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WSU fraternities win national awards

Phi Kappa Tau and Lambda Chi Alpha received awards at their national conferences.

By Christine Rushton

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The WSU chapters for Phi Kappa Tau and Lambda Chi Alpha fraternities each received awards at their respective fraternities' national conferences this summer.

At their 53rd annual Stead Leadership Seminar in July, Lambda Chi Alpha received the Phoenix Award for making the most strides toward improvement for three consecutive years, and the Outstanding Scholarship program award for best academic achievement.

Lambda Chi Alpha President John McMullan said he is proud of the brothers' work in membership growth, depth of programming, academic achievement and risk-free operations.

"This is a great honor that recognizes the achievements of a great group of men," McMullan said. "We have continuously worked to push ourselves to be the strongest chapter we are capable of being."

Chapter Scholarship Chair Scott Knobens assisted in the creation of an academic program that records members' hours of study, supports diverse study habits and rewards positive study behavior like visiting professors and seeking tutoring. To earn the Outstanding Scholarship program award, the chapter made the highest spring semester chapter GPA of 3.27 and helped last year's freshmen in averaging a 3.67 GPA.

John Holloway, director of chapter services for Lambda Chi Alpha, presented the chapter with the Phoenix Award at the conference. He said he is proud of their efforts and is looking forward to seeing their future improvements.

"These men have come a long way," Holloway said. "They started with an empty house, struggling operations and have now become a leading chapter on all fronts of Greek Life."

In relation to their Phoenix award, the chapter started with 15 members in 2007 and now has 85 members. McMullan said in 2007 the few members the chapter had were handed a house that was basically bare bones.

"They worked and recruited to create a fraternity that could be the top," McMullan said. "We have become a group of individuals that work to inspire and create the best possible house environment."

McMullan said they put in a lot of hard work, and the award has inspired them to continue to improve their GPA. He said they are grateful for the alumni and support from their fifth-year seniors and are continuing to build on their foundation.

"The recognition really inspired us because we are now setting the pace nationally and are helping other chapters," McMullan said. "We hope to continue to build the brotherhood, be the most outstanding Lambda Chi Alpha chapter."

At the Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity's inaugural Conclave in August, the WSU chapter received a community service award. Lori Foister, the Phi Kappa Tau executive offices' administrative assistant for the chapter's services and awards liaison, said the award was for completing an average of at least 20 hours of service per member in the chapter.

"WSU averaged 29.36 hours per man," Foister said. "We are trying to recognize those chapters that did a lot of community service and encourage other chapters to do that as well."

Sean Haschak, the president of WSU's Phi Kappa Tau chapter, said last year they worked with their members on the importance of giving back to the community. He said in light of this, the award means a lot to them.



"It shows everyone that we are making a lot of progress and are moving in the right direction," Haschak said. "I feel like it's a solid accomplishment for our house. It's definitely something we can build on, and it's something we can use to make even bigger improvements in the future."

Haschak said the chapter's goals this year are to get their members involved in on-campus groups beyond those in the Greek community. He said they are never content with meeting their past goals and are well on their way to surpassing what they did last year.

"The award tells us that we are moving in the right direction," Haschak said. "However, there is still a lot to be done and a lot that we can accomplish."

Anita Cory is committed to Greek Life on campus

Cory is the dedicated director of the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life

By Christine Rushton

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Anita Cory never planned on becoming the director of the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life when she began her stint at WSU in 1993.

"I took a job here in Pullman and thought I'd be here a couple of years," Cory said. "Then my husband came out here, and we thought it'd be a couple more. Now it's close to 20 years, so it's been a while."

Cory started her journey to Pullman when she transferred to the University of Nebraska as a junior in college.

"For me, transferring and then joining a sorority a semester later had such an impact on my life," Cory said.

Cory became a Chi Omega and soon moved to the graduate school at the University of Nebraska. She had the opportunity to work with 200 Greek members as their hall director

"My boss was the professional Fraternity and Sorority Life adviser, and she was a great mentor and encourager," Cory said. "Originally, I thought I'd be a councilor, but through working with Greeks as a graduate student pseudo-professionally and through her mentorship, I really started to see that I could work with fraternities and sororities professionally."

Chi Omega and her job showed Cory a different career path. Cory said a lot of people in the student affairs line of work change their minds on career paths due to their experiences.

"No one starts college and says, 'When I grow up I'm going to be a hall director' or 'When I grow up I'm going to be a Fraternity and Sorority director,'" Cory said. "Sometimes it's our life experiences that help guide our career and not necessarily our educational background."

After graduate school, Cory said she decided to look for jobs practically anywhere in the United States that worked with fraternities and sororities professionally. WSU offered her the coordinator of Greek Life for Fraternities and Sororities position, which gave her an opportunity to build and change the program's processes.

In 2000, Cory took her current position as the director of the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life. With her husband John, the associate director of the CUB, they made a plan to stay in Pullman and raise their family here.

"We have that life outside of working at WSU that is really a wonderful life," Cory said. "I am totally sold on raising my kids in a college town and living in a college town is fabulous."

Cory has three children: her oldest is a sophomore in high school, her middle child is in seventh grade and her youngest is in third grade. When she is not working, she is busy registering her kids for school and spending time just being a mom.

Cory said she believes Pullman is a good environment for kids due to the experiences and events they get to see because of the university, like the events that come to Beasley Coliseum.



"Being immersed in an education-oriented environment is an advantage," Cory said. "My kids have friends from all over the world due to faculty and people coming to work at WSU because a college town is more of a melting pot."

A recent major accomplishment for Cory is her PhD. While working full-time, raising her children, and taking classes every semester, she completed her doctorate in Higher Education Administration.

"I'm really proud of finishing my PhD," Cory said. "My dissertation is on how fraternity and sorority membership influences leadership identity development among college students, and I found that they felt like the support encouraged them to be a leader."

Among her accomplishments as a mom and a director at WSU, Cory was nominated twice, once in 2001 and again in 2010, for the Outstanding Fraternity and Sorority Life Professional in the Western Region award by her Greek students. She said she is honored by the awards and is really proud of the above-average mindset the Greek Community is working to adopt.

"It's hard to measure what we do in this job, to know if what I'm doing is making a difference," Cory said. "It's that life-on-life experience that you're not quite sure what was accomplished, but it means something to that person."

Working with college students can be rough for many, but Cory said she absolutely loves her job. She said it is a privilege to collaborate with those who have youthful enthusiasm and with the high-caliber professionals at WSU.

"There is a high burnout rate in fraternity and sorority work because there is a lot to it," Cory said. "I enjoy working with college students when they're really engaging in this process of not only just the classroom learning, but also the out of class leadership and life learning."

In the future, Cory said she aspires to create a more connected Greek Community and teach the members how to live closer to their values of leadership, scholarship and character development. She said she also hopes her career will continue to expand on WSU's campus.

"It's really serendipitous how I got here," Cory said. "I don't have any plans to leave, but maybe with a PhD there will be some more opportunities for me at WSU."

Sigma Pi building new WSU chapter

Sigma Pi fraternity is close to building a house on Greek Row after negotiations.

By Christine Rushton

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The Sigma Pi fraternity took significant strides toward building their chapter this summer when they moved to 700 NE California St., their first house on Greek row.

Sigma Pi started a WSU colony in 2007 and became the newest chartered chapter on April 3, 2010. They initially had three members and now up to 58.

Robert Kincaid, the Sigma Pi housing manager, said they originally were contacted about the house in the spring of 2010. They talked with their alumni, but they didn't have enough time to make the deal and had to wait another year.

"I did all of the negotiations and helped establish with the housing corporation so that we had the power to move on it," Kincaid said. "We were contacted again mid-spring in 2011 and were able to act."

Kyle Heimbigner, the Sigma Pi marketing and public relations director, said the fraternity is still building and is new on campus. He said they want to make it a lasting tradition.



"Ever since we started, it was a goal of ours to get a house on Greek row," Heimbigner said. "We wanted a house large enough to hold at least the majority of our members."

Sigma Pi President Kyle Klemencic, said they spent more than \$8,000 this summer on repairs for the house because the past residents left it in complete disarray. He said when they arrived there was only one toilet working, mildew in all of the sinks, trash as high as the fence line in the back and mattress and couches laying outside.

"I can say that this summer was a time for us to grow even stronger as a brotherhood because we had all these projects to work on that most Greeks never have to deal with," Klemencic said. "We filled up two giant industrial dumpsters in the first three days with the trash debris left from the past residents."

Klemencic said they repainted the dark green and purple walls, spackled over 220 fist holes in the walls, covered more than 300 holes other body dents in the wall, fixed the plumbing and replaced all of the ripped out electrical wires in the rooms. He said they had a licensed inspector come in to check the place, and next week the fire chief will do a walk through to look at the new fire alarm system and make sure the building is up to code.

"We had no contractors, no construction workers, and this was all work we did ourselves, with the exception of the plumbing, windows and electrical," Klemencic said. "We're very proud of our members and how they've taken on this responsibility because a lot of 18 to 20-year-old guys would not even think of taking on a project like this."

The house now has a graveled barbeque and smoke pit in the back, tan and black colored rooms, a new living room set, beds, a recreation room and guest accommodations. Klemencic said a few volunteer members that stayed over the summer did the work.

"We built a brotherhood, but now we have these relationships because we built something together that's physical," Klemencic said. "Now there isn't just a piece of paper that says we're a club, we now have a clubhouse."

Kyle Spane, the Interfraternity Council president, said gaining an official chapter facility should help build the Sigma Pi fraternity. He said the central location should help continue to develop and strengthen their chapter.

"The Sigma Pi chapter here at Washington State University has demonstrated an amazing amount of growth and resilience," Spane said. "It is never easy for a fraternity to charter for the first time on a campus, and for Sigma Pi to now be moving into an official chapter house is reflective of all the hard work they have done."

Klemencic said now that they have a house, they need to become more involved in their philanthropy, more involved in their community service projects and their grades need to be more than just passing. He said they are in the running to be one of the top 25 chapters in their national fraternity this year.

"Having a house and an area for guys to live together doesn't make you a fraternity," Klemencic said. "The one thing that we are afraid of is plateauing and becoming a stagnant fraternity, so the main thing is just to keep on pressing forward like our founding fathers [of the fraternity] taught us."

The pledge class this year should be great because the chapter now have a house on campus, Klemencic said. They have a diverse group in the house ranging from Philipinos and Catholics to body builders, 4.0 GPA students and military members, he said.

"Since we're so young it has been a 'do you work with us and do we work with you' kind of atmosphere," Klemencic said. "In the end, I think it has been a blessing for us because we have more than just one thought pattern."

Kincaid said they have been fighting an uphill battle since 2007, but now it is good to be a part of Greek row. He said he joined Sigma Pi for the brotherhood and closeness.

"We probably have one of the stronger fraternities on campus because we've done so much in building the fraternity," Kincaid said. "As far as I could see I think it is going to just keep getting better and better."



Heimbigner said one of the big sellers of this fraternity for him was that it wasn't established. He said that it is a lot of fun to meet new guys and be involved with such a diverse group.

"We're really going to influence the future members of Sigma Pi here," Heimbigner said. "I don't think I'd be where I'm at today without my fraternity."

Sigma Pi is going in the right direction and are not ready to finish progressing, Klemencic said. This project has been like a family event and the labor shows the resilience of the brotherhood, he said.

"This has really turned into a nice place for us to come back to everyday," Klemencic said. "It is like that theme song from the show Cheers, 'Where everybody knows your name'."

Greeks burst with new members

Formal recruitment for sororities increased by 26 percent. Fraternity recruitment is projected to triple.

By Christine Rushton

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Greek life is reaching record numbers of new members for Fall 2011 recruitment because of the large freshman class.

Alpha Chi Omega President Kristen Coan said this year was a lot harder on the incoming freshmen and sororities because they had to host more recruitment week activities and space was limited. She said there are pros such as the community expanding, but then cons include the technical problems that arise like not having enough chairs at events.

"I'm a little bit worried about freshman falling through cracks because they aren't getting enough attention," Coan said. "However, we're always really excited about new members because they are the future of our sorority."

According to Panhellenic Council records, the number of women at the start of the sorority's formal recruitment this summer was 848, up 26 percent from last year. They signed 655 women at the end of recruitment, which is a 31 percent increase.

The number of men in fraternity recruitment is projected to triple this fall with about 430 men joining, said Kyle Erdman, Interfraternity Council director of Recruitment. He said they signed more than 260 men during summer recruitment this year, and they expect another 170 to sign during fall recruitment, which started Monday.

"I think [the recruitment increase] is really positive, and it allows the fraternities to focus on who they really are," Erdman said. "We have these men that are joining for positive reasons, and more people are going to benefit the community with increased community service."

Vice president of membership recruitment Emily Rietmann said there is a common misconception that increased membership means increased rejection. She said a woman has free will to drop out of recruitment whenever she likes, but there is room for anyone who signs up, so long as they meet certain standards.

"Chapters have high grade cutoffs, most above a 3.0 GPA from high school," Rietmann said. "This year, we had quite a few women under a 3.0 go through, so we couldn't guarantee them."

Rietmann said the most important part of dealing with larger pledge classes is membership education. She said they need to emphasize values and involvement when it comes to overcoming any disciplinary problems that may arise.

"I don't see them as potential problems, but challenges," Rietmann said. "I'm really proud of the sorority community right now, and I think the increased members will do nothing but good for us."



For sororities, the larger house membership could represent an interesting cultural change for the community, Rietmann said. The sororities value the residence hall experience for their freshmen and feel keeping more freshmen women in the dorms is a great option to supplement the increase, she said.

"A lot of people are concerned that it could lead to a major culture shift," Rietmann said. "It could turn out that older members get the privilege of living in longer and bring more experienced leadership to the chapter."

Erdman said they don't have a cap for fraternities, but unlike sororities not everyone is guaranteed. He said the higher recruitment numbers mean an increase of people being patient with the decisions made by fraternities.

Erdman said he is proud of how the men have worked extremely hard to recruit members who want to benefit and improve themselves. He said it took the 25 chapters coming together to realize the potential of this recruitment year.

"If a fraternity and a student don't meet a mutual agreement, the fraternity is going to lead them in the right direction and tell them how to improve," Erdman said. "The Greek community is not necessarily for everyone, but chapters will want to help with growth."

Fraternities rewarded by IFC

The WSU IFC launches new rewards program to recognize fraternities.

By Christine Rushton

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The WSU Interfraternity Council (IFC) implemented their Recognition of WSU Fraternal Excellence program, highlighting chapters' individual achievements, this semester to promote healthy growth in the fraternal community.

IFC president Kyle Spane presented the program to chapter presidents last semester. According to the press release, at the August 31 fraternity and sorority president's meeting, six chapters were the first to be honored based on criteria in philanthropy, community service, educational programming and overall operations.

"The objective behind this vision is that by encouraging the good things that are happening within our community, organizations will always be striving to reach the next level of achievement," Spane said. "By going above and beyond the status quo or minimum requirement of all Greek organizations, chapters can achieve statuses of recognition that will set them apart from other chapters."

The statuses are based on four tier-like levels of achievement, Spane said. Bronze is the lowest, then silver, then gold and finally crimson. Only the chapters most active in meeting the higher standard are awarded the crimson, he said.

"The requirements are very high to be awarded [the crimson] honor; however, it is definitely not unattainable," Spane said. "In fact, I am almost certain that within a year we will have several fraternities fighting for this honor."

According to the press release, the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity received gold, Beta Theta Pi and FarmHouse received silver and Delta Tau Delta, Delta Upsilon and Phi Kappa Theta received bronze.

FarmHouse president Jared Beck said although the program does not mean a lot of change from the work his fraternity already does for nationals, it will be beneficial for showing off fraternities during the recruitment process. He said the program holds the Greek community to set standards.

"[The IFC] had to bump the standard down a bit because they didn't allow us time to prepare, but now we can set goals," Beck said. "The competition keeps us alive, and the fraternities will only get better because of this progress."



Beck said for his fraternity, this award really displays all of the work they have done in the last year. He said he attributes the fraternities recognition to his executive team and how the fraternity members live up to their sworn oath to sacrifice time, pleasures and comfort to be a better fraternity.

"To be a contender next year, we will definitely keep up the same process and turn paperwork in at the right time," Beck said. "We will also work to motivate the rest of the house go to programming events and community events."

Beta Theta Pi fraternity president Kellen LaVigne said the new program was unfamiliar to his fraternity's members at first, but they are now excited about the recognition. He said his fraternity is working on their philanthropy to become a more competitive contender next year.

"I think the program pushes everybody to really work for some things that are not deemed as important as they should be," LaVigne said. "Hopefully, there can be more chapters that can be hirer in the awards."

Spane said his vision is to see the program re-shape the way fraternity men look at their community. WSU's Greek community is far ahead of many other campuses across the nation, and they are working to excel to an unrivaled level of excellence.

"By recognizing our chapters that go above and beyond the status quo, we will be able to take our community to the next level and encourage continual growth to strive to be ever better," Spane said. "By embracing this type of program, it will enable our chapters to focus on the values they cherish, develop and promote those values."