

PHI KAPPA SIGMA

Alumni & Parent Newsletter | Zeta Chapter | Spring 2016

Senior Shoutouts

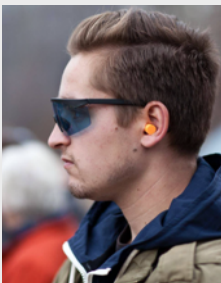


Hunter Citrin '16



Daniel Glass '16

Senior Abroad



Frederik Wouda-Kuipers '16



A Letter from the President

When I took over as president, the Zeta Chapter of Phi Kappa Sigma had just failed our chapter standards report, was informed that we would not be allowed to take on freshmen during our Spring recruitment cycle, and was on probation for an incident in which beer was discovered in our substance-free chapter house. We also faced a dire financial situation owing large sums to Phi Kap HQ and our alumni. The chapter was in need of some real change. I knew my role would be one of transition. When I took over, I spoke with members of the school administration, our Alumni Corp, and the International Fraternity in order to discover how the chapter could improve and survive. I am a firm believer that a positive and strong working relationship with these entities is a prerequisite to mitigate other problems that may arise as well begin a rebranding of our fraternity. I have taken significant steps to build these channels of communication, including but not limited to regular meetings and phone calls. I have also begun reshaping certain aspects of the house. We are no

Senior Research

This past semester, I have been working on an independent research project with Professor Mark Olson in the Biology department examining the mechanisms of ultraviolet radiation (UVR) tolerance in the freshwater snail *Helisoma trivolvis*. This is a small snail, about 18 millimeters long as an adult, which is commonly found in aquariums. Most people know that ultraviolet light can damage DNA and lead to cancers, and this is especially true in smaller organisms. I have been exposing juvenile snails to UVR, using a specialized exposure device built by Professor Olson, and comparing their rates of survival to their body length and shell thickness. This type of research is important in understanding the physiological defenses of small aquatic organisms, particularly species that live on the bottom of lakes and streams. Previous studies have mostly focused on plankton, so this is a relatively untouched area of scientific inquiry.

- Peter Lewis '16



longer in debt to the International Fraternity and I believe we will be in a position to grow next year.

- Jonathan Garza '17



A Letter From the Vice President

My name is Matthew Howe and I'm a physics major from Montclair, California. This year I served as vice president of Zeta Chapter. I am pleased to report that our brotherhood is continuing to thrive and is excited for the future. We have established a much better reputation on campus and with school administration over the last year. This will allow us to grow and accomplish even more than in previous years. I am very proud of the effort and dedication of our brotherhood, and I look forward to enjoying two more successful years as an active member of this fraternity. I would like to give a thanks to all of our alumni who continue to support us, especially our Alumni Board, whose efforts keep this house running.

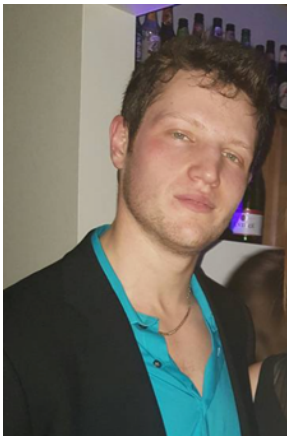


- Matthew Howe '18

A Message from the Recruitment Chairs

This past year as Recruitment Chair has been the biggest challenge since we have joined this house. In the fall, the brotherhood as a whole was unprepared for the calamities that we would face from conflict with our school administration and national organization. My first attempt at rushing new and bright students was a failure that produced no pledges, but in this humble state we learned the true meaning behind why we joined this house and organization. Unable to pledge freshmen in the spring semester was a huge setback, but our rushing techniques and attitude was never better. With a new mentality, we were able to produce four fantastic new brothers in the spring, and we have freshmen prospects lined up for the next fall semester. In the next coming semesters, the house as a whole will be more involved in the rushing process, and hopefully this momentum carries throughout the years we are here and even after in the years to come. Being a Recruitment Chair has allowed me to truly appreciate everyone in the house and is a constant reminder as to why we joined this Brotherhood.

- Joshua Yoo '18, with Ari Deleon '17, co-chairs



State of the House

My name is Avery Brown, and I am the current house manager of the active chapter. This year has been a time of great progress in restoring the house. This semester the Alumni house manager, Nate Muniz, and I have worked on making sure the house is in compliance with fire safety codes. Additionally, this semester I have begun to establish a new Theta Committee in hopes to foster participation to improve the house with smaller projects. The actives are greatly looking forward to the newly initiated brothers' projects to decorate the dance floor. There are still several aspects of the house that I wish develop in the coming semester.

- Avery Brown '17



A Letter from the Academic Chair

As the Academic Chair of Zeta Chapter, I want to thank all the alumni and parents for making the things in this newsletter possible. Without your steadfast support, none of this could have happened. So from the Brothers of Zeta Chapter, thank you.

In the Fall of 2015, our chapter introduced a new academic program that has already proven its worth. This system relies on determining a Brother's scholastic needs based on their previous semester's GPA. Depending on where one's GPA falls on the scale, the Brother will be required to attend a predetermined number of study halls per week, tutoring sessions, and regular meetings with the Academic Chair. Such requirements are enforced by a system that becomes progressively more severe the more a Brother disregards his responsibilities. Of course, incentives can be just as effective a motivator as punishments, and as such we reward Brothers who dramatically improve their GPA compared to the previous semester, since incentives based on relative gains rather than absolute thresholds motivate every Brother to improve. This new system demonstrated its value in the very first semester it was implemented, as our chapter's GPA rose to second highest across all F&M fraternities.



- Jeffrey Robinowitz '17

A Letter from the Alumni Chair

My role as alumni chair is focused on Zeta alumni. At Zeta Chapter, we recognize the value of engaging our alumni constituency. We see our alumni as key investors, terrific advocates, and loyal partners, all with the mutual goal of supporting the success of a place we all have had the pleasure of calling home. With this in mind, we seek to engage the alumni who have shared in our organization's rich and diverse history. As we seek to develop a relationship with the many talented alumni who have passed through Phi Kappa Sigma, we are also establishing a Zeta mentorship program as a means of helping current brothers learn about their desired field of study.

Again, thank you for all your support in the past, and I look forward to hearing from and seeing you all in the future.

- Joshua Yoo '18

Building Brighter Futures

As briefly mentioned earlier, the Zeta Chapter is reaching out to alumni about the possibility of creating a mentorship program. This program would encourage alumni to reach out to the many talented brothers within our chapter and provide them with the tools necessary to cultivate a stronger professional portfolio. If you are interested in helping to form this program, please contact our chapter president Jonathan Garza, at jgarza@fandm.edu

Thank you, and we look forward hearing from you!