



Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi

Annual Report to the Membership

Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Alumni Board President's Annual Report 2020

It's an honor to report to you as president of the alumni board of directors. The 2019–2020 academic year was a very challenging year, highlighted with the closing of the fraternity in March due to the global pandemic. I am happy to report that the alumni board and undergraduate e-board have been working closely together to prepare for the reactivation of the fraternity for Cornell's fall semester. A summary of our efforts is listed below.

Mu Chapter we will be closely following Cornell University's best practices, which can be found on the Cornell website at covid.cornell.edu/reactivation/principles. Among other things, Cornell asks that students quarantine for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19 before returning to campus. In addition, Cornell encourages parents to drop off their students and immediately leave Ithaca. All students will be tested upon arrival. Students who live in one of the 34 states impacted by the New York State travel ban will be required to return to campus on August 17. Mu Chapter will be requiring students coming from these states to quarantine.

Classes will begin on September 2. Undergraduate brothers will arrive on campus over a two-week period in mid-August. The members of the undergraduate executive board and the resident advisor, Luke Williams, will precede the other brothers on campus to ready the house for opening. Please remember that no visitors will be allowed in the fraternity house. We are developing a comprehensive plan for the entire house reactivation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Hand sanitizer will be available at every entry point, disinfectant-wipe dispensers will be available in all common areas, and masks and gloves will be available throughout the house.
- **Kitchen and Dining:** We will implement tiered dining times, and will provide as many meals outside as possible. The pantry and kitchen will be off-limits to brothers. The serving station will act as a barrier between the dining room and the kitchen during meal service. The back door into the kitchen will be *for deliveries and staff only*. There will be one single point of contact for serving, done by Greek House Chefs. Masked and gloved brothers will restock wrapped flatware for each meal. The Greek House Chef staff will always wear appropriate PPE.
- **Bathrooms:** Toilet lids, dividers between the sinks, and appropriate signage will be installed. Disinfectant will be available for the toilets after each use.
- **Brotherhood Functions:** Socially-distanced house meetings will be held via Zoom for brothers living outside the house. Cornell will soon be providing a framework and aids for digital recruitment for fall rush.
- **Cleaning:** We are working with our cleaning service to implement the cleaning and disinfecting procedures recommended by Cornell for fraternity houses. Those protocols have not yet been finalized and published. We are also considering regular cleaning and disinfecting of any of the brother's larger off-campus group housing (i.e., "annexes").
- **Behavior Compact:** The protocols we are developing will only be successful if the undergraduate brothers comply with them. To that end, we are constructing a "behavior compact" intended to ensure everyone's health and safety. It will list each brother's responsibilities regarding events, guests, dining, cleaning, symptom reporting, etc. The compact will clearly delineate the consequences for jeopardizing the health and safety of the brotherhood. Each brother must sign this compact in order to return to the house.

The house will close on November 21st for the semester, and a move-in plan for the spring will be determined at an appropriate date.

This past year saw nationwide outrage over racial injustice. Mu Chapter alumni board, lead by **Slater Goodman '18** and **Felix Tabray '14**, in partnership with **Connor Riser '15**, **Jonathan Cain '19**, and **Jake Howel '16**, drafted a

Annual Meeting Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi

September 24, 2020

7:00 p.m. Eastern Time

DIAL-IN INSTRUCTIONS:

US/Canada toll free:
877-858-5743

International toll:
+1-858-609-8959

Pass code:
242768

statement from Mu Chapter condemning this injustice. In addition, the alumni board established the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, led by Slater Goodman and Felix Tabray.

This year, we are launching a new tradition of supporting Mu Chapter with the establishment of an **annual giving day**, which will be September 9 in honor of brother Dolly Hailstork's birthday. This year would have been Dolly's 105th birthday. Please consider making your annual gift in Dolly's honor!

In other developments, I would like to recognize two of our long-term alumni board and executive committee members, **Dennis McNamara '83** and **Kurt Rasmussen '80**, both of whom will be stepping down from their leadership roles after many years of dedicated service to Mu Chapter. Please join me and extend your thanks for their tireless leadership.

This year will be unlike any other year for our undergraduate brothers and alumni leaders. Please ask yourself how you can pitch in during this difficult time. Can you help an undergraduate with an internship or job opportunity? Can you join an alumni committee? Can you make a donation to the alumni corporation or our educational foundation? The brothers of Sigma Pi are resilient and value their connection and relationship to our dedicated alumni base.

The annual meeting of the fraternity will be held on **Thursday, September 24, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. ET**. *All alumni are encouraged to participate*. A conference-call dial-in number will be emailed to all alumni and posted on the Sigma Pi website. We will be holding our annual election of directors as well. **All alumni are encouraged to participate by proxy, via email (alumnirecords@sigmapicornell.org), or by mail: Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Fraternity, Alumni Records Office, PO Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851.**

If you would like to speak with me or with other members of the alumni board, please contact me by phone at 212-737-7300 (office) or 917-364-5500 (cell) or by e-mail at jwait@jfwaitadv.com.

Fraternally,



Jarrett F. Wait '80

Educational Foundation: Joseph Zanetta '75, Foundation President

The Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation has continued to build momentum during the past year, and we are proud to share the following highlights:

- Provided seven grants to brothers who were directly affected by or took unpaid internships due to complications from COVID-19.
- Sponsored six attendees at **Andrew Ross Sorkin's** ('99) DealBook Conference in New York City.
- Helped facilitate three undergraduate brothers to intern at alumni's companies this past summer, in addition to funding two house intern positions focused on career services and diversity and inclusion for **Sackett Terry '21** and **Will Nuga '21**.
- Added **Peter Muth '74**, **Craig Dewey '06**, **Alex Eacker '15**, and **Nick Wint '15** to the foundation's board of directors, bringing the board to 14 members.
- Received donations from 50 alumni and friends of Sigma Pi, **totaling almost \$26,000**.

Treasurer's Report: John J. Haggerty '78

Greetings from an unusually quiet Ithaca. While summers here are normally less hectic than the academic year, this year, the campus has been a veritable ghost town. I need my dean's permission to enter my office. I have not seen a student "live" since mid-March. What a long, strange trip it's been.

Financially, the house is in good shape, considering the impact of the pandemic. After closing the house in March, we refunded approximately \$70,000 in rent to our members living in, consistent with the actions taken by Cornell University. While we had adequate cash on hand to fund those reimbursements, the simple fact is that our expenses have not been reduced by a commensurate amount. The two largest bills the house pays, taxes and insurance, are not reduced at all by COVID-19. Maintenance costs should be marginally lower due to the empty house, but that will be more than offset by the over \$30,000 we are spending to reroof the house (an expense that would be considerably higher were it not for the fact that our Facilities Committee chair, **Liviu Rusu '98**, is performing the work for substantially less than the commercial bids we received to the project). Thank you Liviu!

It is difficult to forecast for the upcoming fall 2020 semester. We have 31 brothers living in (an adequate but not ideal number, except that it helps permit social distancing), and rent has been billed consistent with Cornell's revised academic schedule. Between the late start (September 2) and the clearing of the campus before the Thanksgiving holiday, we are down approximately four weeks of rent per student. Cash flow is adequate to cover expenses, but a sudden decision to close the campus and send students home would create stress. We have been able to build a small cash reserve, but a significant loss of rent situation in 2020 would probably require borrowing.

I will discuss the financial situation of the Dining and Learning project in more detail for the annual meeting. The project remains incomplete (primarily issues with the fire exit door from the dining room), and we owe approximately \$250,000 subject to the negotiation of the final change order. We have \$80,000 remaining from alumni, student, and parent contributions to the project, leaving a potential shortfall of \$170,000. We negotiated a \$250,000 line of credit with Tompkins Trust for this purpose, and to date have used none of that credit facility. Again, we have the ability to cover our known expenses, and a small cushion for the unexpected, but another COVID shut-down and loss of rent will be challenging.

As treasurer, I have to ask you to dig deep and to consider an unrestricted cash contribution to the alumni corporation if you are at all in a position to do so. Many of you have given generously, some often, but there are more of you out there who could. Unrestricted donations to the house corporation will provide the flexibility we need to navigate the house through these challenging times.

I usually close by asking you to contact me if you plan to visit the campus, but I can't this time—COVID rules: no visitors inside the bubble. Trust that the university is doing everything possible to protect those of us in the bubble. I hope you are staying well where you are.

Brotherhood Committee: Matthew Pens '00

The 2019–2020 school year came to a close like none we have experienced before. As we look to the reopening this year, the brotherhood will most surely be tested. From meal service, masks, virtual classes, no guests, no sports, travel restrictions, and social distancing in and outside of the house, this upcoming year will feel like none other. This committee will do all that it can to support the undergraduates as they navigate all that has come about from the pandemic: the ever evolving science and university responses, challenges we have prepared for, and challenges that, despite all our efforts, might surprise us.

Our active members have stepped up and shown great leadership as they prepared for their return, and that is to be commended. The chapter facility will be near capacity, with 30 brothers plus our RA taking residence with only single- and double-occupancy rooms. It is our sincere hope that actives take all the myriad of precautions and guidelines seriously so that they can enjoy a healthy, active, and full year on campus. They will need to be creative both in their social programming (outdoor and distance activities) and with the all-important recruitment this fall and spring. You will notice below in the statistics that we have an alarming imbalance between upperclassman and sophomores that the brotherhood has an imperative to address. More is yet to come from the university on these fronts, but our committee stands ready to help.

July 2019				August 2020			
Recruitment	Bids Extended	Bids Accepted	# Initiated	Recruitment	Bids Extended	Bids Accepted	# Initiated
Fall '18	10	6	6	Fall '19	8	8	7
Spring '19	28	22	20	Spring '20	26	14	12
Total	38	28	26	Total	34	22	19
Spring 2019	Brothers			Spring 2020	Brothers		
New Members	26	<i>Total (Fall + Spring)</i>		New Members	19	<i>Total (Fall + Spring)</i>	
Graduated Sr.s	22			Graduated Sr.s	28		
Net +/-	4			Net +/-	(9)		
Fall 2019	Actives	Living in House	% Living in	Fall 2020	Actives	Living in House	% Living in
Class of 2020	28	0	0%	Class of 2021	22	0	0%
Class of 2021	24	18	75%	Class of 2022	29	23	79%
Class of 2022	15	14	93%	Class of 2023	7	7	100%
Total	67	32	48%	Total	58	30	52%
		+ 1 RA				+ 1 RA	
	Room Usage				Room Usage		
Singles	17			Singles	18	<i>Includes RA Room</i>	
Doubles	8			Doubles	7		
Triples	0			Triples	0		
Total	25			Total	25		

Career Development Committee: Jarett Wait '80

Career Development Committee has again had a very active year. We've held numerous activities involving undergraduate brothers, alumni, and even outside parties.

The following is a summary of the various activities from last year:

Developing a Game Plan: A presentation by **Jarett Wait '80** at the house in the Learning Commons to sophomores and juniors, focusing on developing a game plan for their career searches, as well as on a roadmap to opportunities on Wall Street for those interested in financial services.

Cornell Real Estate Conference: A group of six undergraduates interested in real estate attended the annual Cornell Real Estate Conference, held in New York City on Friday, October 18, with **Alan Riffkin '88**, managing director and head of real estate at Lazard, as host.

15th annual NYC career event/DealBook conference: **Andrew Ross Sorkin '99** continued to support Sigma Pi undergraduates by extending six invitations to worthy brothers to attend Andrew's signature DealBook Conference, held on Wednesday, November 6, at the Time Warner Center in New York City. This exclusive conference is targeted to CEOs and business leaders. This year's theme was "Playing for the Long Term." The conference included marquee speakers Bill Gates (Microsoft), Dara Khosroshahi (Uber), Reed Hastings (Netflix), Gini Rometty (IBM), Brian Chesky (Airbnb), and Dennis Muilenburg (Boeing), among others.

15th annual Sigma Pi career event: The annual Sigma Pi career event in New York City was a huge success. This year's event kicked off with a networking dinner at the Cornell Club of New York, with over 50 undergraduate brothers and alumni attending. At the dinner, undergraduate brothers were able to get exposure to the various industries and fields that they are interested in, mingling and networking with Mu Chapter alumni. This proved to be extremely valuable to the undergraduate brothers, especially those who are not sure about what they would like to pursue post-graduation. The undergrads were able to network with alumni in fields ranging from investment banking and consulting to law and software engineering. We had many generous alumni sponsored students' costs for their participation in the dinner.

Alumni Speaker Series Zoom video topic: **Jarett Wait '80** led a Zoom video chat with more than 30 undergraduate brothers. Jarett's presentation was titled, "What is Your Corona Quarantine Story for Prospective Employers?" The key takeaway from the discussion was, after life returns to some level of normalcy, every student interviewing for internships or full-time employment will be asked for their story on how they spent their time of social distancing/shelter in place during the coronavirus pandemic. How can you use this time to demonstrate leadership, initiative, creativity, empathy, etc.? Is there some relevant community engagement you could speak to? The undergraduate brothers have gained invaluable knowledge and insight through these interactions, and, whether with professional guidance, career advice, networking tips, fellowship, or even resume reviews, we seem to be improving every year.

If you aren't already doing so, please consider getting involved in one (or more!) of these programs. The undergraduate brothers have expressed great interest in increased interaction with alumni, and we've received overwhelming positive feedback about the programs. There is the potential to make it even better.

Alumni Relations Committee: Kurt Rasmussen '80

The Alumni Relations Committee facilitated alumni gatherings across the country, including the Procrasticup golf outing, the Pagalooza ski weekend, the Sigma Pi Eastern Regional Meeting (Boston area), the Cornell-Harvard hockey game (Boston area), a Yankees-Red Sox game at Fenway Park, and gatherings at other Cornell sporting events across the country. Events bringing alumni and current undergrads together included the annual NYC career event and the Sigma Pi summer undergraduate/alumni get-together (NYC).

"Name That Pi-Man," a weekly email containing photos of alumni from their undergrad days, continues into its 18th year. Each email also contains an alumni social calendar that lists upcoming alumni events. These social events are also posted on the chapter website. An article with photos of alumni gatherings is a part of every issue of *The Muse*, along with updates of prominent alumni in the news. The undergraduates also conducted the annual thankathon, calling to thank alumni without soliciting donations. In addition, use of the Dick Cahoon Tech Center and The Learning Commons for our mentoring program has provided a way for alumni to get involved and to give back by being speakers, mentors, etc. Please contact **Kurt Rasmussen '80** (rasmussen.kurt@comcast.net) if you would like more information on any of these events or would like to help the Alumni Relations Committee.

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted our usual activities at Reunion and Homecoming. Currently, if conditions permit, we hope to have celebrate a "double" Reunion in June 2021, with all of last year's classes (0s and 5s) joining next year's classes (1s and 6s)!

This coming year, the committee hopes to identify alumni in additional key regions of the country (e.g., Chicago, Texas, SF-bay) to 1) organize one event a year, bringing alumni together (invite undergraduates where possible), 2) update the alumni database in that city or region, 3) be our regional ambassador, and 4) act as the "go-to guy" to connect undergraduates with alumni in that city/region for jobs, internships, networking, etc. If you are interested in serving in this capacity for your city/region, please contact Kurt Rasmussen '80 at rasmussen.kurt@comcast.net.

Facilities Committee: Liviu Rusu '98

Much is happening at the Pi house these days. We are preparing for move-in during COVID-19, with scheduled arrivals, adequate air changes in between, and temperatures measured. Some brothers will quarantine in their rooms for 14 days, while others who have completed their quarantine will help by bringing the quarantined grab-and-go meals to their doors. Bathrooms have hanging partitions, constant ventilation, and strict distancing. Longtime board member, former facilities chair, and retired nuclear engineer **John Morrison '75** has been carefully following New York State's and Cornell's guidelines and guiding us as a board to ensuring that we not only comply but are following best practices. HEPA air filters in common spaces are a current subject of discussion. There will doubtless be more ways that we can identify, finance, and deliver to keep our brothers safe and to support them in their learning mission through this semester.

Short term: we're also trying to replace the roof and schedule around Hurricane Isaias and COVID-related supply-chain delays. Nothing we can't handle! "Passion precedes perfection"

Kitchen and Dining Committee: Steve Pirozzi '80

The emergence of COVID-19 has given rise to a complete review by the current and previous stewards, working with members of the Kitchen and Dining Committee, of all aspects of meal preparation and dining at Sigma Pi. We are singularly focused on maintaining the health and safety of all undergraduate brothers. To achieve this goal, we are working to implement all best practices as established by Cornell and the appropriate government agencies.

The brothers have completed their search for a corporate meal provider. Upon conclusion of the appropriate due diligence, with the help of some alumni, the brotherhood selected Greek House Chefs (GHC) to prepare and serve meals for the coming school year. GHC is working with **Christian Lippey '21**, the current steward, to enact all the best practices required to maintain the health and safety of the undergraduate brotherhood.

The contractor's work on the Dining and Learning project has not yet been certified as complete by the architect evaluating the contractor's work and by the alumni board representatives. The work that remains to be completed is the manufacture and installation of the new replacement dining-room exit door. Completion of this work has been delayed by the COVID-19 outbreak. We have requested and await an updated schedule for the completion of this work. Discussions with our attorney have confirmed that no further payments are due until the contractor's work is certified as complete by the architect and the alumni board. As of publication time, we have made all D&L project payments with the funds that have already been raised. We continue our efforts to raise the remaining funds necessary to fully pay for the D&L project.

We can report that all other areas and features of the D&L project are functioning as designed, and they will move into the next year in excellent condition. We continue talking to and working with the undergraduate brothers to find ways to improve the facilities so that we can maintain their safety while at the same time enhancing their experience.

Insurance Committee: David C. D'Orlando '79

Sigma Pi Mu Chapter insurance policies for property, liability, and excess liability coverage remain in force through Tompkins Insurance Agencies, Inc.

The fraternity house is insured for \$3,900,000, contents are insured for \$565,000, and loss of rents are insured at \$400,000 through Holmes Murphy / RSUI Indemnity Company. The annual premium is \$16,087.

General liability coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and excess liability coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence are provided through Landmark American Insurance Co. and RSUI Indemnity Company, respectively. The annual premium is \$5,029.

Workers compensation insurance is provided through the State Insurance Fund.

Directors and officers liability coverage of \$1,000,000 is provided under the Sigma Pi Fraternity International insurance program.

The Facilities Committee continues to make loss-control safety inspections of the fraternity house on a regular basis.

The alumni board is continuing to focus on loss control as it relates to compliance with recent Cornell University policy changes and COVID-19 protocols.

Legal Committee Report: Dennis P. McNamara '83

The Legal Committee of the board of directors of Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi is composed of **Dennis McNamara '83** (chair) and **Peter Muth '74**.

During the past year, the committee helped the Executive Committee and the board with periodic questions that arose relevant to the board's oversight of the alumni corporation and its dealings with the Educational Foundation, as well as with any new board policy initiatives. The committee engaged an outside law firm to provide training to the undergraduates on several topics, including sexual and other forms of harassment, as well as various conduct policies from Cornell. The committee continued to review various documents in connection with the Dining and Learning project and provided comments and advice to the Kitchen and Dining Committee. Since March 2020, the committee has been involved in advising the board on various topics related to COVID-19.

Finally, the committee continues to be involved in reviewing risk management practices at national fraternities and their applicability to Mu Chapter.

Nominating Committee Report: Dennis P. McNamara '83

The Nominating Committee of the board of directors of Mu Chapter of Sigma is composed of **Dennis McNamara '83** (chair) and **Matt Pens '00**.

The Nominating Committee is tasked with identifying and recommending candidates for the alumni board. The committee seeks potential interested directors through discussions with other board members, members of the alumni, and active members and will make recommendations to the board concerning plans for succession for both executive and non-executive directors. The board is currently composed of 14 members (including four officers), living in states ranging from Massachusetts to California. The board recently acted to increase the number of authorized board seats to 20 directors. Meetings are generally held telephonically on a monthly basis and more frequently if large projects, such as the D&L project, are ongoing. With the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, all directors have given generously of their time to help formulate plans for a safe return to campus.

Two primary goals of the committee during the last year were to continue to search for potential directors from as many different decades as possible to ensure different viewpoints and to ensure that a broad range of professional experience is represented on the board. The committee recently submitted the names of **Jon Fordin '80**, **Chris Selland '86**, **Yordi Goshu '18**, and **Will Murphy '18** to the board as nominees to stand for election at the annual meeting of the alumni corporation in September.

Anyone interested in recommending someone to the committee to be reviewed as a potential director should contact either Dennis McNamara (dennis.mcnamara@opco.com) or Matt Pens (Matt.Pens@pepsico.com).

Technology Committee: Michael Vernick '83

The focus of the Alumni Technology Committee is to continue working with the undergraduates to ensure a robust connectivity within the house. We are working on enhancing the external security cameras on the house.

In partnership with the Education Foundation, we are conducting a performance review of our two key providers, Elevate and Pennington, to ensure best practices and fee structures.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee: J. Slater Goodman '18

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a new working committee with two primary goals. The first is to work closely with the Educational Foundation's diversity and inclusion intern on undergraduate programming, volunteer opportunities, and issues of access and representation within the fraternity. The second is to engage alumni brothers on issues of diversity and inclusion and to provide a forum and platform for those alumni seeking to take a more active role on these issues.