

# Phi Kappa News

---

October 2, 2014

Dear Brothers,

Although you haven't heard from us since last fall, the Building Association has had a very active year working through the aftermath of the fire escape accident. There is a detailed review of everything that's happened this past year to follow, but the most important part of this message is that Homecoming is right around the corner! Here is all of the information on

## **Homecoming 2014:**

Given the situation the undergraduate Chapter is still facing, Phi Kappa will be hosting another split celebration: tailgating with alcohol will be hosted by Brother Jason Luksis with the Building Association's support, and watching the game on the first floor's big screen TV will be happening at the Chapter House. Unfortunately, given the continued disciplinary sanctions the undergraduate Chapter is facing, we will not be having any alcohol at 311 E. Armory again this year.

Please let us know if you are planning to come to Champaign for homecoming by filling out a brief survey to RSVP in this link: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dgQ\\_ZK5Oa33hizTtlzq6oz2rhCgXiE\\_YdIdtFGYctCw/viewform?usp=send\\_form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dgQ_ZK5Oa33hizTtlzq6oz2rhCgXiE_YdIdtFGYctCw/viewform?usp=send_form).

We want to make sure we're prepared for you all with enough food, drink, and tailgate space. Thank you for taking the time to fill out the survey!

At the House, we will be watching the game, enjoying some food, and catching up on how everyone's been doing this past year. After the game ends we will be hosting another Building Association update at 3:30 pm.

At our tailgate spot, we will be grilling with our coolers packed. We'll be reserving several parking spots together in a block for tailgating and we'll

have the exact location of our spots within the tailgate area available the morning of game day. We'll post some maps at the House, and both Jason Luksis and Brian Schmidt will be available by phone to guide you to the tailgate location:

Jason Luksis: 563-209-7250

Brian Schmidt: 630-536-6000

AXP

## **Construction Project Update:**

We're nearly there! The fire escape has been removed, the west wing of the third floor has been completely remodeled, the western most room on the second floor has become an egress corridor and the exterior second means of egress is attached to the south end of the House. With only the installation of a few fireproof windows separating us from a completed project we're very excited to be successfully finishing this multi-year project!

Sometime later this week the final work will be done on the House to completely bring it into compliance with the City of Champaign building safety codes. Once we finish this project we can breathe a sigh of relief by satisfying the safety violations we've been cited with and can shift our focus to improving our Chapter's image and preparing for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2016!

We will likely be able to become Certified Housing again, as nearly all fraternities are. The code violation was the cause of our loss of certified status. For those of you who don't know what Certified Housing status is, it's a title awarded to houses on campus that certifies they're safe for students to live in (not just safe according to Champaign's building codes). By regaining Certified Housing status in the future we will be able to break contracts with the dorms for free when a Brother wants to move in to replace a Brother who graduates halfway through the year or studies abroad. Noncompliance with the building code is what initially brought attention to the House/Fraternity from housing, fraternity and sorority affairs, and the office of the dean of students' offices. This attention is what led to the disciplinary sanctions Phi Kappa has faced over the past year. You can get caught up on how we're working through that situation in the next section.

## **Chapter Operations Update:**

This letter of explanation reviewing our current situation at the Chapter is long overdue. The last 4 months have been very busy and our situation has only recently been clarified by the National Fraternity and the University offices of fraternity and sorority affairs and dean of students. Now that we have clear decisions regarding Phi Kappa's ability to maintain operations, we are able to pass on that information.

We have provided a brief explanation of the current state of affairs and the way forward below. After this brief explanation, you will find a more detailed timeline of events and the results of each event in detail for your reading as your time permits. These are the facts as we know them now:

After Phi Kappa's interim suspension was lifted in December, we faced a university hearing for Chapter misconduct related to the accident that resulted in Phi Kappa losing university recognition for a period of three years. We spent the summer working with the National Council setting up emergency measures so we could maintain their support and not have to completely close down the Chapter. The National Council has found enough positive attributes in Phi Kappa to continue to support our operations during our loss of university recognition. During this period of working outside the university confines, and without the university's support or resources, Phi Kappa will have to "toe the line" to ensure our actions and activities do not draw any negative attention to us or result in any misconduct. Under the National Office's guidance Phi Kappa is continuing to operate as an alcohol free facility until we can develop a successful display of operating professionally. We are working through the challenges now facing Phi Kappa with this new situation we're facing and we greatly appreciate your continued involvement and support! With the backing of the National Office and National Council, Phi Kappa is marching through this stumbling block and heading proudly toward our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2016!

One major milestone Phi Kappa needs to hit to make it through our sanctions is to enlist a live-in resident advisor for the facility. If you know of anyone who may be a good fit for this role, please contact Brad LaPayne at [brad@lapayne.com](mailto:brad@lapayne.com), 217-390-8962

Here is the detailed review of the events leading to Phi Kappa's present state:

- During the summer of 2013 a new Director of University Housing was hired and Phi Kappa was one of the first non-university owned buildings she focused her attention on. She determined that our Champaign City Code violation was a danger to students despite the city's willingness to allow occupancy while we addressed the second means of egress construction project. Through our interactions with her office, one of her team members notified all of our Brothers that our building was condemned at the start of "move in week" last fall. This caused roughly half of our Brothers to immediately sign leases with apartments, and a significant loss of revenue for the Building Association.
- In the month that followed, the IFC Executive Board began a campaign to crack down on alcohol use during recruitment and cited Phi Kappa with two counts of having alcohol onsite during the first month of school (which is not allowed at any time according to IFC regulations). Before we could stand before our hearing to review the facts and prove our innocence, the social alcohol ban ended and the alcohol-inclusive gathering that led to the girl falling off our fire escape occurred.
- Phi Kappa was placed on immediate interim suspension from September 23<sup>rd</sup> through the week before finals while the Office of the Dean of Students' representatives reviewed our case for potential misconduct. As you may recall, this was the driving factor for not having alcohol onsite during Homecoming last year.
- Our suspension was lifted just before final exams occurred last fall. The official university investigation into the Chapter's conduct began at that time, and the police investigation into possible intent during the accident continued into the spring.
- In April the police report, which found no evidence of criminal activity, was filed. At this point the university concluded their investigation and called Phi Kappa to stand before a disciplinary hearing based on their findings of our actions on the day of the accident.
- As of the most recent appeal meeting to the Board of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs on May 5, 2014, we have had our recognition status as a student organization revoked for 3 years. What this means is that AXP is not currently a registered organization on the university's campus and we are being treated as a community organization by the university body. As a result of the university's findings of Phi Kappa's actions, we have lost our affiliation with IFC, cannot have registered social events with other

Registered Student Organizations, and cannot use university resources to conduct business and activities.

- Throughout the summer, the Building Association and the newly elected Executive Board worked with the National Office and the National Council to present all of the facts surrounding our loss of university recognition and conduct internal conduct and operational reviews.
- Two weeks ago the AXP National Fraternity CEO, Scott Carlson, and the National Council Vice President, Ken Chapel, arrived in Champaign and interviewed each current undergraduate member. Based on their findings of our individual members and our Chapter, they have decided to continue to support our undergraduate Chapter's operation as an unregistered organization. They have notified the university that we will continue to exist as a fraternity during their period of recognition loss, and they worked through a plan with university representatives to define a "most successful" approach to unregistered operation that would be most likely to lead to an expedient re-acceptance into the university. Our official sanction declares Phi Kappa will remain unregistered through the middle of May 2017, but there are opportunities for us to petition to decrease that sentence if we follow the plan put together by the National Officers and the university officials.
- The Chapter currently has 16 Brothers living in the House and 50 more on campus. They have 12 new pledges this fall and the Building Association is very excited to be working with them through this challenging situation. They're a group that is continuing to grow, not just in numbers but as AXP men, and we're looking forward to the stronger, smarter, and safer Phi Kappa that will rise out of this setback.
- The way forward: as long as the undergraduates continue to work with the Building Association and National Office to continue improvements and track their progress, it is likely that we can apply for recognition after a year of good behavior and problem free operations. If we are not successful after one year then we will try again after 2 years. During this time as an unrecognized organization, we will have to diligently work at safety, alcohol management, healthy recruitment, and appropriate Postulant Education to maximize our chances of getting reaccepted into the university and IFC. This reacceptance will turn a lot of scrutinizing, watchful eyes away from us and onto other university matters, and will provide Phi Kappa with many more resources for our members to enjoy a full fraternity experience.

- We need your help to fill small roles to help the undergraduates monitor their improvements and progress and give them guidance and mentoring during this period of development. If you're willing and able to help the Building Association and the undergraduate Chapter, with a weekend each semester or an hour a week, please contact Brian Schmidt at [bschmid3@gmail.com](mailto:bschmid3@gmail.com) or 630-536-6000 to discuss ways in which you could support Phi Kappa.

This situation was new to all of us involved and we worked through it the best we could, unfortunately not with the best outcome. All we can do is move forward from here and work to the best of our abilities to make Phi Kappa better day by day, week by week and semester by semester! If you have any questions about the events that transpired that brought Phi Kappa into the position it's in today, please reach out to Brian Schmidt or Brad LaPayne at:

Brian Schmidt: [bschmid3@gmail.com](mailto:bschmid3@gmail.com), 630-536-6000

Brad LaPayne: [brad@lapyane.com](mailto:brad@lapyane.com), 217-390-8962

As a reminder, Homecoming is October 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be no alcohol allowed on the property this year, but we plan on having a tailgate near Memorial Stadium and champagne and possibly other beverages for celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. Plan on visiting the House for homecoming to renew old friendships, begin new ones, and see the progress of the construction project. We will have more details about this year's homecoming the week before the celebrations occur. If you are planning on being in Champaign for homecoming this year, please take the quick survey above and we will publish the names of those who plan to attend in our pre-homecoming message. The game starts at 11AM, so if you come by the House before the game we will have coffee and donuts and after the game we will have some more food, likely barbeque. House tours will be given all day so that you may see the improvements that have been made in the last several years and the code compliance work that was recently finished.