

House Director Blog
March 4, 2022

Rushing and Zooming with Captain America

Hard to believe we are now 6 weeks into my 6th semester as the Alpha Delt House Director. Time flies once the guys are back and we have been busy.

Besides classes (remember those?), the first week of school at the end of January features “**New Member Acquisition**”, the new politically correct term for “**Rush**”. We were well prepared by several Open Houses and our recruitment leadership being active in campus events, so we were able to enlist 32 new members (not supposed to call them “pledges” anymore). As I said to our Alumni Council President, Stefan... “Looks like a good group!” He reminded me that I say that every year!

There was only one negative in our process. We had the son of an Alumni Brother (aka “legacy”) that our guys were unable to offer a bid. That part was OK... it’s not guaranteed. The problem was that we did not let him know in time for him to seek another House. This is a symptom of the constantly changing leadership that fraternities face... we (and I) dropped the ball, and it was disrespectful to our Alum and the young man. **We can do better.**

We were rapidly engaged in “**New Member Education**” (don’t you just love euphemisms?), the process of educating our new crew in the history and traditions of our Chapter and the International Fraternity. One of the best things we do is ask the new guys to conduct **interviews with the active Chapter members**. This engages them in building real relationships, sharing experiences about campus life and classes, and is highly rated by the new guys. Not so popular is the test we ask them to take on history and traditions... took a couple of takes to get that done!

The Alumni are active in the process as well. **One of the few “good” things to come out of Covid was Zoom meetings**, and we took the opportunity to engage Alums in presentations to the new members. I started with an “in person” session about expectations, the House itself and our processes for upkeep. Next up was Brother Don French, one of the 1833’s who reestablished the Miami Chapter in the 1950’s. Don had great stories about his time at Miami and his continuing engagement with the International Fraternity, including a term as President.

We followed that with Alumni Council President Stefan Davis, talking about the “business” of the Fraternity and our relationships with other Chapters, the Convention, etc. And finally we had our Communications Manager Doug Diefenbach share his experiences with the guys by way of stories and pictures, some of which may have been “incriminating”. Doug also shared some of the continuing Alumni events that he attends with his classmates and peers. **The Zoom program was well received and helps build the relationship between Alums and actives...** and hopefully convinces them that this is a lifelong opportunity, not just a great 4 years!

New Fraternity members are **required to perform service projects and our guys have done more than their share**. In addition to the monthly truck unloading, they volunteered for “spring cleaning” at the Knolls Retirement Village. They were surprised how much fun they had taking

down Christmas decorations, sweeping garages, and helping the residents as needed. It's exactly the kind of thing we need to do more of... and that people who don't like Fraternities need to know!

In the middle of all this, we also managed to pull off the **2nd Annual Campus / Community Charity Pickleball Tournament**. We expanded to 4 "session" sponsors, each of whom picked their own charity. We had almost 80 participants and we can proudly say that one of our teams came in 2nd in the Fraternity Bracket... of course they had to beat House President Mason and yours truly to get there! The donations are still being distributed but the event did a lot of good for organizations like our favorite... St. Mary's Backpack program. This is the same program where our guys help unload the truck each month... and **we've donated nearly \$ 8,000 in the last year or so to help make sure that needy families in Oxford have food security.**

In the midst of everything our new members were going through our New Member process, a combination of some traditional elements, social events and a lot of fun, including Dodgeball and a Euchre tournament. The University mandates that new members all be inducted by the end of February, and we gathered to do just that on Saturday 2/27. **In historic Kumler Chapel on the Western Campus we gathered 109 Alpha Delts... 96 actives, 12 Alumni, and our founder Samuel Eells** for a ceremony that combined tradition, good thoughts and future memories. It was the kind of day that makes you appreciate your connection and gives you hope for the future.

So now we are 6 weeks into a Spring semester that goes 15 weeks, with one week off for Spring break. I would be remiss if I did not mention that this means that **I am 6 weeks into my Gerontology class**. Yes, I signed up to audit the course because I wanted one where I could be the "subject matter expert". So far I'm having fun and doing better on keeping up with my homework than I did 50 years ago... no pressure there! And I am working on my midterm paper on a fictional character over 70 years old. Naturally I chose Captain America!

We are well settled into our routines with the usual fun, activities and headaches... and we are all anxious for Spring. I'm also looking forward to graduation in May for the first class I lived in the House with in 2019-20. My original goal was to stay here for a complete 4 year cycle which would take me to May 2023... **stay tuned!**