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This fall, the University of Florida will be welcoming back the Alpha Epsilon chapter of Pi Kappa Phi.

In the summer of 2008, it was declared that the UF fraternity would receive a four-year suspension due to hazing violations that occurred in the fall of 2007. Some of the hazing rituals included forcing pledges to drink excessive amounts of alcohol and perform strenuous physical challenges.

At the end of this past spring semester, however, Pi Kappa Phi was reinstated as a student organization and recognized fraternity.

“For every crime, someone must be punished. However,” said Chris Veau, founding father and philanthropy chair of the newly reinstated fraternity, “we are not the ones who should be punished because we were not there when the hazing incidents occurred.”

As the fraternity received a four-year suspension, all of the original active members from the time of the incident have since graduated and are no longer affiliated with the Alpha Epsilon chapter.

From the end of March until April 6, staff from its national office set up a table at the Reitz Union to recruit new members, during which time 26 official bids were extended by the national office.

The national office was also in charge of appointing all fraternity officials for the upcoming year. The fraternity itself will not be able to extend bids until rush in the fall.

One of the first two bids was extended to the current president of the Alpha Epsilon chapter, Ryan Montgomery.

“Considering that this will be everyone’s first year in the fraternity, everybody will be looked at as an equal brother, even though we have already established somewhat of a hierarchy with the official positions,” Montgomery said.

The president will only be in his sophomore year in the fall, and has officers under him that are older.

Regardless of the hazing incident, the fraternity will be welcomed back into the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and will be able to participate in rush. The ones who are accepted from fall rush will immediately be named brothers of the fraternity instead of pledges, unlike other fraternities.

However, in the fall, the “Big/Little Brothers” program will be established. Its function will be to create bonds, not to distinguish between class levels, Montgomery said.

Through the fall and spring rush, Pi Kappa Phi expects to have an average fraternity size of about 70 members.

“That’s just a goal nationals has set for us, but we’re all more interested in quality brothers over quantity,” Montgomery said, “to really ensure that another hazing incident does not occur.”

Montgomery said that this fraternity is being built upon students who are looking for the Greek life experience without the bad qualities that once were an everyday part of Pi Kappa Phi.

Chris Veau and Logan Morton were both students that participated in rush last year and were uninterested. This year, both men look upon Pi Kappa Phi as a fraternity that can provide a different opportunity and environment.

“It’s definitely a gentleman’s fraternity,” Veau said.

“We all need to be aware of what happened, but not shy away from our past. We need to let people know that we recognize it and that we will not let it happen again,” said Sean Dixon, secretary of Pi Kappa Phi. “We don’t need to shy away from it, but we do need to separate ourselves from it.”

“It’s going to be tough to build this fraternity back up to the top-tier standing that it once was,” said another founding father, Logan Morton. “We are just going to have to do that by making ourselves known for doing what we say we are going to do, and be honest men, and not participate in hazing.”

Veau said that the suspension for hazing was not a deterrent for him. Rather, he saw it as an opportunity to be a part of the fresh start of rebuilding Pi Kappa Phi into something better than it was before and something different than the other fraternities.

“Hazing will no longer be an issue for Pi Kappa Phi,” Veau said. “My theory is that people haze because they were hazed. However, I think we just stopped hazing from its roots. Nobody will be hazed in the first place, so those who have not been hazed will not haze anyone in the future. The good cycle will continue.”

Veau, Montgomery, Dixon and Morton were all recruited by the national’s office. They were all captivated with the philanthropy aspect of the fraternity, and all joined mainly to be a part of Push America, which supports people with disabilities. Veau even decided to become the philanthropy chair.

“I think the Greek community will be very welcoming to us. We already have a few mixers and socials planned with sororities,” Montgomery said. “As far as the community, we will just have to prove their thoughts of us wrong, and we hope to do that partially through our philanthropic efforts.”

The Zeta Beta Tau fraternity is also welcoming of the returning fraternity, despite the current housing situation. Zeta Beta Tau rented out the Pi Kappa Phi house four years ago, and now Pi Kappa Phi plans to return to the house, leaving Zeta Beta Tau scrambling to find a new living situation as of now.

The Pi Kappa Phi fraternity has already drawn a plan to demolish the current house and completely rebuild.

“We are excited for the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity to rejoin the IFC,” said James Newman, president of Zeta Beta Tau. “Even though sometimes fraternities compete with each other, we all must not forget that we are all part of one Greek community.”

#### Sources:

Chris Veau: Founding father and philanthropy chair Pi Kappa Phi  
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