

Saint Padre Pio Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order
Georgetown, Texas

Governance Guidelines

1. The Fraternity

- 1.1. The fraternity, being a part of the organic union of the Regional Fraternity, will abide by all the regional governance guidelines which will supersede these local guidelines where relevant, being mindful that “the principle of subsidiarity must be respected” for both the fraternity and the region, as defined and described by Pope John Paul II in his May 1, 1991 encyclical letter *Centesimos Annus*.
- 1.2. These local guidelines may be amended from time to time by simple majority vote of the Council at a duly constituted meeting.
- 1.3. While not a requirement to be a professed Secular Franciscan, compliance with the Ethics and Integrity in Ministry guidelines of the Diocese of Austin and its requirements are mandatory for all members of the fraternity where activities covered by those policies are engaged in by fraternity members.
 - 1.3.1. It is the responsibility of each member to be informed of these guidelines and to keep certification current.
 - 1.3.2. The council may from time to time review the certification of any member involved in ministry to the youth or vulnerable adults as deemed necessary.
- 1.4. Persons transferring into or becoming active, professed members of the fraternity must strive to assure that the records of their profession and any relevant milestones (Inquiry, Candidacy, Profession) be updated in the fraternity permanent records within six (6) months of becoming active members of the fraternity.
- 1.5. Fraternity Spiritual Assistant
 - 1.5.1. The fraternity shall endeavor to collaborate actively with the Spiritual Assistant to promote the life of the fraternity to the extent possible in order to assure that the Franciscan charism and formation and teachings of the Church are included and observed in fraternal life.

2. Gatherings

- 2.1. The fraternity will gather monthly.
 - 2.1.1. The monthly fraternity gathering is vital to the life and vocation of each member and therefore, should rarely be cancelled or rescheduled.
 - 2.1.2. Each gathering will consist of prayer, fraternity, ongoing formation, initial formation and a business meeting preferably in that order.
 - 2.1.3. The fraternity, on the recommendation of the Council, may alter this format.
- 2.2. At regular monthly gatherings members may place reading material for distribution on a designated table for interested parties.

- 2.2.1. Individual distributions are discouraged except for designated formation materials.
- 2.3. Minutes of each regular fraternity meeting should be distributed to all active members so members may review and offer changes. The fraternity secretary shall be responsible for providing the minutes and making necessary corrections. The minutes are accepted at the business portion of the meeting.
- 2.4. Council meetings are opened to all the membership unless the council calls for a closed meeting.
- 2.5. The financial reports of the fraternity which include the budget, income/expense report and bank statements should be available to the general membership upon request to the Treasurer.
- 2.6. The financial support of the fraternity should be done anonymously and with no record of individual contributions being kept.
 - 2.6.1. All monies collected at each gathering will be counted separately by the Treasurer and a council appointed member.
 - 2.6.2. Upon request members may obtain a receipt for their contribution to the fraternity at the time the contribution is made.
 - 2.6.3. The fraternity cannot accept contributions greater than \$100 dollars per month from persons who are in initial formation, applying for membership in the fraternity, or discerning entrance into the OFS.
- 2.7. The fair share contribution to the Regional Fraternity should be done in accordance with the guidelines set by the Regional Fraternity.
- 2.8. The fraternity's treasury will, as much as possible, pay for all expenses (registration fees, traveling expenses, lodging and meals, etc.) for its members attending events (meetings, workshops, retreats, etc.) on a local, regional or national level that are deemed necessary by the Council. The Council will determine the appropriateness of paying for such expenses and for whom (general membership, specific committee or individuals, council members only) depending on the nature and circumstances of the event and/or the fiscal ability of the treasury. Each event will be independently evaluated.

3. Formation

- 3.1. Inquirers and candidates in formation are required to focus on their discernment process and, as such, cannot hold a position of primary responsibility within the fraternity. They may, however, assist a professed member in execution of those responsibilities.
 - 3.1.1. A position of primary responsibility is to be determined by the Council.
- 3.2. Sponsors will be assigned by the council to all members in Initial Formation as they enter Inquiry through the end of Candidacy.
 - 3.2.1. The sponsors will be professed members except for the Minister, Formation Director or Spiritual Assistant who will not be sponsors.
 - 3.2.2. The sponsors are to mentor the members in Initial Formation, assist them with their lesson preparations as needed and be available for make-up lessons.

- 3.2.3. The sponsors will accompany the members in Initial Formation throughout their formation discernment process by joining them in prayer and by their testimony of the lived Franciscan charism.
- 3.2.4. Following profession the sponsors should continue to be available to the newly professed whom they were sponsoring for up to one year.
- 3.3. All candidates in formation are required to meet annually with the Council during their formation program.
 - 3.3.1. These annual meetings will be coordinated by the Formation Director.
 - 3.3.2. Candidates who withdraw from the formation program for any reason must submit a written statement to that effect to the Council.
 - 3.3.3. The Council may request an intervention in an attempt to resolve any issue impeding the progress of a candidate's formation. If the candidate fails to respond to such a request, the Council will, by written statement, withdraw that candidate from the program.
 - 3.3.4. Any individual in Initial Formation experiencing an obstacle to being in communion with the teachings of the Catholic Church, sacramentally or otherwise, shall be asked to resolve these issues with the fraternity Council prior to proceeding in Initial Formation.
 - 3.3.5. When an Inquirer requests admittance into Candidacy, the Minister will, prior to the Council's meeting with the potential future Candidate, solicit advice from Professed members of the Fraternity regarding that Inquirer's suitability to enter the Fraternity. When a Candidate has submitted a request for profession, the Minister will, prior to the Council's meeting with a potential Professed member, solicit advice from Professed members of the Fraternity regarding that Candidate's suitability for profession.
- 3.4. A formation team to assist the Formation Director will be formed at the discretion of the council.
 - 3.4.1. Members in Initial Formation are encouraged to give feedback to the Formation Director and/or the fraternity council as to their experience in the lessons.
- 3.5. All professed members of the fraternity should actively participate in the ongoing formation program under the direction of the council, Formation Director, and the formation team. This is consistent with Article 23 of our Rule of Life which states, in part, "The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living."
- 3.6. Initial and Ongoing Formation must remain true to the Franciscan Charism.
- 3.7. The Fraternity will bear the expense of all the formation material.
- 3.8. If a professed member is having a one-on-one interview with a visitor, and an impediment is discovered, the fraternity minister or spiritual assistant shall be asked to be part of the interview.

4. Elections

- 4.1. No later than two (2) months prior to elections, two (2) professed members who are not Council members and who are approved by the fraternity, will audit the fraternity books and provide a written report of their audit to the fraternity.

- 4.2. The outgoing Council will transfer bank signatures, checkbooks and all documents pertaining to the Council's activities to the new Council within one (1) month after elections.

5. **Ancillary Duties of Elected Officials**

5.1. Minister

- 5.1.1. All inquiries related to the Secular Franciscan Order, will be received and managed by the Minister.

5.2. Vice Minister

- 5.2.1. The Vice Minister will prepare, publish, and distribute the monthly fraternity Good News newsletter, including prayer requests.

5.3. Formation Minister

- 5.3.1. All formation materials introduced to the fraternity will be evaluated and assessed by the Formation Minister for appropriateness, and in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Franciscan Charism.

- 5.3.2. All questions related to fraternal formation will be addressed by this office.

5.4. Secretary

- 5.4.1. All postal mailings related to fraternal and council minutes, and other miscellaneous mailings will be mailed to those members without email.

- 5.4.2. All attendance records and duty lists for Gatherings, Retreats, Regional and other meetings, will be managed and kept updated by the secretary or an appointed assistant.

6. **Non-Elected-Ancillary Positions**

- 6.1. Historical Archivist – A professed member of the St. Padre Pio Fraternity will organize and preserve significant records and photographs pertaining to communications or events that the Council deems necessary to the spiritual historicity of the Fraternity.

- 6.2. Photographer - A member of the Fraternity will be responsible for taking photographs that document events and activities that are important to the history of the Fraternity. This person will work together with the Historian as to how the records and photos will be preserved and presented.

- 6.3. Secretarial Assistant - The council may appoint a secretarial assistant from the general membership to work with the secretary as needed.

7. **Cell Groups**

- 7.1. The Fraternity should encourage the formation of cell groups to promote Franciscan Spirituality.

- 7.2. The formation of cell groups should follow the guidelines set in The Handbook for Spiritual Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order.

Amendment No.1, Article 2.6.3, January 16, 2013
Amendment No.2, Article 2.8, January, 16, 2013
Addition No. 3, Article 3.2, June 2014
Amendment No. 3, Article 3.4, July 16, 2014
Amendment No. 4, Article 3.8, January 21, 2015