

BROTHERHOOD

OUR SUBSTANCE OF CHOICE



*Celebrating 10 Years of
Alcohol-Free Housing*

*White Paper By
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PHI DELTA THETA
Go far.

Brotherhood: Our Substance of Choice

Celebrating 10 Years of Alcohol-Free Housing

By Dr. Edward G. Whipple

The following white paper is a follow-up to “Alcohol-Free Housing – Does it Make a Difference?” which was written and published by Dr. Edward G. Whipple in 2005.

Introduction

USA Today highlighted a story on October 22, 1997, with the headline “Can dry (alcohol-free housed) fraternities survive on campus?” Ten years later, Phi Delta Theta can respond with a resounding YES proving that fraternities can not only survive but thrive.

Since colleges and universities were established in the United States, underage drinking, alcohol abuse, and disruptive behaviors have been issues for institutions of higher education (Wechsler & Wuethrich, 2002). Significant research conducted in the last 20 years regarding alcohol consumption among college students revealed that over 80% of students drink alcohol, and two-thirds of students reported engaging in “heavy episodic drinking,” better known as “binge drinking” (Mitchell, Toorney, & Erickson, 2005; O’Malley & Johnston, 2002; Philpot, 1997; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002a; Wechsler, Lee, Nelson, & Kuo, 2002b; Wechsler, Seibring, Liu, & Ahl, 2004). Even more concerning is that the percentage of college-aged students who reported driving while under the influence of alcohol increased from 26.5% to 28.9% between 1998 and 2005 (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009).

Fraternities and sororities have been identified as key groups fostering a culture of drinking (NIAAA, 2010). According to four Harvard School of Public Health college alcohol studies (CAS), 86% of students involved in fraternities and sororities reported consuming alcohol and a vast majority (i.e., approximately 83%) disclosed that they considered drinking to be a central part of social life within fraternities and sororities. The CAS studies also found that students residing in fraternity and sorority houses engaged in higher rates of heavy drinking

(Wechsler et al., 2002b). Inherently, these results are alarming to college administrators and to governance bodies of (inter)national fraternities and sororities. These trends prompted Phi Delta Theta Fraternity to reassess its risk management policy, which resulting in alcohol-free housing (AFH) policy for all chapters.

The purpose of this white paper is to underscore the Fraternity's rationale for a compulsory implementation of alcohol-free housing for all Phi Delta Theta chapters. The paper will also review key results and related issues that have emerged since the implementation of an alcohol-free housing policy.

Definition of the Alcohol-Free Housing Policy

“All chapter facilities and properties in Phi Delta Theta Fraternity shall be alcohol-free at all times, and under all circumstances. The implementation of these procedures is a continuation of the ongoing educational efforts of the General Fraternity” (Phi Delta Theta Fraternity Risk Management Policies, 2010). It is understood in Phi Delta Theta Fraternity that this policy means that chapter properties are to remain free from alcohol by anybody, at any time, under any circumstance. Chapter property could be owned by a local house corporation, college or university, or other entity. If the property is considered Phi Delta Theta “space”, the property is to be alcohol-free, and such “space” includes not only a structural facility, but outdoor areas (i.e., front and back yards, parking lots, and sidewalks). It is the obligation of the chapter to enforce this policy and to hold those accountable that may violate it through local bylaws and *The Code* of Phi Delta Theta. “Alcohol-Free Housing” does not imply “prohibition” as it relates to alcohol use. The Fraternity does expect, however, that all chapters comply with college or university regulations, as well as local, state, and federal laws.

Implementation Strategies

The Fraternity announced its revised risk management policy regarding alcohol-free housing in March 1997, and at that time, fewer than 12 chapters' facilities were alcohol-free. The announcement to students, parents, alumni, university officials, and the media stated:By

the year 2000, every chapter of Phi Delta Theta will have alcohol-free facilities, or it will not continue to exist as a charter group. We are serious about this initiative; between now and the year 2000, each chapter will be expected to take specific steps to reach this goal.” (White & Deloian, 1997).

Through a series of financial incentives, several chapters voluntarily implemented alcohol-free housing prior to the July 1, 2000 deadline. Others followed, and by June 2000 all but 30 chapters with facilities had adopted the alcohol-free housing policy. The Fraternity developed a resource guide containing information on recruitment, social alternatives, enforcement procedures, education, and support materials to help educate alumni and students about implementation of this policy. In addition, the Fraternity made available additional information at its summer leadership colleges and regional alumni summits concerning techniques to successfully implement the alcohol-free housing policy. On July 1, 2000, all chapter facilities were alcohol-free in Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity.

Reasons for Alcohol-Free Housing

The Fraternity articulated seven key reasons for the implementation of alcohol-free housing facilities: 1) to return the focus to the founding principles; 2) to combat an alcohol-dominated culture; 3) to improve members’ academic performance; 4) to stop the deterioration of chapter facilities; 5) to slow the rising cost of liability insurance; 6) to meet the needs of today’s college students; and 7) to re-involve alumni members.

Results and Trends from Alcohol-Free Housing

Articulating these seven key reasons for implementing of alcohol-free housing facilities expectations meant that the Fraternity expected to see positive results associated with each reason.

Result #1 – A Return to the Cardinal Principles

“I vividly remember the days when the GHQ staff would come to work each Monday morning worried about what incidents may have occurred over the weekend. We were in a

reactionary state-of-mind and the majority of the week was spent putting out fires and cleaning up messes. Today, our staff is able to be highly proactive rather than reactive, resulting in a constantly improving and forward-thinking Phi Delta Theta. I attribute this to the culture changes that have resulted from alcohol-free housing.”

- Robert A. Biggs, Executive Vice President, Phi Delta Theta Fraternity

A renewed focus on the Fraternity’s Cardinal Principles (i.e., Friendship, Sound Learning and Rectitude) has been the driving force behind an alcohol-free housing policy. As Phi Delta Theta chapters and members drifted from the Fraternity’s true purpose and the Founders’ vision, a re-alignment of the organization’s values and actions was needed. Such re-alignment has occurred with the help of alcohol-free housing.

Friendship.

“Phi Delta Theta is a values-based organization built on a set of identified principles. The Fraternity is committed to providing an atmosphere that facilitates the development of leadership, values, true brotherhood, and friendship. Removing alcohol from the chapter house greatly deters those with an alcohol-centered view of fraternity life from joining Phi Delta Theta. This has resulted in a higher caliber of member, increased focus on the values and principles of the Fraternity, significantly improved academic achievement and improved chapter life. Pair this with the fact that our chapters can’t rely on alcohol to recruit and Phi Delta Theta is allowing our students to learn how to build stronger relationships with their peers, a skill that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.”

- M. Scott Mietchen, President of the General Council, 2010-2012

Sound learning.

Today, Phi Delta Theta members are succeeding in and out of the classroom. Nearly 25% of Phi Delta Theta’s chapters were recognized during the past year for achieving the top GPA on their respective campuses. A rising Fraternity GPA (i.e., from 2.73 to 2.93) has been fueled by implementing a chapter minimum GPA standard (i.e., 2.50). Phi Delta Theta expects

both the GPA standard and members' performance to continue to increase. Outside of the classroom, our members remain leaders on campus.

Phi Delta Theta remains committed to leadership development conferences and emerging online technologies which allow the Fraternity's educational message to reach the masses. Over 7,200 individuals have attended on-site programs (e.g., Emerging Leadership Institute, Presidents Leadership Conference, Recruitment Boot Camp, and the Chapter Advisory Board Summit) throughout the past ten years. Ninety-two percent of Emerging Leaders Institute attendees have become officers within the organization. An ever-growing list of student leadership successes can be found on the Fraternity's website.

"Over the past ten years, I've been on the faculty at every Emerging Leaders Institute and nine Presidents Leadership Conferences. Each year I am reminded of the AFH policy's benefits when I interact with the students that attend these programs. The quality of the students we are attracting continues to improve each year."

- Anthony H. Ambrose, President of the General Council, 1994-1996

Rectitude.

While definitions vary, most would agree that rectitude can be explained as "doing the right thing." Of Phi Delta Theta's three cardinal principles, rectitude is the foundation for alcohol-free housing.

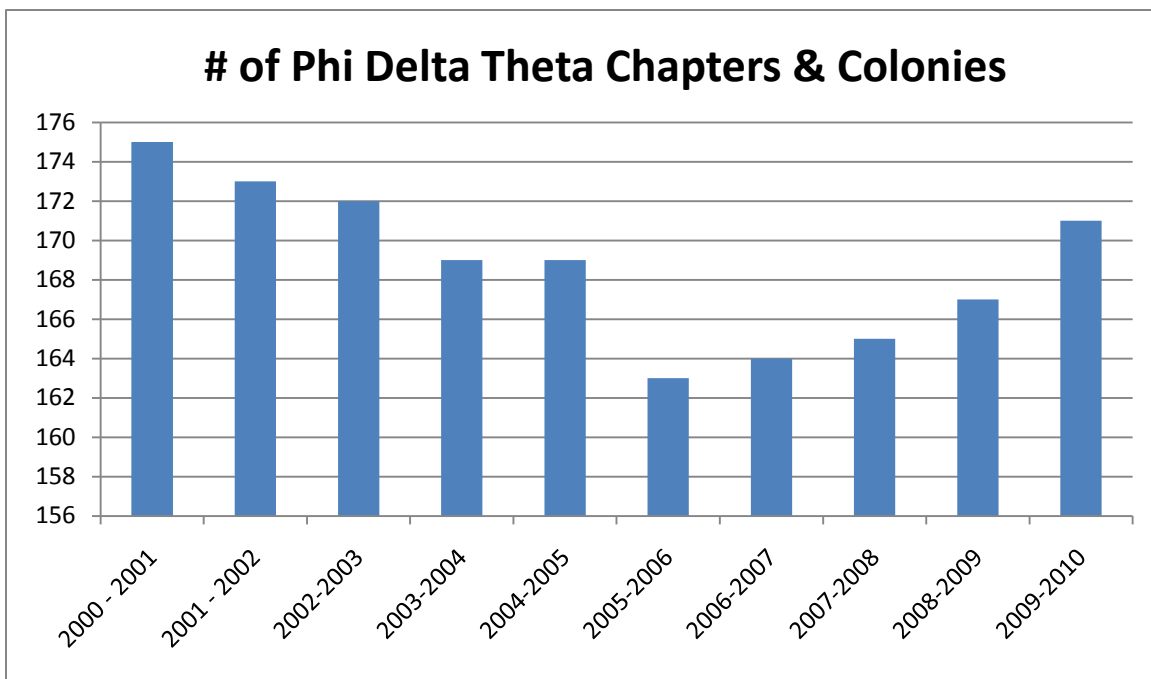
"Simply put, Phi Delta Theta believed that alcohol-free housing was the right thing to do for the well-being of our membership and sustainability of our organization."

- Dr. Robert Deloian, President of the General Council, 1996-1998

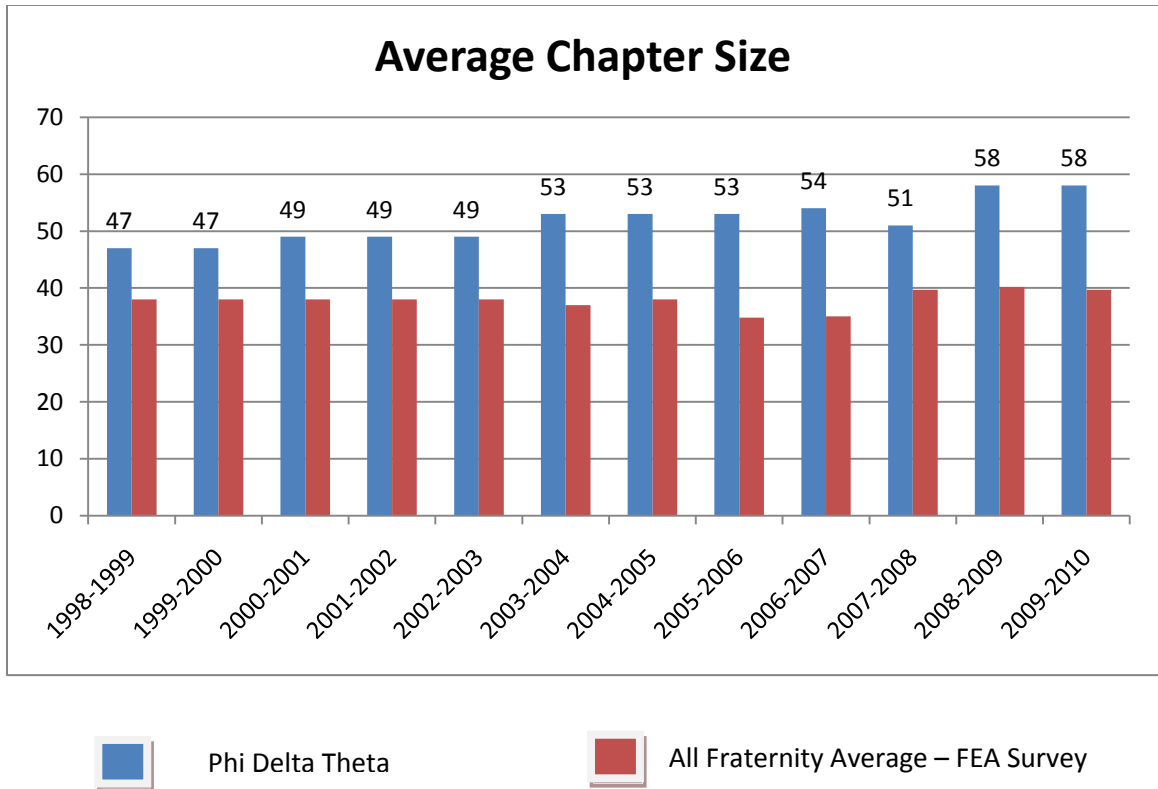
Result #2 – A Growing Membership

When alcohol-free housing was announced, many were concerned that Phi Delta Theta would attract fewer members resulting in a declining membership; however, the data does not support this concern. Ten years later, the Fraternity has a comparable number of chapters and colonies with an average of ten or more members when compared to other national

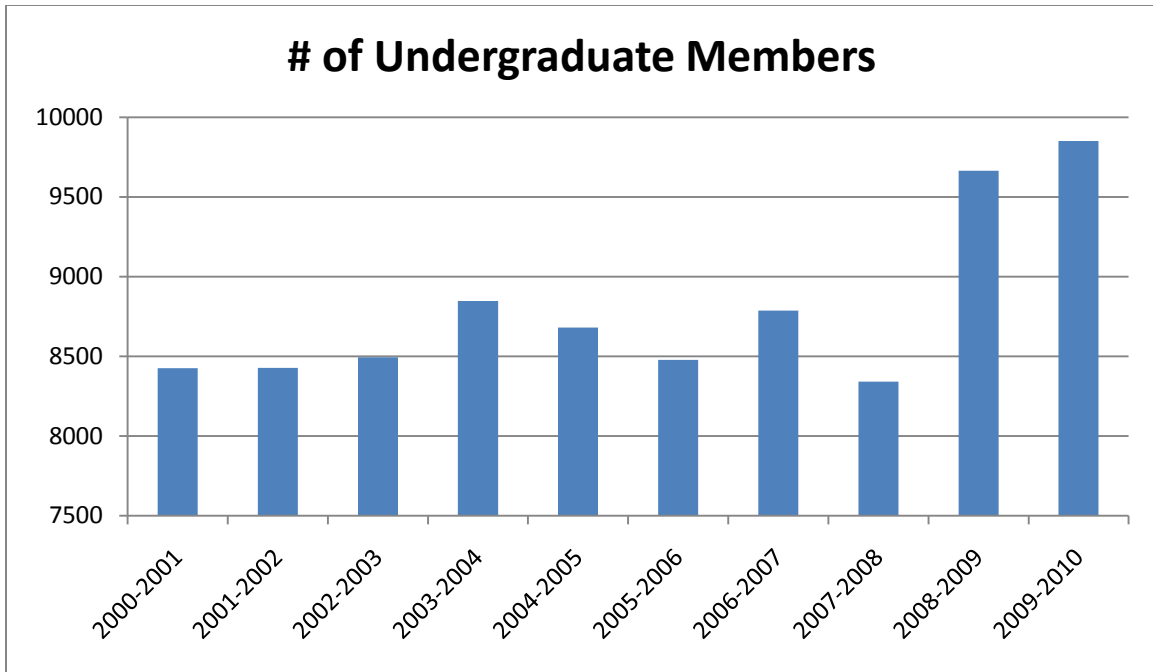
organizations. Phi Delta Theta is indeed growing and spreading the Fraternity's three Cardinal Principles to a greater number of students.



Since 2000, 49 Phi Delta Theta chapters have been suspended and 48 chapters have been installed. Of the 49 suspended chapters, alcohol-free housing issues played a major factor in 15 and a minor role in seven of the suspensions. Other reasons for suspension included drugs, hazing, sexual assault, failing chapter operations (e.g., size and finances), and voluntary separation. From 1999 to 2009, Phi Delta Theta suspended an average of four chapters per year. During this same time period, nine peer (inter)national fraternities also averaged four suspended chapters per year. Phi Delta Theta has returned to 19 of the 49 campuses where chapters had left and will return to nine of the remaining campuses within the next three years. Phi Delta Theta remains committed to reinstalling other suspended chapters if the host campus's environment is conducive to Greek life and alumni support is strong.

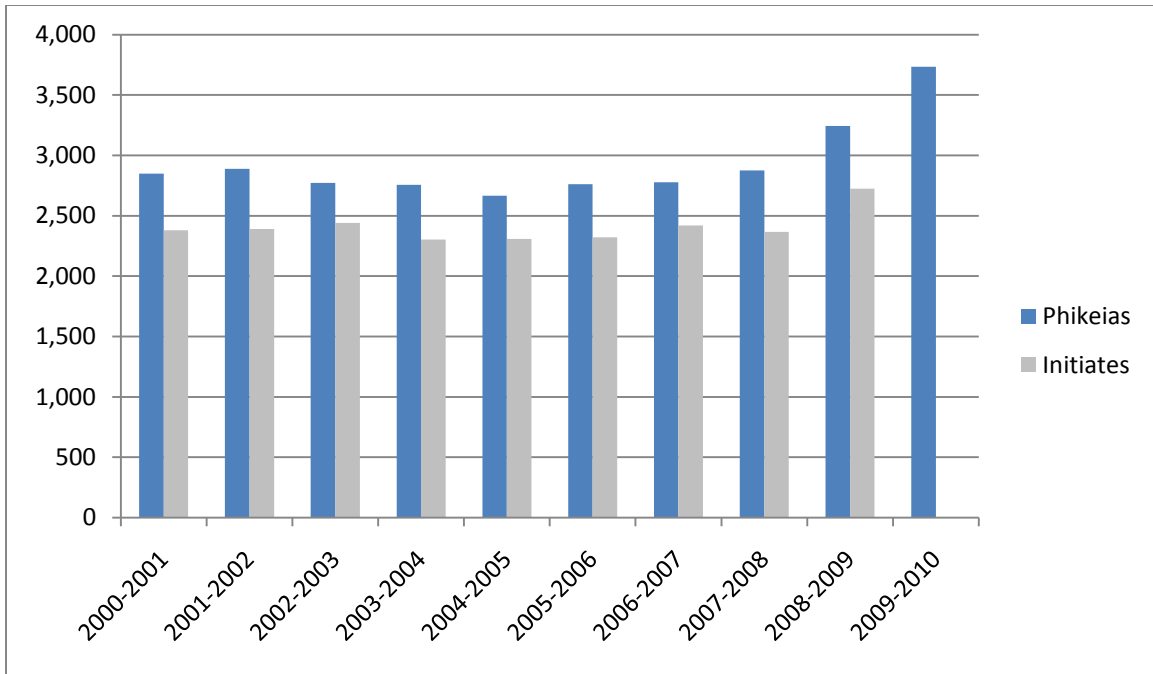


In 1990, the average size of Phi Delta Theta chapters was 18% larger than other (inter)national fraternities; in 2004 it was 30% larger; in 2006 it was 39% larger; and in 2007 it was 54% larger. In 2009, Phi Delta Theta ranked third in average chapter size with 58 members behind Pi Kappa Alpha and Sigma Phi Epsilon which both had 63 members. Today, the Fraternity is 44% larger than the average chapter size.



“The alcohol-free housing policy makes Phi Delta Theta a much more marketable product to all audiences. Without alcohol in our chapter facilities, students, universities, parents, and alumni all see a venture that has a very low potential for risk and a high potential for leadership development.”

- Sean Wagner, Associate Executive Vice President



During the last ten years, the number of Phikeias recruited only decreased from 2002-2005, and the number of initiates only decreased from 2003-2004 and from 2007-2008. A growing Fraternity has many benefits but one is critical: a larger Fraternity equals more services and recourses for its membership which propel the organization forward.

Result #3 - Improved Academic Performance

Alcohol consumption and specifically misuse correlate with poor academic performance in a college environment. Alcohol can affect the ability of undergraduates to adhere to the mission of universities and to a principle of fraternal organizations, academic achievement. In 2000, the year alcohol-free housing was established, the average Phi Delta Theta chapter GPA was 2.73. Only eight Phi Delta Theta chapters were recognized for achieving the top GPA on their respective campuses. Today, the average GPA among Phi Delta Theta chapters is a 2.93 and 41 chapters were recognized for achieving the top GPA on their respective campuses this past year. Alcohol-free housing has provided Phi Delta Theta members a clean, safe, and quiet atmosphere to focus on their studies resulting in outstanding scholastic performance.

In 2009, the General Council of Phi Delta Theta implemented a minimum standard regarding academic performance for all chapters of the Fraternity to ensure that the upward trend in academic performance continued. To recognize and acknowledge academic achievement by brothers across North America, the Phi Delta Theta Foundation allocated over \$150,000 in undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships to 66 brothers in 2010. In total, the Foundation has granted over 2,000 scholarships and fellowships exceeding \$3.4 million.

Result #4 – Chapter Facilities

The deterioration of living facilities correlated to the misuse and abuse of alcohol and was a major concern for Phi Delta Theta prior to the implementation of alcohol-free housing. The Fraternity's facilities were steadily deteriorating, due largely to social events. Alumni were unwilling to donate funds to chapter facilities that were not maintained properly. In the last ten years, millions of dollars have been raised to invest in Phi Delta Theta's housing. Pennington and Company, Inc., Phi Delta Theta's fundraising partner, has partnered with eight local house corporations to raise \$10.5 million since 2000. Specifically, the Indiana Gamma at Butler University campaign led by Stan Cuppy, *Butler '78* raised \$1.8 million to restore "The Castle." One of the greatest assets that Cuppy and the men of Indiana Gamma had in their campaign was the condition of the house and the promise of how it would be maintained.

"The house will become a viable and sustainable asset for the next 100 years. It will be a great place for the alumni to feel welcome and have a great time anytime they want to come back and reminisce."

- Stan Cuppy, Indiana Gamma, '78

In addition to money raised through Pennington and Company, Inc., I believe that millions of other contributions have supported Phi Delta Theta chapter houses. Such giving is attributed to alumni investing in the future of a chapter and knowing that facilities will be safeguarded from destruction associated with behaviors resulting from alcohol abuse.

Funds supporting chapter houses and their transition to alcohol-free environments have also been a priority of the Walter B. Palmer Foundation. Since 2000, \$3.8 million has been loaned to make chapter improvements, making Phi Delta Theta's facilities more attractive to potential members, brothers, and alumni. Accordingly, the Fraternity's chapters are recruiting members into a facility which they can be proud of and showcase to parents.

Result #5 - Reduction of Liability Insurance Costs

One of the greatest benefits to the membership of Phi Delta Theta concerning alcohol-free housing has been reduced insurance costs. Such savings occur because facilities are considerably safer than they were in prior years. Before the implementation of alcohol-free housing, Phi Delta Theta incurred sharply increasing insurance premiums, along with all other fraternities, resulting from a long history of incidents caused by a high-risk living environment. Safer environments, afforded by alcohol-free housing, have resulted in the Fraternity's insurance claims decreasing dramatically. Prior to the implementation of alcohol-free housing, Phi Delta Theta averaged 12.3 claims per year due to alcohol issues; this number has decreased to 4.4 claims per year over the last ten years, which equates to a 64% drop. Looking at average dollars spent per year on insurance claims, Phi Delta has experienced a 94% decrease, averaging \$812,789 pre-alcohol-free housing and \$46,789 post-alcohol-free housing. Alcohol-free housing has made the difference.

While a safer environment within Phi Delta Theta's facilities allows members to focus on leading their chapters instead of wondering what might go wrong at the next social event, the greatest effect is on the cost of membership. Since implementation, Phi Delta Theta has seen a continual decrease in liability insurance costs for its members. According to a 2009 FEA Survey, the average insurance rate for fraternities is \$149, while Phi Delta Theta's current rate is \$88, the third lowest of all fraternities. This savings allows Phi Delta Theta to offer an affordable fraternity experience to more college men.

Result #6 - A Fraternity that Combats Binge Drinking and Meets the Needs of Today's Student

"Easily obtainable cheap alcohol, especially beer, fuels binge drinking for underage college students."

- Henry Wechsler, Ph.D., Director of College Alcohol Studies, Harvard School of Public Health.

Phi Delta Theta does not want the reputation of being an organization where college students can easily obtain alcohol. Within Phi Delta Theta, approximately 65% of current members (initiated and Phikeias) are under the age of 21. Accordingly, Phi Delta Theta could not justify an alcohol policy for its facilities when such a small number of members were of legal drinking age.

According to Neil Howe and William Strauss in *Millennial's Rising*, today's students exude the following characteristics: closeness with their parents, commitment to grades and performance, involvement with extracurricular activities, orientation to community service work, and technological competencies. They also prefer secure, regulated environments. "When it comes to alcohol, more incoming college freshmen are not drinking *any* alcohol, according to a Center for Disease Control survey. In fact, the number of freshmen who abstained from alcohol has jumped 22% in the past decade" (O'Shaughnessy, 2010).

Phi Delta Theta understood, as it understands today, the characteristics of college-age students and has proactively created an environment for them to thrive and succeed.

Result #7 – A Re-Engaged and Re-Energized Alumni Base

Since introducing alcohol-free housing, Phi Delta Theta has experienced an unprecedented increase in alumni support. Financial contributions have increased and alumni are donating more time to chapter support. Phi Delta Theta currently has 55% more advisers working with chapters than in 1997, prior to the implementation of alcohol-free housing. Such involvement has provided a wider base of support for chapter leadership and has demonstrated to undergraduate members that Phi Delta Theta truly is a "Fraternity for life."

While it is believed that local contributions also have increased, we can certify that during the same time period, Phi Delta Theta's Foundation has experienced its best years. The Fraternity's Foundation has seen alumni contribute at record levels since alcohol-free housing was introduced. In fact, since 1997, the Phi Delta Theta Foundation has had nine of its highest giving years in history.

Issues Phi Delta Theta Still Faces

Issue #1 – Approximately 20% of the Undergraduate Membership Changes Each Year

As Phi Delta Theta grows and new members are inducted into the Fraternity, educating students about the reasons for, and the benefits of, alcohol-free housing will continue to be a vital piece of the Fraternity's educational strategy. The policy is still unique within fraternities and sororities, and our newest members generally have questions regarding how it affects their chapters. These questions become difficult to answer if existing members are not well-versed in discussing the policy. Today, the membership is better at such conversations, but the Fraternity must continue to educate undergraduates and alumni about the overwhelming benefits.

Issue #2 - For the Most Part, We Still Stand Alone among Fraternities with an All Inclusive Alcohol-free Housing Policy

Phi Delta Theta is one of three fraternities with a comprehensive alcohol-free housing policy, the other two being Farmhouse and Phi Kappa Sigma. Other varieties of alcohol-free housing policies were implemented by fraternities, but many apply only to new chapters or include exemption policies. Phi Delta Theta remains committed to an all-inclusive policy believing that successful implementation can only be reached with a consistent standard for all members.

In 1997 and in subsequent conversations since, the General Council has recognized that exemptions to AFH would only lead to a counterproductive and complicated culture within Phi Delta Theta; a culture focused around the right to drink alcohol. The experience of other fraternities with AFH exemptions has borne this out.

While an exemption policy may seem like a harmless reward to good performance, its results become detrimental to the development of chapters. A constant cyclical trend emerges when a chapter is motivated to achieve strong overall performance for the privilege to consume alcohol in their facility. Many other fraternities with exemption policies have witnessed their “good” chapters deteriorate to the point where they no longer qualify for the exemption. The pursuit of this exemption often becomes the central focus for chapters, detracting from their core values and central focus as a fraternity.

Additionally, other fraternities have shared concern about the “law of unintentional consequences” whereby additional work is created for students, alumni, and staff to evaluate an exemption application noting the reporting of incomplete and inaccurate information. The time, effort and resources spent to apply for and monitor exemptions holds both chapters and the General Fraternity back from focusing on issues at hand and leadership development.

It is Phi Delta Theta’s hope that other fraternities join us in the alcohol-free housing movement and help alleviate the alcohol issues that fraternities still face.

Issue #3 - Unsupportive Campuses

For alcohol-free housing to work on a specific campus, Phi Delta Theta relies on the institution for support. Colleges and universities have a wide range of views and institutional policies regarding alcohol-free housing. The majority of campuses where Phi Delta Theta chapters exist is supportive of the Fraternity’s policy and see it as a benefit to the organization and to the campus. When campus-based professionals help support and communicate the Fraternity’s policy, Phi Delta Theta sees greater success. On the other hand, some campuses discredit the policy, do not see its merits, and do not support enforcement. In many of these cases, a demise of the Phi Delta Theta chapter has occurred, thus minimizing the opportunity for return. The Fraternity must continue to build relationships with college and university host campus administrators.

Issue #4 – Resisting Chapters and Alumni

It was inevitable that a percentage of the Fraternity’s chapters and general membership would not agree with the tough decision to implement alcohol-free housing, and Phi Delta Theta had to be comfortable with losing some support. Thirteen years later following the announcement and ten years following the policy’s initial implementation, the Fraternity still faces some undergraduate and alumni resistance.

Resistance from chapters generally stems from the environments around them. If the Phi Delta Theta chapter is the only fraternity on campus with alcohol-free housing, members may view the situation as a roadblock rather than a competitive advantage. If the campus is unsupportive of the policy, accountability diminishes and negative consequences may not be visible to the chapter. If influential and visible alumni from a chapter are unsupportive of the policy, two situations generally occur: 1) The chapter is influenced by the resistance and is poorly advised, or 2) the chapter stands up to the alumni resistance and risks what they believe to be alumni support. The second situation is much tougher for students to face and therefore less likely to happen.

The resistance issue has and will take time to solve. The solution, however, is clear – recruiting the “right people.” Phi Delta Theta must continue to teach undergraduates successful recruitment skills and practices - successfully recruiting members that understand the philosophy behind alcohol-free housing, value it, enjoy its benefits, and help the chapter move forward rather than backward is paramount. This practice holds true for alumni volunteers too because it impacts the quality of advising that undergraduates receive.

Where Phi Delta Theta Is Heading

The results of an alcohol-free housing policy have enabled Phi Delta Theta to proactively look to the future. The Fraternity is in the midst of developing a 10-year roadmap that will focus on strategic planning to answer the following questions:

Growth and Expansion

- How can Phi Delta Theta help its chapters reach healthy levels of membership?
- How can Phi Delta Theta become a member of, or return to, fraternity communities at well-respected college campuses that embrace our three Cardinal Principles?

Fundraising and Revenue

- How can Phi Delta Theta help cultivate major gifts that strengthen the financial foundation of the Fraternity?
- What alternative sources of revenue besides member dues and fund raising dollars can help Phi Delta Theta continue to grow and be a leader among all Greek-letter organizations?

Communication and Branding

- How can Phi Delta Theta best tell its story to others?
- How does Phi Delta Theta's communication strategy facilitate this message?

Educational Programming

- How can Phi Delta Theta best educate its members, both in-person and online?
- How can Phi Delta Theta's educational message reach more members?

Chapter Support

- How can Phi Delta Theta best support its undergraduate chapters?
- How does Phi Delta Theta's staff and volunteer structure facilitate this support?

Chapter Operations

- How can Phi Delta Theta's undergraduate and alumni officers become better trained?

- What technologies can Phi Delta Theta use to efficiently achieve its goals?
- How can Phi Delta Theta improve the quality of its housing stock?
- What risks remain pertinent to the organization, and how does Phi Delta Theta work against them?
- What standards will help Phi Delta Theta move forward?

Conclusion

Phi Delta Theta is proof that a fraternity with alcohol-free housing can not only survive on today's college campuses, but also thrive. The Fraternity has experienced positive results regarding the seven key reasons for implementing an alcohol-free housing policy and expects such results to improve annually. Phi Delta Theta still faces important issues associated with alcohol-free housing but believes that all of them can be resolved with time as well as committed student and alumni leaders. While Phi Delta Theta is planning for what is to come in its next ten years, members, young and old alike, should be proud of the progress that has been made to date.

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