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Gamma Zeta News

Gamma Zeta Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity

University of Illinois

www.atoillinois.com

October 2016

RESIDENT DIRECTOR PROFILE

Murad Elyyan Hired as Chapter's New Resident Director

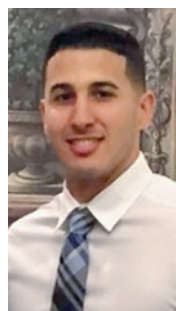
Board Hopes New Position Will Bridge the Gap between Older and Younger Brothers

Our chapter recently hired a new Resident Director to live inside the house and provide assistance to undergraduate brothers. Murad Elayyan has accepted the new position, and is excited about the opportunity.

He says he chose to undertake the role because it gave him a chance to be part of an organization like ATO. "This position means a great deal to me because it gives me the opportunity to grow as an individual and be part of an organization that has a long and rich history of success at the University of Illinois," he said.

Alumni Chairman Jack Klues said, "Like many other fraternities on campus and around the country, in-house membership today is primarily composed of students entering their sophomore or junior collegiate year. Most upperclassmen, who historically acted as the more experienced mentors and managers for our younger members, either now find themselves wishing to explore apartment life or going abroad for their last semester."

Jack says he hopes the new position will help fill the gap between older members and new freshmen.



Murad Elayyan

"We see our RD acting as an adult guide for our relatively young members as they are still acclimating themselves to the University, its resources, and scholastic demands. And of equal importance, he is available to assist GZ elected leaders 24/7 as they strive to live the principles behind our fraternal creed and build a positive reputation and culture across the entire

membership that we can all be proud of," Jack said.

In his position, Murad plans to continue to move the fraternity in the right direction. "There has been a tremendous amount of hard work and commitment put in by members of the Chapter in an effort to see the fraternity succeed," he said. Although he is not a member of the Gamma Zeta Chapter, Murad says that this opportunity interested him because he has been able to get to know the ATO brothers over the past few years. "I've built relationships with many brothers due to my experiences as their resident advisor at Bromley Hall," he added.

Check out the newly renovated RD suite on page 3.

HOMECOMING 2016

Exciting Events Planned for This Year's Homecoming!

Friday, October 28

5:00 - 7:00 PM - BOT
Meeting at Chapter House

Saturday, October 29

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM -
Brunch at the Chapter House,
featuring our food service
Upper Crust

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Ceremony at Chapter House
Awarding of Timson,
Clausing, Simonds, Heldman,
and Philbrick scholarships
Dedication of Worthy Master
plaque

Awarding of the "Tau
Madness" trophy for last

spring's NCAA basketball pool
tournament champion and "Last
Tau Standing" trophy for last
fall's NFL pool.

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM - Illini
vs. Minnesota Football Game
4:30 PM - Postgame Victory
Celebration, including cash
bar and hot appetizers

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Jack Klues '77 Encourages Alumni to Help Chapter Reach A+ Status

As I write this letter to all of you, I am beginning my fourth year as the GZ Board of Trustees Chairman.

I can tell you that it has been an interesting experience to say the least. In December 2012, a small number of us alumni from pledge classes dating back to the mid-70s got together one pre- Christmas night in Chicago to help get the Chapter back onto a more positive path and regain our strong 100 year plus reputation on the Illinois campus as the premier leadership fraternity.

A somewhat smaller version of this group now represents the current Board of Trustees and House Corporation.

My candid assessment of our performance to date would probably get a "B-". It occasionally feels like two steps forward and one step back to many of us. It is not because of a lack of commitment or effort from any of them to be clear.

Improvements to the physical plant continue to be made each year because of their effort (and their money). This fall, the entire lower level section off the kitchen has been remodeled. We have created a "President's Room" and a "suite" to house our newly hired Resident Director. The gender neutral bathroom has been re-done as has the laundry room with four new washers and dryers for the membership to use. Old carpet tiles in all room hallways have been replaced with a more contemporary, cleaner, and sturdy composite ceramic product. The main staircase is also being renovated. There are blinds and window treatments throughout the main floor, including in the "Tube Room." The beautiful hardwood floors in the main foyer and East and West living rooms will be completely resurfaced during the holiday break. Plans for a small exercise room also are underway just off the study room area, which should be finished next semester.

A lot of work still needs to be done with HVAC, plumbing, and many individual rooms just to name a few big jobs. The house is big and old after all.

In terms of membership, we successfully navigated a rigorous, yet necessary, formal Membership Review conducted exclusively by Alpha Tau Omega National HQ, which I reported to you in my letter last winter. With their expert guidance, a solid core of high



Jack Klues

quality young men remain who are totally committed to rebuilding our culture.

This rebuilding is well underway and is led by WM Austin Okuno.

The Chapter has also doubled down on community and charitable service. The men are engaged in helping manage service dogs, blood drives, weekly visits to local church center, Wounded Warriors projects, and American Cancer Society projects. On September 25th, they will be hosting a gigantic remote food packing event for "Feed My Starving Children," which entails preparing 100,000 meals and recruiting of over 400 student volunteers.

The undergraduate Exec and BOT co-authored an entirely new and condensed New Member Education program emphasizing leadership and scholarship.

The Mentor/Mentee Career Development program will be expanding to include the new pledge class 35 strong and will be the Beta Test partner for an exciting, new online leadership program (further details to be announced) that will integrate with National HQ and member Birkman learnings of the past couple semesters.

The new RD and current WM recently introduced a more formalized "study time" in the Chapter House this fall, along with peer to peer and external tutoring available.

However, the Board and I feel we need more leadership by example and more direct connectivity like the type only adult alumni can provide if we are to keep behavioral / cultural progress of the membership moving forward. To be fair to today's members,

fraternity life is under a lot more rules, regulations, and public scrutiny than it was 40 years ago or more.

This past July, for example, the University administration decided that it also needed to weigh in regarding the same membership issues of last fall that had precipitated our own formal review and associated penalties. Again, with the help of National HQ, Exec/WM, and the BOT, we were able to develop and defend our remedial actions to the basic satisfaction of the University's Board of Fraternity Affairs. ATO GZ remains a recognized fraternity on campus with full rights and privileges. We are back as a part of the University's Certified Housing Department and as a Registered Charity Organization. We will remain under the official University status as a fraternity chapter on "Revocation Held in Abeyance" until the spring of 2018. This is serious and means the school can revoke our charter if the members do not abide by the self-imposed sanctions we had already placed upon ourselves at beginning of this year (this includes hiring of a GZ Resident Director starting this fall).

This is why I give us BOT /HC a "B-" grade today.

Alpha Tau Omega Gamma Zeta Chapter deserves nothing less than an "A+."

We simply cannot get there with just the current 10 alumni volunteers on our BOT/HC roster. We need about twice this number.

I ask you to think about what ATO has meant to you and done for you. We need your time as much as treasure. We have plenty of doubters and critics yelling from the sidelines. We need guys to join us in actively nurturing, coaching, and building up GZ so that we can proudly stand for another 100 years.

You do not necessarily have to still be physically located in Illinois. We often do our work via conference call, Skype, and Email.

I ask that you join us in pursuit of an "A+" as a BOT and /or HC member. Just drop me a note indicating your interest to Kluesjack@yahoo.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Jack Klues '77

Chairman

Gamma Zeta Board of Trustees

RD SUITE

Renovations Completed For New RD Suite

We recently made some renovations to the house in order to accommodate the RD suite. The new RD, Murad Elayyan, featured on page one, will live in the chapter house and be available to brothers 24/7 to assist the undergraduates as they strive to build and maintain a positive image for the Gamma Zeta Chapter.



UNDERGRADUATE UPDATES

A Letter From the Worthy Master

Undergraduates Start the Fall Semester on a High Note

The Fall Semester is underway and Gamma Zeta is excited for everything we have in store. We started the semester with an outstanding recruitment and invited 33 new members into our beloved chapter. This successful recruitment makes our house 86 strong!

We also successfully fundraised \$24,500 to host our own Feed my Starving MobilePak on September 25th that included over 500 volunteers! Our new Signature Event exemplifies our push to regain a positive image on campus and throughout the nation. We are looking forward to hosting the American Red Cross Blood Drive on November 11th. Aside from on-campus philanthropic efforts, we have continued our strong relationship with the Hope Center Food Pantry in the city of Urbana.

Last semester, we increased our all house GPA to 3.21, and we have set a goal to rank in the top 5 of chapters on campus.

The IFC has brought back the Greek Cup this year, and Gamma



Zeta looks forward to bringing back some hardware. We are currently in the all-points series competition on campus with a 3-1 record.

Through the generous alumni donations, we were also able to build a newly furnished RD and Presidential Suite on the first floor. This construction project highlights the efforts the BOT, alumni, and undergraduates have put into maintaining the Thomas Arkle Clark Memorial.

The undergraduates celebrated their midterms with an exciting barn dance, and we are excited for the different exchanges we have with several sororities on campus.

The undergraduates are motivated and excited for this semester. Please continue to follow our progress and get updates on special events, especially Homecoming, on our Facebook page.

Sincerely,

Austin Okuno '18, Worthy Master

Alumni Share Latest Updates, Highlights of Their ATO Experience, and Advice for Younger Brothers

Steve Yahn '69 recently entered our chapter eternal.

Christopher Kenessey '97 (1740 W Altgeld Street, Chicago, Illinois 60614-1994; ckenessey@gmail.com) Christopher was recently named CEO of PE Hub

Scott Voris '92 (2033 Prairie Street, Aurora, Illinois; svoris@kelmscott.com) Scott was recently named President of FUSE

Kevin Finke '89 (303 Hascall Road NW, Atlanta, GA 30309-2223; kevin@experiencewillow.com) I believe in the ATO ideals, and I think positively about my own ATO undergrad experience. I would encourage my own son to join because the legacy and tradition is important. I would love to reunite with **Matt McCarty '87**, my pledge dad. I haven't seen him since 1992. We need to crack open a bottle of bourbon and catch up. If I could give the younger brothers

advice, I would tell them three things. One, to be mindful and self-aware. Know who you are and don't ever compromise your values for anyone or anything, especially money. Two, be adventurous. Be an explorer. Find the kinds of people, projects, and places you most connect with. Take chances while you can and choose paths less traveled. You're young, so if you ever fail, get lost, or something doesn't work out, you have time to get back into the flow. Three, everyone you know and will ever meet has a story, and their story could teach you something about life and yourself. Learn from everyone you meet and everything you do. Make a conscious effort to listen, learn, write, and grow as a person. When you know better, you do better.

James Kowalczyk (1308 Lory Street, Fort Collins, CO 80524-4214; jimmy.kowalczyk3@gmail.com) Gamma Zeta taught me many life lessons and gave me some of my best, friends, who will remain close

for the rest of my life. It would be great to reconnect with **Jeff Scolaro '04**. He's always busy working and spending time with his family, but still finds time to volunteer for the chapter. I haven't seen him in a while.

Dion Dimiropoulos '10 (2000 Pin Oak Drive, Mt. Prospect, Illinois 60056; d.dimiropoulos@gmail.com) ATO has molded me into the young professional that I am today. It has also opened doors that I would never have had access to if I had not joined. I am the youngest of three brothers, who all became members of the Gamma Zeta Chapter. **Jack Klues '77** was a great role model for me. We had a couple conversations when I was preparing to enter the workforce, and he had such great advice and guidance for me. He really is an amazing guy who wants to see his fellow brothers succeed. A few of my pledge brothers and I also went to New York this summer to visit a brother who was living there.

IM DISPLAY

IM Display Dedicated in Chapter House

Undergraduates Hoping to Bring Back an All Points Competition Trophy to 1101

Don Ainsworth '42 passed away last year, and his family donated a plaque to be displayed at the house. Don was very proud of this plaque and saved it for nearly 75 years. It recognizes the ATO Intramural Honor Roll for 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1941. Don's name is etched into the plaque, along with the names of **Dean Olson**, **Pick Dehner**, and **Bob** and **Bill Hemphill**.

Those five guys took it upon themselves to move ATO to the top if the U of I Fraternity IM Standings, where we stayed for many decades to come. Prior to 1938, ATO never appeared in the top five. From 1938 until 1975, when the IM Department abolished the Fraternity All Points Competition, ATO finished in the top five 29 times and won it outright six times.

Thanks to the Ainsworth family for donating the plaque and thanks to **Peter Korst '75** for leading the dedication ceremony on Saturday,



Brother Peter Korst '75 lead IM Display dedication ceremony on September 17 at the Chapter House.

September 17 at the Chapter house. Don Ainsworth's wife, Marilyn, attended along with JoAnne Daniels, **Stewart Daniels Jr's '49** wife.

We also rededicated the portraits that hang in our living room during the ceremony, including the portrait of **Stewart Daniels Sr. Scott Hemphill '75** and **Jamie Hemphill '78** also attended the ceremony to recognize their dad and uncle, whose names are on the plaque. **Nobel Olson '77** unfortunately wasn't able to attend but was very happy to hear that his dad's name is on the plaque as well.

The IM Department has brought back the All Points Competition under the name of the Greek Cup with some prodding from Gamma Zeta alumnus **Don Rubenstein '80**. Our current undergrads have their sights set on following the lead of Don, Dean, Pick, Bob and Bill and bringing back the trophy to 1101.

NEW MEMBER UPDATE

Undergraduates Recruit and Retain 33 New Brothers

From Legacy Members, to All-Star Athletes, This Year's Pledge Class is a Winner!

This semester proved to be a pivotal recruitment for the Gamma Zeta chapter. The recruitment team recognized this and worked hard to make sure we attained top quality new members for the future of our chapter. We are proud to say that we have successfully recruited and retained 33 gentlemen that exhibit an incredible level of intelligence, chivalry, and class. The diversity of this group is what makes them special, but their enthusiasm and commitment to Alpha Tau Omega is what ultimately brought them here.

The new class of Gamma Zeta holds diversity in areas that extend beyond character. For example, a few of our new members are out of state students. These young men hail from Georgia, New Jersey, and even Texas. The majority of the other members are all from Illinois, but nonetheless, they are all from different parts of the state. A variety of south, west, and north suburbs make up the rest of the membership. Furthermore, these gentlemen are diverse in their interests as well. Although a select few of the freshmen are undeclared, they seem to be all striving to get into the Engineering and Business program, and a good amount of their pledge class is already either majoring in Accounting, Finance, or



Engineering. All majors seem to hold a place in this pledge class, including Kinesiology, Mathematics, Communications, and even Computer science. The class as a whole has been nothing less than bright this semester.

In addition, for the first time in a while, the University of Illinois' athletics program has allowed some of its athletes to rush Greek life. We have been fortunate enough to recruit four quality guys who play on the football team. Three of them, **Ikjot Wahi '20**, **Altan Aldemir '20**, and **Jonathon Milazzo '20**, walked on the team and have proven to be extremely hardworking guys. The fourth member of the football team we are welcoming to Gamma Zeta is **Kurt Gavin '20**. He's a 4-star recruit from Frankfort, Illinois, who is here on a full scholarship to play for the Fighting Illini. He also had full-ride offers from Cincinnati, Syracuse, and Illinois State, just to name a

few. Although not all of our new recruits are athletes at the university, many of them were either captains or participated in varsity sports, such as basketball and football, throughout high school.

Legacy is another huge component of our fraternity. We respect our predecessors in hopes of gaining the same respect from our younger guys going forward. We are excited to announce the only legacy in the Gamma Zeta 2020 pledge class. His name is **William Cihlar '20**, and he's a freshman from Metea Valley High School, majoring in Kinesiology. Billy is the son of **Joe Cihlar**, a member of the Gamma Zeta '77 pledge class.

I wish that I could individually name and accredit these young men for their past accomplishments, but that would make this article far too long. The whole chapter is really excited for the potential these men have in building the legacy of Gamma Zeta. The class of 2020 has a very high ceiling, and I believe they will not only reach the ceiling, but blow the roof off. It was a pleasure to recruit these guys and will be even more of a pleasure to see how they can improve this campus.

L&R,

Christian A. Klos '18

Head House Recruitment Chair

MATTO AWARDS

Two New Brothers Were Recipients of MATTO Awards in Middle School

Award Still Honors and Remembers Fellow Brother Matt Heldman '98



We're excited to report that two of our new members, **Kyle and Sean O'Malley '20**, are from Libertyville, and while in middle school there, they both won "MATTO" Awards in 8th grade. The school still honors and remembers our own **Matt Heldman '98** just like we do with the Matt

Heldman Scholarship and the Illini Basketball team does with their own MATTO/Hustle award each year. The brothers were very excited to learn that they were following Matt's footsteps as ATOs and hope to hustle their way to another MATTO award as college students!

Calling all Former Worthy Masters!

On **Saturday, October 29 at 9:30 AM** at the Chapter House, we'll be dedicating a plaque to recognize the incredible service and leadership shown by the undergraduate Worthy Masters of our Chapter. This plaque will display the names of every Gamma Zeta Worthy Master going back to our original charter in 1895. All are welcome to join us to thank these guys for taking on this challenging role.

ATO ALTITUDE PROGRAM

Undergraduate Brother Attends ATO Altitude Program

Devin Maki '18 Writes Letter Detailing His Experience

This past summer, I had the opportunity to attend the ATO Altitude program. For anyone unfamiliar with the program, it offers a group of ATO undergrads a chance to explore Colorado through white water rafting, climbing, and back packing. Now, I'm no Bear Grylles, but I wanted take the challenge of climbing a 13,000-foot mountain. Along with a group of 8 other ATOs from across the country, we accomplished that and much more.

We were challenged by our trip leader to push ourselves from the beginning of the trip. That first day consisted of mostly travel, but on the second day, we were able to experience what we signed up for. We spent the morning repelling and climbing, which resulted in one bloody knee and a case or two of altitude sickness, but we all repelled off a cliff to safety. White water presented



Devin Maki '18 and 8 other ATOs from across the country embarked on ATO Altitude Program trip this summer."

more challenges in the afternoon while the rain came down. Our rafts stayed afloat through the rain as we traveled across miles of "some of the finest class III and IV rapids in Colorado" to quote our proud river guide.

The following four days took us past our basecamp and into San Isabel national forest. There, we experienced intense backpacking, which included a day of hiking 10 miles up and over the continental divide. We spent the days climbing and taking in views while the nights were spent sleeping under the stars. Each view seemed surreal when compared to the miles of corn surrounding Gamma Zeta and U of I. I was fortunate enough to take this trip thanks to the men of Gamma Zeta. The fraternity has given me this opportunity and countless others thanks to the devotion of the current undergrads and alumni. I would encourage others to take advantage of opportunities like ATO Altitude and make an effort grow in new ways.

L&R,

Devin Maki '18

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Gamma Zeta Chapter Leads Feed My Starving Children Event

108,000 + Meals Packed at the Event – Enough to Feed Over 170 Children Every Day for a Year

On Sunday, September 25, ATO Gamma Zeta led a giant event in the Armory with Feed My Starving Children to pack food for malnourished children around the world. They raised over \$25,000 in the last year at the Dad's Day Casino Night and Mom's Day Silent Auction with great support through donations from Gamma Zeta Alumni. They also recruited nearly 500 people, including representatives from the Pikes, Alpha Phi Alpha, DGs, Thetas, TriDeltas, and many more to work shifts packing food. The result was over 108,000 meals packed in one day. That's enough to feed over 170 children every meal every day for a year. There was a very



Gamma Zeta Chapter hosts Feed My Starving Children event on September 25 and got a great turnout.

positive article in the Daily Illini the next day, featuring ATO and the positive impact from their leadership on the campus and Greek system.

Congratulations to all of our undergraduate members who participated in this process

over the last year. We'd especially like to thank **Christian Klos '18**, who chaired the Casino Night fundraiser last fall, **Quinn Gaughan '19**, who chaired the Armory event, and current Gamma Zeta Worthy Master, **Austin Okuno '18**. They did a remarkable job pulling off this event.

Also thanks to alumni **Jack Klues '77** our BOT Chairman,

Patrick Dennis '73, and **Norm Bilsbury '92** with his wife and three kids who were right in there working with all of the students, including our strong new member pledge class. It was a very impressive sight.