

The Theta Record

5/1/2014

Spring 2014

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State of the Chi

The Theta Chapter is growing in many ways, and, while we have several obstacles to overcome, our progress towards becoming a stronger and more prestigious brotherhood continues to build momentum.

Academically, we currently have a term GPA of 2.98, showing a marked improvement from last semester, and placing us at 18th in GPA out of 29 fraternities on campus. One of the chapter's primary goals this semester is to return to our status as a Dean's listed house, and to strive towards the higher standards of surpassing the All-Men's and All-Greek GPAs.

To this end, we are improving our scholarship program, and more proactively utilizing the position of Scholarship Chairman – a position implemented relatively recently, charged with promoting the academic success of our active brothers – to help needful brothers improve their grades. This is a top priority for us, and we are optimistic that next semester we will attain our Dean's list goals.

The house, unfortunately, has not been Accredited by National for either of the 2013 semesters, and this is another main area of focus for the 2014 administration and the brotherhood as a whole. I have personally been working very closely with our Public Relations Chairman, Br. Robert Rouhani '16, and the Theta Alumni Association President, Br. John Mazza III '10, and our Chapter Advisor, Br. John Tully '07, to ensure we meet all requirements for Accreditation this semester, and we have drafted an in-depth improvement plan for doing so. The chapter, as well as myself, is confident we will achieve Accreditation this semester.

On a similar note, our 5-Star rating with RPI is another area of focus for the 2014 administration. While a rating of a full 5-Stars is most likely not possible for the 2013 calendar year, every effort is being made to meet the requirements for a 5-Star rating for 2014. We are using the 5-Star documentation as a guidebook for most of our planned events this year, and we are confident this will greatly improve our rating for 2014.

The chapter has one brother on co-op this semester, Br. Daniel Campos '15, and a brother on a temporary leave of absence from RPI, Br. Charles MacBain '16, who will be rejoining us this coming fall. We are proud to say we initiated 6 new brothers this past fall, and we currently have 2 potential new members for our spring semester rush, Lyndon J. Pisansky, and Zachary R. Borrelli.

I represent all of the actives of Theta when I say we have a challenging year ahead of us, but, knowing the character and fortitude of this group of men as I do, I am confident that we will achieve all of the goals before us, and so become, once again, an exemplary fraternity on campus.

Fraternally,
Br. Andrew Shapiro '15
Alpha

Delta Report

Starting my first semester as Delta, I have been acquainting myself with the tools used by previous Deltas to manage the house's funds. I have already worked to improve the turnaround time of updated budgets by moving the budgeting spreadsheets to Google Drive. Now budgets will always be available from the same link and are automatically updated within minutes of a receipt being filed. This makes it easier for officers with budgets to know exactly how much money they have left for the semester.

I would also like to provide a breakdown of where each dollar of a brother's dues goes. This will help me adjust budgets and dues for next semester based on what the house as a whole would prefer to spend their dues on.

By the end of my term, I hope to also reduce the amount of alumni debt that has accumulated over a very long period of time. I will be getting in contact with those who owe the house money and are not currently paying it back. Thank you to those who are currently paying back their debt and to those who already have. I would like to reach an agreement with the rest of our alumni.

Going forward, the house will be accruing significantly less debt, largely due to RPI's eBill system. Most students choose to pay their tuition through this system because of how simple and direct it is. Dues, room, and board are all charged through this system, and it will prevent students from registering for classes or graduating until all charges are paid off.

Fraterally,
Br. Robert Rouhani '16
Delta

Improving the Future

In addition to the Beta's usual responsibilities of Chaplain and IFC Representative, I plan to focus on increasing the Beta's role in the house over the next two semesters.

The committee system has lost a bit of its luster in the past few years and I feel as though it is not being utilized to its maximum potential. The main focus will be placed on the major committees such as Epsilon, Social, Eta, and Rush. I would like to see more organization within these committees so that tasks can be efficiently delegated and distributed. If each committee is already organized and coherent before it is time for tasks to be assigned, then delegating will be much more effective. In addition, I would also like to give some attention to the "Lost Committees", if you will. Committees such as the Steward committee and the Gamma committee have a lot to offer to the house if used properly. However, these committees have been barely utilized over the past few years, to the point that some people don't even know they exist. I plan to work with the chairs of those committees to bring them back into prominence so that they can properly contribute to the house.

I would also like to step up the Beta's role as Vice-President. We are now a few weeks into the semester and Andrew (the Alpha) and I already have a close working relationship. We often discuss issues and carry out any necessary solutions as a team. I want the Vice-President to be a sort of "Go-to guy" for anyone in the house, be it the Alpha or any other brother. The Alpha has a lot on his plate and the Vice-President should be able to take care of many of those issues, in support of the Alpha.

And finally, this semester I plan to create dedicated binders for each elected position in the house. These binders, written by the current officers, will include basic instructions on how to effectively carry out the duties of each position. We feel that the binders will minimize the gap between successive officers by taking the lessons learned each semester and passing them on to the next wave of officers. In particular, we hope that these binders will increase our performance on Five-Star and Accreditation reports by clearly laying out what each officer is required to complete for full Five Star points.

Fraternally,
Br. Brian Dunn '16
Beta

Gamma Report

I've been working hard maintaining the wiki during this first semester and my devotion will surely continue during the next semester. During the year, getting in contact with National has been troublesome, especially in regards to correcting Brother Certificates and badges for several Brothers. I'm attempting to find a successor to take over the Gamma position for the next year. Contact me if you would like to be removed from the non-alumni email list.

Fraternally,
Br. Nicholas Marton '15
Gamma

Eta Report

This semester has been relatively calm for me and the rest of the fraternity. We passed the fire inspection from RPI with scores of 93 and 87 for the main house and Annex, respectively. As this is my first semester as Eta, I have been taking advice from the previous Eta and maintaining the status quo. Next semester I hope to implement some ideas to make the house safer. Such ideas include offering incentives to sober drive more than just on the weekends, placing Gatorade or water in sober driver cars for parties, and developing a concise emergency situation card that every brother would keep in their wallet so they would know what to do in any crisis situation. I believe this house has a bright and promising future and I hope my time as Eta will only add to that belief.

Fraternally,
Br. Paul Kluppel '16
Eta

Epsilon Report

Throughout this semester there have been a lot of improvements to the house both small and large. The two biggest projects have been resurfacing and painting the basement floor, and replacing the walk-in fridge. However, the work should not stop there. The fire code plans are still being worked on when time permits. There is one fire-door left to install, and placing drywall in the stairwell has been started. After a recent teleconference with Housing Corporation, the plans for the bathroom remodel are coming together. A timeline for demolition has been established, and the discussions about furnishings have started. The plan is for the A-2 bathroom to be removed by the end of the semester and begin the remodeling process in the beginning of summer. Once the A-2 bathroom has been finished, we will begin demolishing the A-1 bathroom. The other projects that are on the agenda are replacing the eaves on the mainhouse which are rotting away and letting wildlife into the attic. The next long project that we have in mind is to look into registering the main house as a historic landmark. It has a rich history that makes it a great landmark for the Troy area. This would allow us to apply for landmark restoration grants which could help us cover the cost of major repairs like the foundation. These projects should keep my committee and I busy for the semester while also battling the daily repairs that need to be made.

Fraternally,
Br. Jonathon Underwood '16
Epsilon

Philanthropy

This semester featured a variety of successful philanthropy events and programs. Some the house has participated in numerous times in the past, such as Relay for Life, a Red Cross Blood Drive, and can sorting for the Mohawk-Hudson Humane Society. Chi Phi Live, which had not been held since November of 2012, is scheduled for May 2nd. Also, for the first time, the Theta chapter is entering the Adopt-a-Highway program, committing to clean the roadsides of the first 2.0 miles of Route 2.

The house started off philanthropy for the semester with a joint blood drive with the RPI Players on February 20th. Thirteen brothers put in time handling registration, publicity, canteen operations and making blood donations themselves. The final tally was 80 units of blood collected, enough to help up to 240 patients.

In response to the house's demands of more animal-centric philanthropy, the recurring event for this semester has been participating in the "Empties for Animals" program, otherwise known as can sorting, at the Mohawk-Hudson Humane Society. The process involves taking donations of returnable cans and bottles which have been dropped off at the humane society, and sorting them by brand and/or distributor. They can then be redeemed in bulk for the full 8 cents per can. This is a huge source of income for the society, which regularly raises over \$100,000 annually from the program. The brotherhood is glad to work in an environment with such direct and visible importance. In the spirit of this, the brothers always take time to visit the cats, dogs, and other animals before returning home.

This year was also a great success for the house's Relay for Life team, which raised approximately \$600 for the American Cancer Society. Over \$400 of that came from donations from the brothers and their friends and family. The remainder was contributed by alumni. Therefore, I would like to thank Peter Gregg, John Mazza, and Bob Albern for their generous donations. During the Relay for Life event on April 25-26th, the house was well represented throughout the night, being one of only 5 organizations to make it until the closing ceremonies at 6:00 am.

As of April 2014, the paperwork has been submitted for the Theta chapter to make its first adoption, a 2.0 mile stretch of Route 2 (Brunswick Road), beginning at the Troy/Brunswick line and continuing east from there. Through the NY State Adopt-a-Highway program, the house has committed to clean this roadside at least four times annually for the next two years. In return, the DOT will place signs recognizing the house at the beginning and end of this section of Route 2. While I will not be around to reap the benefits of this program, it adds a convenient way for future philanthropy chairs to create highly visible and meaningful events for the brotherhood.

Finally, planning is going forward for Chi Phi Live to be held on May 2nd. As usual, all monetary and dry food donations will be forwarded to the Joseph's House of Troy. This annual event had been put off the previous semester due to a lack of performers. This spring, I have worked to change that and will include a mix of live bands and performing DJ's. The electronic music portion of the event is being led by our own Br. Reimer. He is working with the electronic community at RPI to set up a showcase of the improvisational skills of multiple DJ's. This should make for an interesting night of performances which I encourage any local alumni to attend.

Fraternally,
Br. John Bartlett '14
Philanthropy Chair



Chi Phi volunteers at the Food Bank in Latham, NY with GE employees

Social Chair Report

This year I am predominantly focusing on expanding relations with other houses, both IFC and Panhel. This semester alone we have held multiple mixers with other houses, including TEP, ΘΞ, and ΑΓΔ, and I plan to arrange more with other houses for next fall, such as ΠΚΑ, ΣΑΕ, and ΑΦ. I believe that maintaining a strong relationship with our fellow Greek community is something that should be held at utmost importance and should not be forgotten. As these bonds are strengthened, the social aspect of the house will benefit greatly along with an improved campus presence that the brotherhood has been working on for some time. With these progresses, recruitment will be boosted and philanthropic events will show large advances with the support of hundreds of brothers and sisters from other houses. As a house we are striving towards many goals, many of which can be achieved through better social and brotherhood organization.

Fraternally,
Br. Robert Spicer '15
Social Chair



Chi Phi mixer with Alpha Gamma Delta (Casino Themed)

Public Relations

For the past few semesters, Chi Phi has only achieved a 3-star accreditation from RPI. Also for the past two semesters, we have not been nationally accredited. A lot of damage has been done, but I believe with hard work this semester and next, improvements in the way the chapter is run will put us back on top. This semester a lot of regulations and procedures are being tailored towards meeting accreditation requirements and more are to come during the next academic year while I will be PR chair. The main problems that we are trying to correct are low GPA, low amount of philanthropy hours, and being more social/outgoing. Expect to see an increase in accreditation in the fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters.

Fraternally,
Br. Will Kucharczyk '15
Public Relations Chair

Academic Chair

Two years ago the position of Academic Chairman was created to run the scholarship duties of our house, and the position continues to play a prominent role. As the Greek Academic Peer Support (GAPS) representative, it is my responsibility to monitor the Early Warning System (EWS) of this house. The EWS is a system where each Brother will receive emails if their grades in a course are slipping or if they haven't been attending classes. These emails are also sent to myself as Academic Chairman so I can talk to them one-on-one and try to resolve any issues they may have. Along with these duties, this semester I have also attended a Scholarship Meeting with the other Greek houses' GAPS representatives. At this meeting a number of ideas were shared on how to raise the GPA of Greek life as a whole. I am currently working with the executive board to implement some of these concepts. I believe with continued hard work, we can expect Theta Chapter's GPA rise in the future.

Fraternally,
Br. Steven Ulin '14
Academic Chairman

New Member Educator

This past semester we initiated 6 new brothers to our fraternity! Congratulations to Gregory Avsyuk, Dashiell Kieler, Jacob Liberatore, Tyler Quon, Alexander (Jax) Ross, and Nicolas Sirano. They all did a great job during the pledging process, and we are all very proud to have them as brothers. We currently have two pledges who are awaiting initiation this May.

Fraternally,
Br. Edward M. Cofrancesco '14
New Member Educator

Zeta Report

In addition to the normal responsibilities of the Zeta position there are two things I want to focus my efforts on in particular. First I want to keep looking for ways to improve and expand the new point system. The point system is now in its second semester of operation and we will soon have our first housing selection where it will be applicable. The goal of the point system is to encourage brothers to be active and upstanding men in the house and in our community. Points are award for things like sober shifts, attending intramurals, and participating in extra philanthropy events to name a few examples. Although my responsibility is only to keep track of points I feel I am in a unique position to find room for improvement because I see every point that gets entered. I plan to continue to bring up any opportunities for improvement that I see to E-Board so we can make it a meaningful system that encourages all brothers to do their part to help out the house.

Secondly I want to continue the work that our previous Zeta Br. Steve Ulin was doing last semester to try to get some of the older documents professionally preserved. I plan on working with my committee to catalogue what documents we have that we think need to be preserved and getting an estimate on it. The Zeta is the historian of the house, but I intend to use the position to build a bridge from our past to our bright future.

Fraternally
Br. Ian Marshall '16
Zeta



Brothers and Candidates for Membership at this year's Spring Formal

Theta Excellence Fund

With the Theta Excellence Fund active our first goal is to provide an annual scholarship in honor of brother, Andrew Colditz, who passed away in 2005. The scholarship is for a new member in each pledge class who was found to best represent the values of Chi Phi, and met a minimum GPA requirement. Also the scholarship fund has been so successful we have been able to establish a second scholarship for leadership in honor of Stephen Rusty Gordon. This scholarship would be for any brother showing leadership through his activities with the house.

It is also my pleasure to announce the winners for 2013. The winner for the Andrew Colditz memorial scholarship is Brother Jonathan Underwood. As a sophomore Underwood has stepped forward as epsilon while continuing his hard work on the varsity track team. A true gentleman if there ever was one.

The winner for the Stephen Rusty Gordon scholarship is Brother Steve Ulin. As academic chair Steve has been a valuable and ever present resource to brothers in need of academic help. He has made himself available to tutor those in need of assistance and he continues to strive to improve the house GPA. Additionally he served as Zeta in 2013 starting his first semester eligible to hold the position.

If you would like to help the chapter through donating directly to the Theta Excellence fund please follow the instructions below.

Theta of Chi Phi

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Postage

Pay To: Chi Phi Educational Trust
Amount in Dollars

\$ Amount

Theta Excellence Fund

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Important