take another step towards making GAL a better sisterhood.

If you have any questions, you may contact by phone at 301-752-1719 or by email at arielle924@live.missouristate.edu.