

House Director's Blog
November 11, 2021

"THOSE ALUMNI ARE PRETTY COOL."

October was a great month for the Miami Chapter of Alpha Delta Phi! The only other term that might apply is "almost normal"!

After more than a year of Covid rules, restrictions, and the paranoia that came with them, we enjoyed a month that felt more like "college" should feel. Part of this can be attributed to a relaxed approach by City and University officials that can easily be justified based on extremely low student infection rates. Of course, the University did enact an "inoculation mandate" that went into effect at the end of October... not clear how and if they are enforcing but the "mental relief" is considerable.

We started October with the end of September "celebration" of Greek Week. In recent years, the House has not been too enthusiastic about these events, but we turned a bit of a corner this year. There was a strong emphasis on participation, especially in terms of educational seminars on DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion for us older folks) and responsible alcohol use and we were careful to hit the required numbers. While we skipped the muddy mess of Puddle Pull (hard to disagree), we finished 3rd in Dodgeball and 2nd in Trivia... I will confess that our Trivia Team had a little "senior" help, but we still think Beta's cheated to win! And the week ended with a blood drive... again we showed up although we could have done more. All in all, a good step toward better participation.

October represents the midpoint of the semester, and Mid-Terms were definitely an issue. It's amazing how quiet this big old House can get when everyone is worried about tests. As I have said before, our guys take their studies seriously. Academic Advisor Rocco reports that grades across the University have dipped a bit... this started last spring as professors adjusted to Covid teaching and started to re-establish their standards. I do think that the overall impact of on-line classes has been negative... nice to see the guys engaged in classrooms and teams... another sign of "normal".

In many ways you can look at October as "Visitor's Month"! We started with Family Weekend... we did not have a lot of families at the House, but the campus and uptown were jammed. The second weekend was Semester Break with no classes on Friday which became an excuse for big weekend parties. It was also an excuse for yours truly to head to Myrtle Beach for one of his 2 annual golf outings! While golf and getting away was fun, the best news I can give you is that when I got back the House was in great shape... guess they don't need me!

My return was scheduled so I would be here for Homecoming Weekend, a tradition that has lost a little luster in recent years. Students at schools like Miami really pay very little attention to collegiate sports... the BIG schools that get all the media hype are more interesting than their "home" team. Attendance figures are routinely inflated to maintain Division 1 status but even with loyal Alumni coming back, the stadium is not filled. Again, campus and uptown were crazy busy... how about an hour wait to get a table at Mac 'N Joe's? But Alumni turnout at the House was a bit slow... good thing the guys were here to eat those donuts! We made up for it later...

The next weekend was the BIG ONE... Dad's Weekend! The guys in charge did a great job of planning events, including a Golf Outing on Saturday morning with 13 4-somes scheduled... a couple must have thought it was too cold and failed to show up even though I was there from 7:30 am as unofficial "Starter". And the guys made it a philanthropic event, taking half of the skills bets and donating over \$1000 to charity. The weekend climaxed with a cookout at "Animal House", one of our "unofficial annexes" where brothers follow each other to occupy every year. Jackie prepped the food and got hooked into doing some of the grilling... but a great weekend, well planned and executed!

Speaking of philanthropy and service, we raised money through Dad's weekend and we are well ahead of prior years thanks to some solid undergrad leadership. We continue our monthly work with St. Mary's Backpack program, and we had 10 guys help with the Oxford Community Arts Center "Howl at the Moon" Halloween party for local kids. Add in some helpers in the Rotary Club's flag program and we are on a good trend. We've already started planning for the 2nd Annual Campus / Community Pickleball Tournament... hopefully with better participation now that Covid seems to be on the wane!

I should also mention the generosity of our Alumni. The "Move In Miami" program allows donations to a foundation in the Chapter's name. The Alumni Council asked the Chapter for a nominee and then made a \$1,000 scholarship grant to one of our members. We also had our External VP work with Alum Doug Diefenbach to put together an undergrad House newsletter for distribution to Alumni... just more bricks toward building better relationships.

Now I don't want you to think that there was no partying going on in October. One of the patterns that started during Covid because of concerns over mass gathering rules and somewhat over-zealous police and university enforcement has continued. Most of the "formal" parties are scheduled away from the House, either at an Annex or a bar rental. While this is good for the condition of the House, it does cause some concerns about "connection" for upper classmen. The good news is that we have had no tickets or major incidents! Good trends... now if we could just get rid of the "2 a.m. stupids"!

The last weekend of the month brought 3 days of partying for Halloween as well as the "formal" meeting of the Alumni Council. I was excited to have 10 Alumni attend with 7 seated around the library table and 3 on Zoom. Zoomers included the venerable Don French, one of the 1833's who re-established the Chapter! And we were all pleased to have a warm welcome and excellent participation from the Active Chapter. To a man they were welcoming, engaged and eager to understand more about the Alumni as individuals and "landlords"... we even had 5 guys who made it through the full 3 hour meeting! Amazing!

The in-town Alums had planned to play golf on Friday but when the weather failed to cooperate, we had a great time at Top Golf in West Chester, hosted by Brother Jim "Boog" Barre. And I do want to point out that there was a "Mom Reid Memorial Bridge Game" in front north! Brothers Ted Soto, Ralph Herda, Steve Whitlatch and Mike McGrath reenacted what used to be a tradition! Being a bit under the weather, I did not participate in the Saturday night Uptown festivities, but I can report that the most common expression I heard on Sunday morning was "Those Alumni are pretty cool!" Nuff said!

All in all, a busy "normal" month! Good for the House, the guys, and the Alumni... did my heart good!

