

The Skull

Spring 2018

April 7, 2018

Alpha Epsilon of Phi Kappa Sigma



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Welcome from the Upsilon

I am happy to welcome everyone to the Alpha Epsilon of Phi Kappa Sigma's Spring 2018 Smoker. I want to thank everyone who helped make this event happen. Special Thanks to Hashem Amara for his dedication and hard work. His behind the scenes planning makes Smoker as great as it is.

Smoker is a great way to see old friends and meet new ones. Just like Smoker, becoming Upsilon helped me reconnect with some of the younger alumni and connect with new brothers whom I have never met before. I loved hearing and reading all the stories everyone has to tell. Each one is unique.

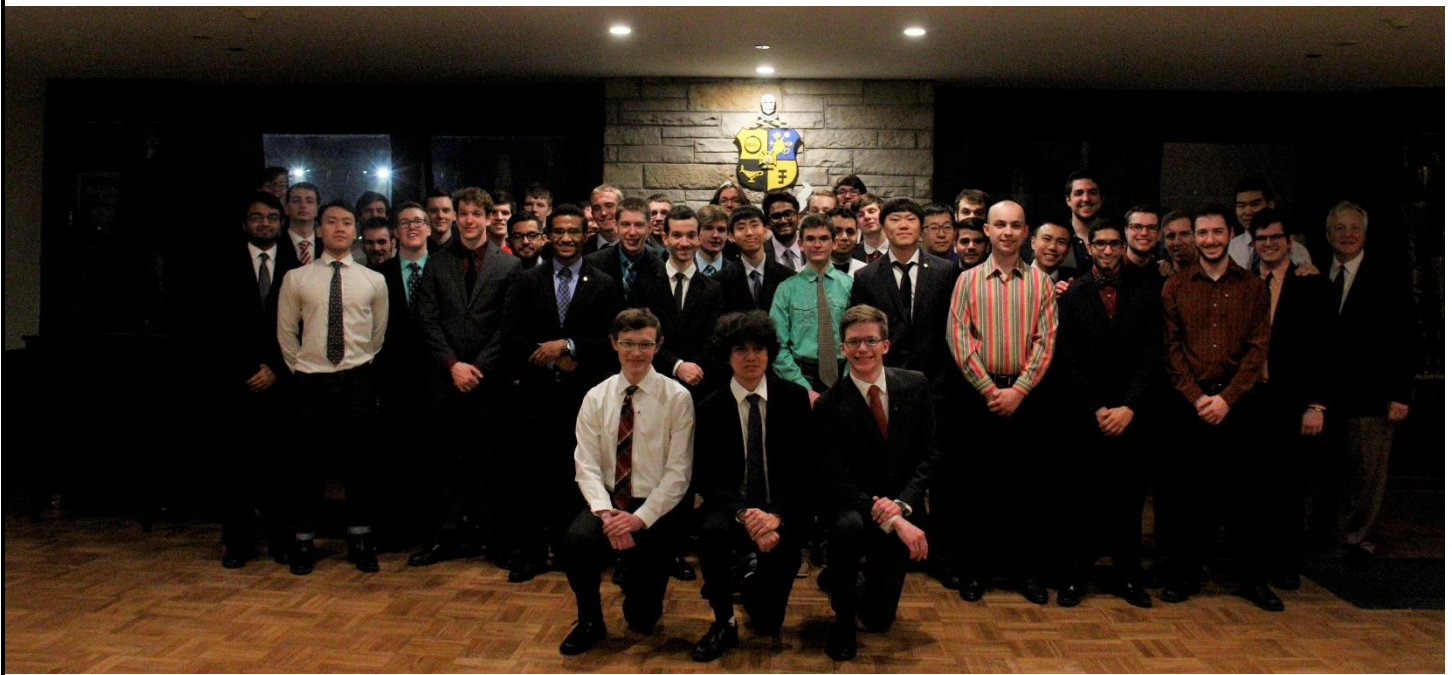
One of my favorite moments of the semester was getting a package from Brother Max Rajan. He sent the house two old Skull t-shirts. This showed me that the alumni of this chapter are always thinking about us. The active brothers are lucky to have such wonderful alumni.

This will be my last Smoker as an Active member and I cannot wait to come back for many more once I graduate, I hope.

Again, welcome to Smoker and I hope you have a great time. Don't forget your pint glass at the end of the night

-Jack O'Malley





Update from the Alpha

This spring semester has been flying by. We started off by sending brothers to Men of Honor, spending the first week cleaning our house, and having an astronomical chapter retreat. The retreat began with the chapter heading to the Adler Planetarium. Then, after a pizza dinner, we had an awesome goal planning session. Since then, we've been following our progress throughout the semester. Our focus has been on making differences that we can see and differences that will better us.

One of the things we've started to do is value-based discussions during meetings. These discussions cover different topics to get us, as a chapter, thinking about how we should be acting to uphold our values. We've talked about where we see the chapter once we graduate and how we see ourselves contributing to getting there. We've also had some discussions in which we dive a little deeper into chapter history and the purpose of our membership in the greater Fraternity.

Another point of focus has been making changes to bylaws. We added a new committee, Bylaws committee, with the intent of getting more people involved and familiar with Mitchell Chapter Standards. With this, officers have taken a closer look at MCS tiers and what pertains to their office, so they can contribute more to our MCS progress.

Regarding programming efforts, we have emphasized philanthropy. To achieve this, we have started to do a small bi-weekly philanthropy event, this way we can continuously strive to reach our philanthropic goals in addition to having larger events.

In other news, the chapter has lavaliered Anna Chorazyczewski! It was an exciting night where a handful of members surprised her at dinner when she thought she was just going on a date night with her boyfriend, Al Mitchell ('17). She was shocked to see us at dinner, but when she found out, she was ecstatic about the honor and very appreciative of our chapter.

Overall, the semester has been productive. We've been trying new things to see how they work, bettering ourselves every chance we get, and enjoying time with each other. We're all looking forward to Grand Chapter this summer. About ten of our members are going, and I know it's going to be a blast! I can confidently say that we've had amazing growth as a chapter this semester due to all the work that every brother, active and alumni, puts into this great Fraternity.

-Matthew Flavin



TRUST
HONOR
RESPECT
KNOWLEDGE
WISDOM
RESPONSIBILITY
INTEGRITY



PHI KAPPA SIGMA

NEW

MEMBER



EDUCATION

Update from the Iota

We all went through New Member Education in some form or another. Through the years, the process has changed many times. Be it from the changes made at the local level from Iota to Iota to the international level, most recently through the introduction of the Pillars program which aimed to shift the entire Fraternity further away from what it calls the “pledge” process towards a “new member” process. I’ve tried to lean into this idea and focus my own teaching technique on a discussion-based experience in which New Members construct their own understanding of what it means to be a good member of our Fraternity.

When I was elected Iota, I looked at the notes from past Iotas that were passed down to me or were held in the Chapter archives as well as a close reading of the Pillars curriculum designed by the international staff. Based on these, I identified certain key elements that needed to be stressed and assessed and certain things that I definitely didn't want to do. With this in mind, the New Member Mentor, Tanner Zielinski, and I designed a more complete plan based off of Pillars and the list of brotherhood building activities provided by headquarters. This featured a discussion of the most relevant aspect of the Objects, the Core Values, and the Doctrine of Excellence in every New Member meeting as well as an activity designed to build the character of the New Members.

One example of such an activity was a variation of the “5 Whys.” Tanner and Brendan Batliner facilitated a discussion in which each New Member looked at something they cared about and asked, “Why is this important to me?” Then asked the same question, recursively. This helped boil down what New Members care about to a discussion about what their individual core values are.

To further help me understand the New Members and their experience, I held one-on-ones with them to touch base and gather some feedback on these changes. What I learned was that each New Member - to varying degrees - appreciated the discussion aspect of the Pillars most of all. I’m excited I had the opportunity to experiment with the New Member process in this way and I’m excited to encourage future Iotas to continue this and experiment in new ways. That way, our Chapter and our Fraternity always has a chance to grow.

-Andrew Adams



Skulls Build a Rail Road

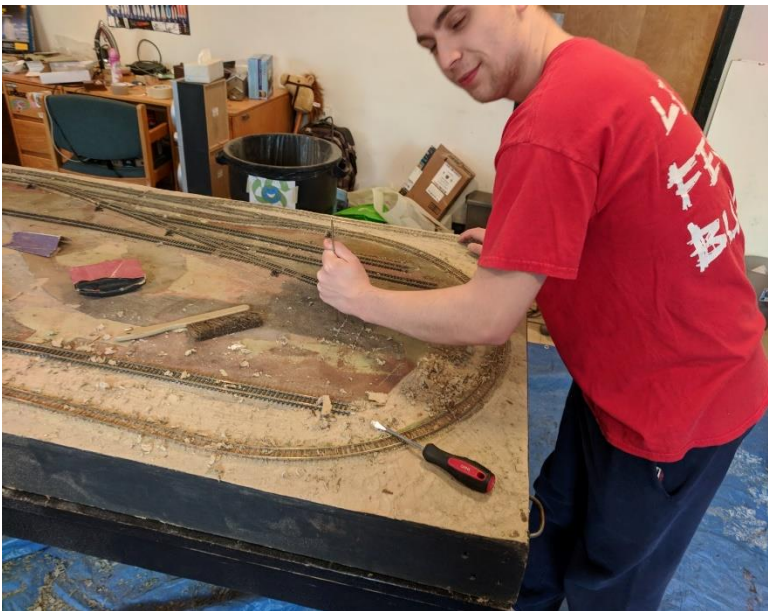
My passion for railroad engineering started many years ago with model railroading- a hobby comprised of building functioning models of railroad infrastructure such as main lines, classification yards, industries, and stations. Railroads are super cool because they encompass so many different types of engineering, and model railroading creates the opportunity to experience them all and build a tangible product with my own hands.

When I came to Illinois Tech last fall, I was excited to develop my passion into a career because Chicago is the railroad capital of North America. I set upon restarting the IIT model railroad club and to my surprise, even though I was merely a New Member, the brothers of Phi Kappa Sigma were extremely supportive of my effort. For the first event I organized, a tour of an existing model railroad, 3/4 of the attendance comprised of Skulls! Never before had I experienced a group culture where people are willing to throw themselves out there to try something new, just to support a fellow brother.

Over spring break, we rehabilitated a small layout that was donated to us by model railroad club alumni. With the permission of the Alpha and RA, we set up our workshop in the Rack Room and put over 150 man-hours into getting it back in operating condition

The first step was to lower the elevation of the surfaces around the railroad track. Pieter, Spillman, Buffo, Brendan, Jack Pio and I attacked the baseboard with chisels, scraping tools, and sandpaper and created a realistic terrain profile. Next, the layout was soaked in glue and painted to create a stable shell to build up on

The most work came with fixing the track geometry, which had warped to the point of constant derailments due to 20 years of storage and water damage. Using special gauging tools and microscopic track spikes, Pieter and Jack spent many hours painstakingly perfecting straightening every bump and kink.





In addition, Jack and Brendan churned out over 50 new wooden ties to replace ones that had rotted and cracked by cutting them out of balsa wood, sanding, and soaking in wood stain to create a realistic oily-brown color. While they dried, he also created handmade trees out of brown armatures and green fluff.

Now that the trackwork was perfected, Kasey, Ewan, and I poured scaled-down gravel ballast around the tracks

Meanwhile, Ewan and Spillman have been working on gluing and painting together models of buildings. We hope to add the buildings, trees, and other landscaping onto the layout in the upcoming weeks.

In addition, Dan Jimmy Keats has been designing a command and control system for the locomotives that utilizes an arduino motor shield, raspberry pi, and wifi router to let us run trains with our phones and computers. It is now in full operating condition, and now he's making it stupid-proof enough for our civil engineers.

It's so cool to see how our model railroad project has turned the Rack Room into a social gathering place for Skulls. Huge thanks to everyone who gave their time to make this project a reality, and we can't wait to see the final result of our hard work!

-Daniel Rappaport

<https://www.facebook.com/IITrailroad/>



Φ K Σ

Brothers Who Are Graduating

Alvah Bickner	Aerospace Engineering
Alexander Buffo	Mechanical Engineering
David Duan	Environmental Engineering
Andrei Dumitru	Computer Science
Yohann Fallord	Computer Science
Sanjin Ibrahimovic	Computer Science
Leon Leroy	Materials Science and Engineering
Jordan Mynes	Information Technology and Management
Jack O'Malley	Materials Science and Engineering
Janek Wasag	Electrical Engineering
Barry Zeng	Electrical and Computer Engineering
Rukang Zhao	Electrical Engineering
Leo Zhang	Applied Mathematics
Christopher Zurowski	Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics

Congratulations

Thoughts and Aspirations of Seniors

As my active time at Alpha Epsilon draws to a close, reflecting on my time here has caused me to realize how fortunate I was to find this family. Throughout my 3 years here, this Fraternity has taught me how to be a better student, friend, and man through events, experiences, and life lessons. I would not be the man I am today if it was not for this house. I will stay in touch with all the brothers here after I graduate, as I will most likely be moving out of Chicago. I'm currently applying at Boeing, NASA, SpaceX, Lockheed Martin, and the US Department of Defense. I can't wait to see what the future holds for myself and Alpha Epsilon!

-Alvah "Towel Lit AF" Bickner

Joining Phi Kappa Sigma was one of the best decisions of my life, and I would not trade the last four years for anything else. Now that I am a senior, it is time for me to move on. I have loved giving advice to younger members and can say that I am proud of the Chapter that I will be leaving behind. Once I graduate, I will be working with ComEd as an electrical engineer, but I know that I would not have been able to accomplish what I have without this Fraternity.

-Janek "Blackball" Wasag

Being a Phi Kap has led me to be a better man, and I couldn't be more grateful! I've learned the values and ways of life that better the man, and have been exposed to people and perspectives I never thought I'd meet. By now, I can confidently say that joining Phi Kappa Sigma is the best decision I have made in my life, and I can't wait to see what the future holds!

-Alexander "Evacuate" Buffo

You would think that after graduating with a Master's in Applied Mathematics this summer I would want to take a long break from school. However, I want to better understand different branches of mathematics and choose one to dive deeply into. To achieve this, I plan to pursue my Applied Mathematics PhD at IIT. Maybe after five or ten years I will get bored of mathematics and force myself to get a job.

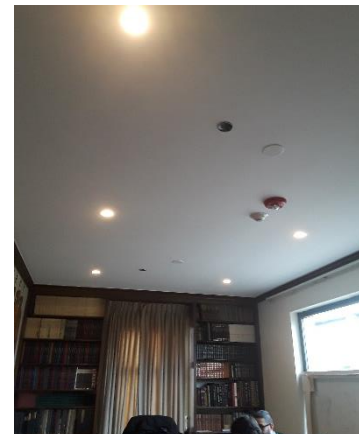
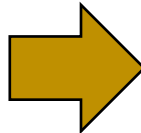
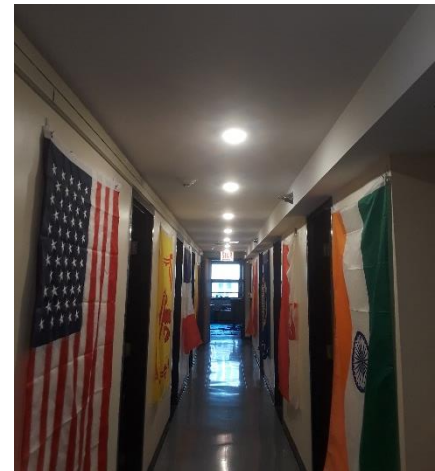
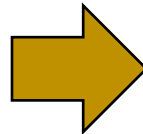
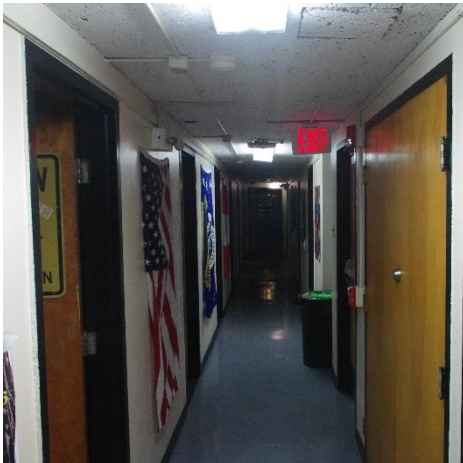
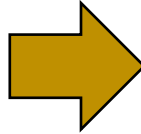
-Leo "Ambassador" Zhang

While in Phi Kappa Sigma for the past four years, I have met the most intelligent and humorous group of people in my life. Everyone in this chapter is unique in their own way and I know everyone will have unbelievable futures. Currently I am looking to work in the steel industry. Analyzing and optimizing metal properties and performance is my passion and I hope to get the chance to do this as a career. Stellis Aequus Durando

-Jack "Tonto" O'Malley

House Renovations

Over the Summer Break the house had been renovated. The renovations include new ceilings, new lighting, a fire alarm system, and sprinkler system. Housing Corp is working on doing more renovations in the upcoming semesters.



Regular Day at the SkullHouse



