

1-31-20

REDISCOVERING "RUSH"

Last Sunday was a good example of the "Yin / Yang" of my job...

The guys started coming back on Wednesday and by Saturday night the House was full... and by Sunday morning it was a mess. I understood their combination of relief to get back and not have classes yet... but Sunday evening was an Open House for the beginning of "New Member Recruitment" (I will use the old term "Rush" going forward... even though it is currently discouraged.) Suffice it to say that the early clean-up effort was not inspired. At one point a certain "Senior Citizen" who lives in the House was pretty discouraged (actually the technical term is "pissed")... but the guys came through!

Even though the clean up was last minute it got done and they were more than prepared for the Open House. We had more Brothers engaged in this open house than I have ever seen ... more than most Chapter meetings and even some parties! They were extremely well organized, complete with computer sign in and pictures of each potential new recruit which were then projected with notes during the selection process... think of a high-tech version of the scene from "Animal House". They shuffled 4-5 recruits at a time between group interviews with somewhere between 5-10 Brothers. And while the questions were occasionally a bit "silly" ("Who is your favorite WWE Wrestler?"), it was good to see them take the event seriously.

I did have to admit that their "Rush" was a lot different than the old days when I was a 2 term Rush Chairman. First, it was "dry"... no alcohol in sight and minimal snacks. As I recall, we used to have Boone's Farm Wine parties for Rush... guess we weren't really saints after all. Apparently, they are not allowed to invite recruits to dinner either... one of our best "selling points"! But once they extended bids, the acceptance process was almost ritualistic, riotous, fun and "wet"!

In the end, we had over 100 guys come through the first night and wound up with a Pledge (another archaic term apparently!) class of 38 guys. We took more than we can theoretically house but there are a couple thoughts on that. We know we may have some guys quit and there were serious discussions with the Exec regarding the ability to "drop" guys from the group if they were not fully engaged... and we have some ideas on how to increase live in capacity... more to come on that!

We also had some interesting visitors during Rush. The Director and Assistant Director (Kim and Adam respectively) of the Cliff Alexander Office of Fraternities and Sororities (nimpresive name, huh?) made a surprise visit. I had attended a Training session for House Directors last Saturday... as usual fewer than half those "required" to attend showed up. But we made big points both by being engaged and Jackie and Upper Crust (our meal service) providing breakfast. At any rate, it was Kim's first visit to Alpha Delta Phi Miami Chapter and she loved it... her comment was "More like a Home than a House"! Nice!

There was a rumor that Miami's President Crawford and his wife were making the rounds during the 4 Open House nights, but they never made it here. By Tuesday the story of 2 students being suspected of having Coronavirus may have attracted their attention. However, we also had "Inspectors" from IFC (Interfraternity Council), a reporter from the Miami Student and Mitch Fratrik, the Chapter Support Representative from International. Mitch had met Drew and Chris Mullins at leadership training over break and he was pleased with what he saw. There was some idle chatter about something called a "Blackmon Award"... stay tuned!

So, we are through the Rush process and back to business as usual with classes starting and everyone getting busy. Add to that the month of "New Member Education" that starts this Saturday and leads up to Initiation on Leap Day... February 29th. All Alumni are welcome... I found my active pin and will be wearing it... how about you?

PS – Despite what you have heard about Fraternity "hazing" issues, I'm not terribly worried about our guys. They have some strange ideas based on what they were put through, but the hearts are good and they recognize some of the mistakes of the past... we'll be fine!