



STAR & CRESCCENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF MIAMI'S ALPHA DELTA PHI

Making the House a *Home*

Miami's Alpha Delta Phi embarks on a transformed future

Fall 2019

This fall, big changes arrived at 22 South Campus. The Alpha Deltas welcomed the round-the-clock presence of their new live-in house director, Ross Wason '73 – who, at 68, has taken up residence in the chapter house he moved out of 46 years ago.

And for the first time since the chapter was reorganized in 2003, the kitchen and dining room have been reopened to provide daily communal meals for Alpha Delt brothers living both in and out of the house.

These and other “new era” moves have been designed to influence chapter culture and make the house a better educational and fraternal environment – and the results are already showing.

Learn more inside about why all alumni can be proud of Alpha Delta Phi's new era — and how you can help.





Cooking up a new chapter culture

Alumni Council President Stefan Davis '72 spills the beans



NEW UNDERGRAD EXECS

The new undergraduate executive board has been elected. Welcome to **Drew Kearns 22'** (President), **Elliott Kelley 22'** (Internal VP), **Chris Mullins 22'** (External VP), **Michael Costello 21'** (Risk Manager), **Cam Seibert 22'** (Treasurer), **Matthew Arrix 22'** (Social Chair), and **Ian Crapsey 22'** (House Manager).

YOUNG SUCCESS

Kevin Young '20 has accepted a consulting job offer from Ernst & Young (no relation!) Kevin will be working in people advisory services in Chicago. The brothers of Alpha Delta Phi wish Kevin the best of luck in his near future!



Q: A new house director and a meal plan—that's big news. Why these changes?

Davis: It starts with the Alumni Council's changing view of its job. As the old "Realty Board," we acted mostly as landlords. Now that we're more focused on the educational experience, we realized these changes were "mission critical" and would help make this house a home.

Q: What are the benefits of a live-in advisor?

Davis: There are practical benefits, like better management of the physical plant, more continuity in relating to the University, etc. Also, the position comes with a stipend, which adds to the house director's sense of accountability. But the biggest advantage is having an on-the-spot resource for the undergrads, 24-7.

Q: What role will the House Director play?

Davis: At their best, fraternities have always been great at developing life skills in young men, giving them the chance to learn responsibility and sometimes make mistakes on the way to maturity. We think that process works even better if the guys can call on the daily presence of someone older.

Q: Why now? What's changed?

Davis: Fraternities remain popular – nationwide, fraternity membership is up 46% since 2006 -- but our environment is increasingly intolerant of excesses like hazing, alcohol abuse, etc., and rightly so. The University, Alpha Delta Phi International and our local alumni all agree that we want higher expectations of conduct.

Q: Many alumni remember 22 South Campus as a place to party.

Davis: Well, there are no shortage of those opportunities — this is still college, after all! But there are more rules in place now, especially about parties in the house., and more scrutiny. It's symbolic that the undergrad exec team now includes a Risk Management Chair, whose job is managing safety and liability concerns.

Q: Is our chapter part of a trend?

Davis: Most of Miami's fraternities are moving toward live-in directors, a "best practice" motivated by University policies. We think we're ahead of the pack, though: we invested heavily in building a really great director's suite, so we could compete for the best candidates. That investment paid off in Ross Wason. Most of Miami's fraternity directors are young grad students. Ross brings a lifetime of experience to the job, and we're lucky to have him.

Q: Why add a meal plan after so long ?

Davis: As we shifted to offer more of the single and double rooms that students are demanding, we noticed interaction between the brothers was reduced — with fewer roommates it was easier to spend more time in one's room. Now, meals bring the chapter together in the public spaces and the sense of connection is greater.

Q: Why should Alpha Delt alumni be proud of these moves?

Davis: Recently, more than one Oxford city inspector said we're one of the most well-kept and managed houses they've seen. Since our 2003 restoration, we've been a thriving chapter, with 90 on-campus brothers. But we're even stronger now — because a house director and meal plan make our strength more sustainable.



Living the...dream (?)

Ross Wason '73 does a reboot on fraternity life

This August, four and a half decades after his stint as undergraduate president, Ross Wason '73 moved into the new house director suite at 22 South Campus. His job comes with room, board, a \$13,000 annual stipend, a liability policy — and the chance to help young Alpha Deltas develop responsibility and leadership skills.

Q: First off, every alumnus has the same question: What were you thinking?

Wason: It may sound crazy to some (and to me as well on some days!), but this role drew me in. I saw it as a chance to draw on my experience and strengths. My major was sociology; my profession was staffing IT companies but over the years I've also worked as a career counselor and student teacher and even supervised a residential cottage of 14 emotionally challenged youngsters. After working various small jobs since retiring in 2017, this opportunity intrigued me.

Q: What's it like to be a 68-year-old 'frat boy'?

Wason: First of all, it's given me the opportunity to hear every joke ever told about being old! It would help if I didn't have all those names to keep straight! But these are good kids, and we're coexisting well. They have their own lingo, music and attitudes, but there's mutual respect on both sides. They take their studies very seriously — when there are tests on the horizon this place gets so quiet it makes me nervous. Between sports, service projects and the occasional party they're always busy.

Q: How are undergrads different these days?

Wason: I can confirm what you read about this generation being less mature in some ways than we were when we started college. They've all grown up with smart phones and social media; they've spent less in-person time with friends and are missing some practical knowledge — like how to care for their living environment. They have tended to interact with others as individuals rather than via organizations. All those traits pose challenges for fraternities, but they also make fraternity life more important than ever as a developmental experience.

Q: How do you approach your work?

Wason: Every day here is like Christmas morning — when I go downstairs, I never know if I'll find a lump of coal (disastrous mess) or a nice present (relatively clean and neat). I try to nudge the guys in the right direction, rewarding responsible behavior and calling out the excesses. My



job isn't to do things for them or even tell them what to do, but to help assure that they take responsibility for what *they* do. Because if I take over I give them an excuse not to perform and hold each other accountable, which is a skill they are still learning. So I try to support, not direct. Mainly I work through the officers. One of the first things I said to Chapter President **Logan Harrelson** was "The more you talk and the less I talk, the better we're doing." Logan points out when I'm failing at that, and I usually thank him.

Q: So it's a learning experience for you too?

Wason: Definitely! Anyone who wants to live vicariously can read my blog! And alumni are always welcome to stop by — the guys and I are glad to show off our home.



A CHEESY CHARITY?

Alpha Delta Phi and Tau Kappa Epsilon raised \$317 in their first grilled cheese fundraiser. The proceeds will be split between St. Jude Cancer Research Hospital, the Shine Like Sable Foundation, and the Backpack Foundation.

HOOP DREAMS

The Alpha Delta Phi basketball A-team has started the season strong — undefeated in four outings so far...



BIEGGER PLANS

Noah Biegger '21 has accepted an internship from Accenture, a Fortune Global 500 company that provides professional services in various operations. Noah will be working with analytics, management, and client services.



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ALPHA DELTA PHI ALUMNI COUNCIL

Stefan Davis '72
President

Rocco Manzo '86
Faculty Advisor

Ross Wason '73
House Director

Jim Barre '76

Brett Cole '08

Jeff Crawford '78

Doug Diefenbach '80

Don French '53

Logan Harrelson '20

Ralph Herda '75

Matt Labuda '11

Sean O'Brien '10

Tommy Paquette '16

Chuck Turner '55

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SHOW YOUR LOYALTY — PLEDGE TODAY!

Make an ongoing difference for
the chapter with your three-year
financial pledge to join the alumni
Loyalty Society. Visit our web-
site, or contact Doug Diefenbach
at miamiadphi@yahoo.com.



Chapter dining program feeding more than one kind of hunger

Absent for nearly 20 years, the Chapter's restored meal program is a hit.

This fall, the Alumni Council contracted with Upper Crust Catering. Now cook Jackie Brown serves up 14 meals a week for the 30 residents and 25 out-of-house brothers.

Across campus, few fraternities offer meal plans; most members head to dorms or uptown for meals. "The need to offer more spacious rooms reduced house capacities," explained **Ralph Herda '75**, Alumni Council treasurer. The changes spelled the end for many meal programs, and with them a shared experience of fraternity life: daily meals as a brotherhood.

"Considering its effect on the sense of connection, we decided the meal program was

worth the expense and effort after all," said Herda. "We alumni remember how meals brought us together. We know what a great effect the meal program will have."

Ross Wason agreed. "As much as the guys love the program, parents may love it more. One mom said, 'I'm so glad my son won't be on the 'perpetual pizza diet!'"

Meal restoration came at considerable expense. "Renovating the kitchen and replacing the ancient appliances to meet code cost more than \$125,000," said **Stefan Davis**. "But when you stand in a dining hall filled with good aromas, the clatter of dishes and the laughter of brothers, it feels like it was worth it."



Approving alumni are invited to show support

The House Director Suite build-out, Ross Wason's compensation, and the kitchen renovations are all-new expenses for the chapter.

"We decided that if we were going to 'make our house a home,' we were going to do it right," said Alumni Council treasurer **Ralph Herda 75**. "We wanted to move quickly, so we financed \$150,000, bringing our mortgage to more than \$460,000."

Increased debt service will be accompanied by new operating expenses. "Remodeling the director suite not only cost \$100,000 but eliminated two rental spaces. Ross' stipend and the meal plan also add to the budget," said Herda.

"The Alumni Council is looking to alumni to help fund the investments," he said, "and to become part of our ongoing success by volunteering for Council service."