



March 2022 Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter Newsletter

Save the Date: Saturday, July 30, 2022 – Phi Kappa Building Association and Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter Annual Meetings at the Chapter House on Campus.

Reminder! Please join the official Phi Kappa Facebook and LinkedIn Groups:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7006013/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/168602433263416>

We've gone even more fancy...we have a Facebook QR code:



Excellent...take a picture!

Recruiting Update

The U of I's Spring Semester is under way, and, after operating remotely the first week of classes, students are now back to learning in person again. Hunter Santiago, our National Fraternity Expansion Consultant, is back on campus. Having laid the framework for our return during the Fall Semester, he is now actively recruiting the first pledge class for the Phi Kappa colony.

Continuing COVID restrictions, combined with the cold winter weather, have made recruiting more challenging than normal. However, despite the limited opportunities to reach the student body, his efforts continue, and progress is being made.

Hunter is collaborating with the Fraternity and Sorority Affairs office regarding available opportunities to engage with U of I students. They have worked together to arrange for him to set up a table at the ARC (Activities and Recreation Center) on several afternoons so he can engage directly with students as they come in for their regular workouts. Hunter has also worked to establish relationships with several sororities on campus. This effort has not only generated several legitimate candidates, but it will be helpful for the Colony's future endeavors by giving the new Brothers an existing relationship with other Greek organizations.

Hunter continued to engage with several young men who showed interest last semester. Through on-campus tabling efforts, another mass email to undergraduates, social media advertising and an on-campus AXP recruiting meeting, Hunter found other young men who expressed a desire to learn more about Phi Kappa. This multi-pronged effort resulted in 13 candidates accepting bids to join AXP!

Hunter will be administering the Oath of Postulancy after the U of I's Spring Break and we'll then officially welcome the first pledge class of the reinstated Phi Kappa. This initial pledge class will focus on learning AXP history and customs, and on actively recruiting additional members.

As a reminder...YOU CAN STILL HELP! If you know any current students at U of I, please let us know. Even if they are not candidates for membership, they may have friends or acquaintances who might be interested. I personally ran into two descendants of Phi Kappa brothers last fall on Quad Day (one sorority member and one member of another fraternity), and I am sure that they are not the only ones on campus! Talk to your neighbors and coworkers, members of your church or other organizations, and see whether they might know of anyone. We are aware of at least two good candidates who will start at U of I next fall, so if you know any additional future Illini please let us know! The best place to contact us is at PhiKappaGradChapter@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for all your help and support!

In the Bond,

Andy Kosowsky, '87, Graduate Chapter Mentoring Director

The Question...are Fraternities, and therefore AXP, still relevant?

This is a question that is debated on all college campuses including the University of Illinois. Please use the following link to see what a recent Gallup survey found: <https://nicfraternity.org/>

Pledge Class Champions Update

I want to take this opportunity to discuss the Pledge Class Champions program with all of the Graduate Brothers. One of the most critical purposes of the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter is to re-engage our members and bring back memories and friendships

First and foremost, a sincere thank you to the Brothers who have volunteered their time to serve as a Pledge Class Champion. Your service truly helps strengthen our Brotherhood and is greatly appreciated.

For those of you who do not know, the Pledge Class Champions is a committee of the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter consisting of Brothers who have volunteered their time to help open communications and rekindle bonds with our Brothers. Each one covers a specific timeframe or era of Phi Kappa's existence. While the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter can send out a mass emailing on an event or a Phi Kappa newsletter, one of the critical purposes of the Pledge Class Champions is to give us an opportunity to make these communications a little more personal.

The general concept is that each Pledge Class Champion is assigned their pledge class and a few pledge classes for the years before and after their pledge class. The idea being communications from a brother you personally knew, who you lived with, who attended classes and social events with you, and who attended chapter meetings with you, can foster rekindling and strengthening these bonds while encouraging brotherhood and future communications. We also look to our Pledge Class Champions to update contact information for Brothers and foster more personal communications amongst the pledge classes.

Right now, we could use some additional volunteers to help the success of the Pledge Class Champions. You get to be the one finding and leading the reconnection efforts with the Brotherhood...how rewarding is that? If you are interested, please reach out to me at PhiKappaGradChapter@gmail.com.

Our ask of the Pledge Class Champions is an hour or two a month of contacting Brothers; you could, of course, dedicate a lot of time to the role if you enjoy catching up with and engaging your Brothers. The idea is to a) rekindle friendships and contacts with our brothers, b) keep the Brothers informed and c) bring the Brothers back to Phi Kappa.

Unfortunately, as you probably know, so many of us have lost contact over the years due to a busy world and our busy lives. I am guilty of this myself. I tell myself having my fraternity brothers on Facebook is enough, but it really does not compare to the rekindling of meaningful communications with your Brothers.

As I sat at my computer composing this article for the newsletter, a verse from "Amici" kept popping into my mind.

"Our strong band shall ne'er be broken,
Formed in Alpha Chi,
Far surpassing wealth unspoken,
Sealed by friendships ties."

It really is all about those ties!

In the Bond,

Bother Joe Zollner, '86

What has Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter Done and Why do You Care?

On behalf of the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter board, I'd like to thank each of you who participated in any of our 2021 and January 2022 events. I also send our appreciation to everyone who volunteered to support the Rechartering Initiative and help the Graduate Chapter throughout 2021. Our efforts have covered a lot of ground over the last two years, so let me provide a brief summary of the journey we've been on and the direction we are taking Phi Kappa.

The Rechartering Initiative began in November of 2019 as a committee of the Phi Kappa Building Association. The goals were to:

1. Create a roadmap for bringing the Resident Chapter back to Illinois' campus;
2. Investigate the functional areas in which the Building Association needed support; and
3. Provide an environment in which the future Resident Chapter and Graduate Brothers received sustained benefit and value from their Phi Kappa membership.

The Rechartering Initiative committee spent the winter of 2019 investigating the necessary steps to clear the Resident Chapter's name on campus. During the first four months of 2020, we focused our efforts on studying university procedures and the appeals process to remove the sanctions that had resulted in a permanent ban on the Resident Chapter's return to campus. We successfully cleared the Resident Chapter's name in April of 2020, then got to work investigating both the path to return to campus and the ways in which we could support the Building Association. Throughout the remainder of 2020, we

studied both recent Illinois recolonizations by other fraternities and AXP (re)colonization efforts across the US, developed a Phi Kappa recolonization plan and budget, and benchmarked the benefits other fraternity alumni associations provide to their members. As a result of the team's hard work, we received U of I's permission to begin colonization efforts in the fall of 2021!

At the start of 2021, we turned our focus to securing funding for the recolonization and rechartering, creating the Pledge Class Champions outreach committee, and developing the By-Laws for the Graduate Chapter. Our research informed us that the Building Association would be empowered to best manage the current property – and plan for the future of 311 E. Armory – by offloading the responsibilities of Resident Chapter advisement and Graduate Brother engagement. The creation of a Graduate Chapter Board quickly became the most appropriate way to help the Building Association offload these areas of focus. In April, the Rechartering Initiative committee secured a commitment from the Building Association to fund the recolonization effort with the proceeds of rent and future fundraising campaigns. In June we created a draft of the By-Laws for the Graduate Chapter. In August those By-Laws were approved. The National Fraternity then hired a staff member to direct the fall semester's start to Phi Kappa recolonization efforts, and, at the Building Association's Annual Meeting, Graduate Chapter Directors were appointed. The Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter, along with the Phi Kappa Building Association, are proud to be the official organizations supporting AXP at the University of Illinois.

Throughout the fall and winter, the Graduate Chapter worked to obtain an Employee

Identification Number and Articles of Incorporation in the State of Illinois. We collaborated with the Building Association to formally reorganize the Rechartering Initiative and Pledge Class Champions committees under the Graduate Chapter board. We supported the National staff who were doing the work on campus to begin our recolonization. Finally, we held our first virtual event on January 6th and first in-person event on January 29th. Please read about those recent events in other sections of this newsletter.

It was a lot of work by a lot of dedicated Brothers, but it is just the start. The big goals remain – a) re-energize our Graduate Brothers and bring them back to AXP and b) recolonize the Phi Kappa Chapter.

Thank you in advance for all your help and support.

~In the Bond,

Brian Schmidt, '09, President – Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter

Virtual Basketball Viewing Event

Hello Brothers,

The Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter hosted our first virtual alumni event this past January. We saw brothers turn out from 5 different decades to cheer on our Illini as they beat Maryland 76-64. Hopefully this is a sign of things to come as the Illini look to defend the Big 10 Championship and make a deep run in the March Madness Tournament this year. At halftime we were able to answer questions regarding the purpose of the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter and our goals for the upcoming year.

Please be on the lookout for our next virtual event and we hope to see even more brothers join to share stories and reconnect.

Also, we are always looking for new ideas for virtual events, so if you have any suggestions, please reach out to phikappagraduatechapter@gmail.com.

Jonathon Binkley, '15, Secretary – Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter

Illini Crows Cheer on the Illini @ Northwestern!

We had a great showing for the Illinois vs Northwestern Basketball game with 13 Brothers attending augmented by an additional 7 friends and family members. It was a very close game in which the Fighting Illini pulled through to earn the victory. Everybody had a great time catching up as well as starting some Illini chants during the game. We had Brothers from multiple pledge classes show up and hope to see even more at our next in-person event.

Alex Kay, '15, Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter Events Director

Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter – Looking Forward

As we begin the spring semester of 2022, we're excited to continue supporting Hunter Santiago in his recruiting efforts to build the Resident Chapter. He's secured our first 13 Postulants, is engaged with those students' network, and continues to work through other means to find like-minded potential new members. The Graduate Chapter is also working with the Building Association to prepare for our first joint Annual Meeting, which will occur on Saturday, July 30th, 2022. The meeting will be in Champaign at the Chapter House. If there is enough

interest, we'll look into methods to live stream the meeting to the Brothers who can't make it to campus that weekend.

Throughout this spring and early summer, the Graduate Chapter will work to host more virtual and in-person events (suggestions gratefully accepted), collect updated contact information for all Brothers, build an official Phi Kappa website, create a nominating committee for the Building Association and Graduate Chapter elections, and plan for a Homecoming (currently set for October 15th – Beat the Gophers) event on campus.

We are excited to continue creating ways to interact with you all and, most importantly, give you and your families opportunities to reconnect with the Brothers you may have lost touch with over the years. We're looking for help in the areas listed below. If you are interested in joining our growing team of volunteers, or you know a Brother who might be interested in doing so, please send us a note at PhiKappaGradChapter@gmail.com. Here are some of the options:

1. Help us connect with Brothers who we either don't yet have contact information for or who have lost touch with AXP by joining the Pledge Class Champions committee.
2. Nominate yourself or a Brother to join either the Building Association or the Graduate Chapter board. We're forming a nominating committee to help with outreach.
3. Help Brother Alex Kay, the Graduate Chapter Events Director, plan and organize more events than can be achieved by a single Brother.
4. Help Brother Dale Marquart, the Graduate Chapter Communications Director, spread the word about Phi Kappa with newsletter graphic design

support, social media management, or newsletter content submissions.

5. Help Brother Andy Kosowsky, the Graduate Chapter Mentoring Director, develop the guidance services the Graduate Chapter plans to provide to the colony and, eventually, Resident Chapter.
6. Help the Building Association with fundraising efforts and capital campaign work.
7. Join the four Brothers who have already committed to the ADOPT A PLEDGE campaign. We're still looking for six additional donors to help us reach our goal of covering the first year's dues of the first thirteen Postulants (each Postulant's first year dues will be around \$685).

We welcome your questions, comments, and feedback Brothers. We'd really like to know what types of events and activities you are interested in, and what other ways we can add value to your experience as Phi Kappa Graduate Brothers. Please reach out to us at PhiKappaGradChapter@gmail.com or contact me directly at 630-536-6000.

~In the Bond,

Brian Schmidt, '09, President – Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter

Gentle Ask

If you have any questions or want to volunteer, please contact the Phi Kappa Graduate Chapter at PhiKappaGradChapter@gmail.com.

If you wish to donate to the Building Association, please go to: https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=K2437WYYDZ9YL

Crows at Northwestern



Watch the game, Kevin.



Told you we were better off sitting on the roof.



Really, we're enjoying this.



Almost in the bag...go ILLINI!