

UPCOMING EVENTS

10th Annual Matt Heldman Memorial Golf Outing

Friday, August 7

Highland Park Country Club
Noon shotgun start
\$125 – includes golf, lunch and dinner

*This annual outing supports the Heldman Scholarship endowment and undergraduates living on campus. Register your foursome with **Lou Farinella '02** (lfarinella80@yahoo.com).*

Homecoming 2009

Saturday, October 10

Stop by ATO for a catered cocktail party and live entertainment.

Stay tuned to
www.atoillinois.com for full details on both events!

2009 FIGHTING ILLINI FOOTBALL

We'd love to see you if you are in town for any of the following six home games this coming fall:

September 12 – Illinois State, 6:00pm

October 3 – Penn State (Foundation Day), TBA

October 10 – Michigan State (Homecoming), TBA

October 31 – Michigan, 2:30pm

November 14 – Northwestern (Dad's Day), TBA

December 5 – Fresno State, 11:30am

VOLUNTEERING

If you are interested in helping out with House Corporation in any capacity, please contact

Jeff Piper '97 at

jpiper@illinoisalumni.org
or 773-910-4799.



Gamma Zeta News

Gamma Zeta Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity

University of Illinois

www.atoillinois.com

July 2009

ALUMNI REPORT

Gamma Zeta House Corp. Board of Trustees Report

Providing Capital Resources to Gamma Zeta for Years to Come

By **Jeffrey S. Piper '97**; House Corporation Board of Trustees Chairman

jpiper@illinoisalumni.org; C: 773-910-4799

Our newsletter's intent is to both inform our membership of new developments but also enable undergraduates and alumni to reflect on the progress we have made and acknowledge other members' outstanding accomplishments. Enclosed are some of the highlights.

of their intent to leave the House Corporation Board. Their input and valuable guidance will be missed; however, their immensely positive influence will continue to live on.

Alumni Notes

A Few Announcements

- Outgoing undergraduate President **Andrew Grosdidier** and incoming undergraduate President **Matt Dixon**, along with other House Committee members, were busy during the final days of May finalizing Gamma Zeta's 2009 Annual Report. Gamma Zeta, as it does every year, strives to obtain the National Fraternity's recognition in the form of winning the True Merit award. The National Fraternity will announce all national award recipients later this summer at its biannual awards banquet.
- In late August, the House Corporation will be awarding various scholarship grants to undergraduate applicants based on their academic, extracurricular and philanthropic achievements.
- **Steve Siders**, Purdue '61, and a close friend of our Gamma Zeta Chapter, has decided to retire from his President/CEO role at the Alpha Tau Omega Foundation, Inc. Join me in thanking and congratulating Steve for over 32 years of service to our beloved organization.
- Please join me in thanking **David Krug '95**, VP Special Projects/Infrastructure, and **Ryan Roth '95**, Treasurer, for their generous contributions to House Corporation. Both individuals, who have been actively involved as alumni for over 10 years each, have recently notified me

- **Upcoming Capital Campaign** – Given the sheer scale of projects already completed and/or underway at the Chapter House, any financial support you can provide in the short term is more than appreciated. We have acquired a large sum of debt to restore the house to its proper condition and we would appreciate everyone doing their part to preserve its significance for future generations. Furthermore, House Corporation is in the development stages of launching a multi-year, multi-million dollar campaign to establish an endowment that will provide capital resources for Gamma Zeta for years to come. Shortly, we will be kicking off this effort in earnest, targeting Homecoming this fall. If you are interested in joining the Campaign Committee, please contact me.

- **Dedicated Room Renovations** – Remember the good times in Room #11? Or perhaps Room #4? Would you like to memorialize your legacy forever? Since the alumni dedicated room renovations program began, we have successfully remade two rooms in the House. Good news is that there are more than 40 remaining that could use a facelift. In exchange for your generosity, we will gladly dedicate the room, as you so desire, by mounting a plaque in your honor. If you are interested in donating money that will be used to renovate specific bedrooms at the House, please contact me.

CHAPTER HOUSE IMPROVEMENTS

Gamma Zeta Undergoes Makeover to Remain Competitive with Alternative Housing Options on Campus

It is imperative that we remain competitive with alternative housing options on campus, and therefore we must strive to provide optimal living conditions for our members. Doing so requires us combating the inevitable aging and abuse of the Chapter House. As such, House Corporation has fully drawn on its \$300,000 financing line secured two summers ago to complete much needed aesthetic and safety enhancements over the past two summer breaks. Improvements have included the



installation of a fire suppression sprinkler system (as mandated by local and National Fraternity guidelines), the refurbishment of exterior French doors (living room wings and dining room), the refinishing of the living room walls and floors, installation of a new

staircase banister from the living room to living quarters, gut-rehab of the ladies bathroom and about \$27,000 worth of new furniture. Future improvements call for the conversion of the bike room to a new TV/recreation room, refurbishment of the dining room and the installation of a rooftop deck that overlooks the basketball court. These improvements are made possible by the generous giving of thousands of alumni – thank you!

In the Words of Our Alumni

How has ATO Influenced You?

"I'm sure no one ever had as much gratitude for any group as I have had for over 65 years for my Cham-Bana Taus, who saved my carcass from eradication from U of I in the fall of 1942. I got great food at the frat house, loved playing on our soccer team, loved the band and the ROTC (horse cavalry), but the University stuck me with 20 1/2 credit hours, advanced chem. and math. Freshmen had no advisors, so I could not talk to professors or have teaching assistance. I had a great visit at our chapter house six weeks ago, the first in 65 years. I was gone 3 years in the Army Air Forces during WW II; then I entered college at Univ. of Tulsa, where I was

stationed as an aviation student for 3 months before entering the Aviation Cadet program. After WW II was over, I enrolled in Engineering Physics and was very active in a local fraternity that ATO took over and was Pledge Master for 1 1/2 years, then WC and acting WM my last semester there. I loved it all."

- **H. Cameron Murchison '43**

We want to know how ATO has influenced you too! Read more testimonials and submit your own at www.atoillinois.org!

ON THE WEB

Are You Receiving Our Monthly e-Letter

If not, it's because we don't have your email address!

By providing us with or updating your email address, you are helping us to save money by building our email database for future electronic publications. Update your email address and other contact information at www.atoillinois.org today. Your email address will be used solely for Gamma Zeta chapter communications, and won't be traded or sold.

Did you know that we're missing email addresses for 68% of our alumni? Help us to update the email addresses of other brothers! Review our Lost Email List at www.atoillinois.org. If you are in touch with any of these brothers electronically, please follow the instructions on the page to update our database.

And please don't forget to frequently visit our web site, www.atoillinois.org. If you haven't yet registered on the site, you can find your Member ID for first time login above your name and address on this newsletter.



LeaderShape: ATO's CATALYST Program Allows Brothers to Explore Personal Integrity and Ability to Lead

Chapter Maintains 100% Capacity for Sixth Consecutive Semester

By Jeff Piper '97, House Corporation Board of Trustees Chairman

At the time of our last newsletter, the Chapter's new leadership had recently been elected. President **Andrew Grosdidier**, Treasurer **Kevin Ellsworth**, Vice President **Matt Dixon** and Head House Manager **Dan Soso**, assumed their officer positions at the start of the 2008 Fall Semester with an eye towards working diligently to advance the fundamental living conditions at the house and to improve the fraternal bonds and level of respect among undergraduate members. This group set out on achieving the following goals for the past academic year:

- i) achieve financial collections of 95% or better,
- ii) maintain a minimum of 75 live-in members,
- iii) achieve a top 10 academic ranking among fraternities, and
- iv) launch the University's only marquee campus-wide philanthropy event.

Despite falling short of these mandates while having to deal with a few "bad apples" along the way, this team exerted a tremendous amount of energy, time and integrity in executing their roles. This group has served the Fraternity well and we wish them the best.

The new leadership team is set to use the summer months to devise a strategy for the coming school year regarding effective transitioning of roles and responsibilities and goal setting.

For the sixth consecutive semester, the chapter house has reached capacity regarding the number of members living in-house. Maintaining this 100% capacity level will be essential to securing our financial flexibility in the coming years. On the other hand, the chapter house takes its fair share of abuse when operating at capacity. House Corporation has devoted many hours to restoring and renovating the chapter house so that it maintains its rich look and feel, but also ensuring that it meets the needs and enhances the fraternal living experience for each of our members.

Financially, the Chapter could be in

better condition. Collections this past year were not as strong as we'd typically like so House Corporation and the undergraduates are working to rectify those issues. House maintenance expenses continue to be higher than usual due primarily to increased house destruction activity from the few "bad apples" mentioned above.

Academically, the Chapter's performance has tumbled. Following the spring semester, the Chapter ranked #33 out of 48, with an overall Chapter GPA of 3.05. This mark was below the Interfraternity Council GPA of 3.12 and the All Fraternity GPA of 3.11. Improving the Chapter's overall house GPA is the undergraduate's top priority for the coming school year.

"Gamma Zeta hosted a new LeaderShape workshop, called the CATALYST Program, designed to deal with Chapter specific issues and concerns while also providing individuals a chance to explore their own personal integrity and capacity to lead. The day-long session, facilitated by Howe Wallace, National Alpha Tau Omega Board member, was well received."

The House Corporation and the new undergraduate leadership team are taking necessary steps to cull recent destructive behavior and to improve its members' attitudes and perspectives. Rather than hosting a normal retreat, House Corporation thought it might be more beneficial to bring in an independent moderator to help assess the situation. On March 15, 2009, Gamma Zeta hosted a new LeaderShape workshop, called the CATALYST Program, designed to deal with Chapter specific issues and concerns while also providing individuals a chance to explore their own personal integrity and capacity to lead. All freshman, sophomore,

and junior members were required to attend. The day-long session, facilitated by Howe Wallace, National Alpha Tau Omega Board member, was well received. House Corporation is optimistic that positive interferences like CATALYST and ongoing transparent communication regarding expectations and proper management will improve the Chapter's outlook.

The philanthropy committee continues to struggle with getting a marquee philanthropy event up and running – we are targeting spring semester 2010 to have something in the works. In the meantime, the undergraduate members continue to proactively contribute to the community by raising money and volunteering service hours via a number of causes. First off I would like to highlight the success of this year's Mother's Day Annual Charity Auction. Gamma Zeta raised \$8,500 to benefit three unique and deserving charitable organizations: Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Guatemala House and the Linda Mills Breast Cancer Foundation.

In other news, Gamma Zeta intends to carry on the tradition of its annual blood drive as well as encourage further community involvement via the Champaign-Urbana Park district as volunteer coaches, tutoring at Champaign middle schools and participating in other Greek philanthropy events. The completion of pledgship now also requires a minimum of ten hours of community service.

Gamma Zeta Announces new leadership team

Matthew Dixon takes over the presidency after having served as Chapter VP for two semesters. Others elected are Dan Morgan as Chapter Treasurer, Devin Fraley as Chapter VP, and Robbie Bak as Head House Manager. We thank these brothers and wish them the best of luck.

UNDERGRADUATE REPORT

Chapter Runs Successful Philanthropy Events and Focuses on Upcoming Rush

I'd first like to introduce myself; my name is **Matt Dixon**, I am from River Forest, IL, and am entering my junior year as a communications major – I am also the newly-elected **Worthy Master of Gamma Zeta**. I write to provide you with a recap of the past year as well as to give insight on plans for the upcoming year.

Over the past academic year, the chapter experienced successes throughout rush, philanthropic events, our social calendar, and various individual achievements. Our rush team, headed by sophomore Kyle Cushing, brought in 41 new initiates to the chapter this year – a number we hope to exceed or match with the next incoming class. The chapter also coordinated with the Red Cross to hold our annual Fall Blood-Drive – the turnout was so great that potential donors had to be turned away due to an overwhelmed staff. Our Mom's Weekend auction featured many sports ticket and entertainment packages and raised \$8,500 which was donated to the Children's Memorial Foundation of Chicago, The Linda Mills Breast Cancer Foundation and the orphanage Casa Guatemala.

As usual, our social calendar was not one to disappoint. Handled by sophomore Steven Kruzel, our calendar included exchanges with Delta Delta Delta, Kappa Alpha Theta, Delta Gamma, Gamma Phi Beta, Kappa Delta, and Alpha Chi Omega.

Furthermore, our calendar included impromptu date events, Semi-Formal, Pledge Dance, a spring house-party, and various bar crawls.

In addition to our Chapter's activities, there were also many individual or smaller group accomplish-ments and events throughout the year. Among our senior class, we had six members receive internships from Deloitte & Touche LLP. Also, the sophomore team of Kyle Cushing, Matt Gitelis, Mustafa Khan, and myself took 1st place in Deloitte Consutling's university-wide case competition. In the fall, a senior team took second place in intramural football, while junior Mike Graves, sophomore Chase Michels, and freshman Billy Vydra won a charity volleyball event. In the spring, the junior class won Delta Delta Delta's Greeks-at-Bat softball tournament for the second straight year, and sophomores Robbie Bosco, Rick Regalado, and Steven Kruzel took 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in Kappa Delta's 5k race. The house also saw nine members study abroad for the spring semester; primarily consisting of juniors. As for spring break, we also had a group of 39 senior and sophomores travel to Acapulco together.

Our new executive team has already started to plan and organize various events for this upcoming year. We're planning on kicking off our social calendar with

Outhouse the first week social events are allowed. We've also started to work on implementing a new philanthropy event, ATO Recess, which will have sorority teams competing in dodgeball, kickball, and flag football. We are starting our rush process this month with a boat trip on Lake Michigan as well as a rooftop party at Wrigley Field. With that, it would be greatly appreciated by our rush team if the information on any incoming students would be sent to **Kyle Cushing** at kyle.cushing@gmail.com. I hope that I eventually have the opportunity to meet or talk with many of you; please feel free to contact me at any point. Hope you all are enjoying your summer and that you can make it out for Heldman Golf Outing on August 7th.

Sincerely,

Matt Dixon

matthewjosephdixon@gmail.com

Are you one of the 68% of alumni not receiving our monthly e-letter? See page 2 for how to get on the list.



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Alpha Tau Omega
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In this issue...

- How to Dedicate a Room in Your Name
- Chapter Fills House to Capacity for 6th Straight Semester
- An Alum Visits Gamma Zeta for the First Time in 65 Years!

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