

ENDOWMENT FUND CHAIR DAVE PHILLIPS (OHIO STATE, '80)

In March, members of the Octagon hosted two alumni events in the Columbus area with 25+ Sammy alumni in attendance. We share our appreciation for our hosts, Dave and Andrea Kleppel and Evan Remer, and thanks to the Sammy alumni who were able to join us!

STATE OF THE FRATERNITY

Written by



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(Minnesota, '01), Executive Director

Hearing origin stories about how fratres found their way to membership in Sigma Alpha Mu never gets old. It usually boils down to a person - a friend, relative, or classmate - who made the introduction to Sammy. It always involves being invited to join and saying yes to the opportunity to belong.

As a freshman at the University of Minnesota, I did not go through rush. It simply wasn't on my radar. Fortunately for me, I met Aaron Liebo (Minnesota, '99) through a friend of a friend. He introduced me to his friends and the chapter. It turns out that I was actually "rushing" while meeting those guys without even knowing it. My life improved when the Kappa Chapter at the University of Minnesota asked me to join. I can still vividly recall the rush of adrenaline that came with being invited to join. Being accepted and belonging evokes powerful feelings. As that initial excitement faded, a genuine sense of confidence stemmed from having a trusted support system.

This year 765 students have said yes. We are projected to start next year 9% ahead of this past year due to the fraternity's investment in growth and chapter health as part of the SAM 2030 strategic plan. This academic year has seen the return of Beta (Cornell), Sigma Iota (Michigan), Sigma Omega (NC State), and the addition of Epsilon Rho (Clemson). We continue to support interest groups at Sigma Beta (Ohio State) and Mu Rho (Rochester).

Since April 2020, nearly 500 undergraduate fratres have completed the Certified PhiredUp Recruiter program. This online course aims to teach our members skills to cultivate new friendships, grow a pipeline of interest prospects, and leverage technology to increase the quantity and quality of new members.

It should be no surprise that the vast majority of chapters saw year-over-year increases in their recruitment efforts. Our students are better prepared to reach a generation of students who crave the positive attributes of fraternity.

Today's college students, known as Generation Z or GenZ, were born in the early 2000s. The fraternity can positively impact many of the core concerns faced by this generation. One such concern for GenZ college students is mental health. Academic performance, social life, and personal growth pressures can take a toll on students' mental well-being. College can be overwhelming and stressful, particularly for students away from home for the first time. Many GenZ students feel overwhelmed and anxious, and they are looking for support and resources to help them cope.



Sigma Alpha Mu offers an excellent way for GenZ students to acclimate to college life and develop a sense of belonging. We continue to provide an opportunity for students to connect with their peers who share similar interests, goals, and values. GenZ students develop essential skills and experience that can enhance their academic and professional pursuits - just as we did in college. Serving as an officer or leading a project with their peers helps build their confidence and demonstrate their abilities. Membership in Sigma Alpha Mu facilitates the developing of the skills, passions, and networks that will shape their careers. That alleviates another significant concern of GenZ about finding meaningful employment after college that will allow them to pay off student loans and live a comfortable life.

For decades, a hallmark of Sigma Alpha Mu has been its ability to diverse groups of people together - whether geographical, socioeconomic, religious, racial, or sexual orientation.

GenZ students actively seek learning opportunities about different cultures, beliefs, and perspectives. Exposure to diverse viewpoints and experiences can broaden their understanding of the world and contribute to personal growth. Many chapters have leaned into this by hosting cultural programming that highlights the backgrounds of their members.

Our chapters actively create a sense of community and belonging, which is in demand on campuses where many students feel isolated or disconnected. This sense of community is an essential support system during challenging times. It continues to foster the lifelong friendships and connections that were envisioned by our Founders more than a century ago.

These are truths we may also share with this current generation of fratres. For anyone who remains skeptical, we have some research* findings that help emphasize the fraternity experience.

- Fraternity members report higher levels of positive mental health and less depression or anxiety than unaffiliated members.*
- Nearly 80% of fraternity men report excellent mental health and well-being.*
- Members seeking help are twice as likely to turn to a brother than anyone else.*
- Fraternity and sorority members believe that good support systems exist for students going through tough times.*
- Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to seek therapy or counseling at some point.*
- Fraternities provide an environment where members can have tough conversations, especially about personal issues like relationships, family, and mental health struggles.*

The investment in membership is paying off, and it is changing lives. The power of belonging is profound for our fratres who have found a home in Sigma Alpha Mu.

*Learn more at nicfraternity.org/research