A Letter from the Incoming President

Dexter Horne ’13 - XV

Hello!

I am Dexter Horne, associate class of 2013, and this year’s President for Phi Kappa Tau, Delta chapter. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued support of not only our fraternity but Centre College and the Danville community which we all have—at some point—called home. This place grows more excellent every year and our college experience becomes increasingly sweeter along the way; we have committed alums like you to thank for that. The fraternity that you have willed down to me and the other active brothers has been a large part of our worthwhile Centre experience and it is our desire to keep PKT a place that builds bonds and changes lives for brothers, alums and outsiders alike.

Join us at Homecoming!

This year, homecoming will occur on October 2nd and 3rd. Join us at the Phi Tau house for a great weekend. More on p. 4

Swimmer’s Success at SAA Conference Meet

Rising Sophomore Logan Oatman (’15) discusses the successes of our Brothers at the SAA Conference meet earlier this year. Check out the story on p. 6

Delta raises $5,000 for St. Baldrick’s

In one of the most popular philanthropy events of the year, Delta continues to excel. Philanthropy and Service Chair, Stephen Orr (’14), discusses the success of the chapter’s event on p. 7

Hear from the Associate Class!

Letters from the most diverse class in recent memory start on p. 8 with a letter from the Associate Class President ’15.
June 2015

In order to continually build a fraternity that does these things we have invested our time into a number of projects for this upcoming academic year. I want to highlight a few of these so that you can see the direction in which our chapter intends to move:

**Strategic Planning**

This summer we will begin crafting a process for a 3-year Delta chapter strategic plan. The purpose of this initiative is for the active members of this organization to establish an identity, set clear goals for their three year experience in the chapter and measure the progress of those goals so that we as a fraternity have a clear sense of direction and path for continuous improvement.

**Philanthropic Improvement**

In the past two academic years Delta chapter has raised around $18,000 total for various philanthropies as well as being highly supportive of the philanthropies of our peers on Greek row. We are extremely proud of our contributions and have the utmost respect for the organizations to which these funds are donated. Still, the majority of our fundraising efforts have been for organizations other than our national philanthropy, SeriousFun Network. This year we will be placing a large emphasis on the revitalization of our Letter Writing Campaign as well as establishing a new, creative event for the fall on campus that will generate success for years to come. It is our hope that you—the alumni—as well as every active brother will be on board with this initiative as it marks a period of renewed dedication to SeriousFun for Delta, something we’ve wanted to get to for some time now.

**House Improvements**

This spring we bought new furniture for the chapter room, replacing several couches and chairs that had seen better days. Additionally, as a part of our chapter’s centennial celebration a seal was purchased and will soon be placed into the floor of the vestibule.

**Sustained Successes**

Not exactly an initiative but a promise; Delta chapter wants to continue the successes that we have garnered in the realms of community service and academics. For two years now we have recorded more service hours per man than any chapter on campus and last year we recored more hours per man than any Phi Tau chapter in the nation. We are extremely committed to our
responsibility to the world outside of the Centre bubble and our Philanthropy & Service Chairman, Stephen Orr, is ready to lead our organization to more great works in the future. When it comes to our chapter GPA, Delta has consistently placed in the top three on campus, losing out by only a few hundredths of a point in the past two terms to other organizations for the campus Yerkes Cup. Next year we will be expanding our scholarship program in order to push our chapter into even further success. The sky is the limit.

**The Will to Win**

Chapter of Excellence and Maxwell…that’s what’s on this year’s executive council’s agenda. Delta was able to win the Chapter of Excellence award and make the Founders Four two years ago and we want to go even further than that in the months to come. The actives have the will to win, and the talent level within our fraternity is where it needs to be in order for us to excel. All that there’s left to do is go out there and perform.

***************

On behalf of all the active brothers still sporting Harvard Red and Old Gold, I want to extend our appreciation once more. We stand on the shoulders of giants, your contributions to this chapter have made a way for our growth and development. I hope that you continue to support us, Centre and the city of Danville in the years to come.

Thank You,

Dexter Horne

President of Phi Kappa Tau, Delta
To the Graduate Council of Phi Kappa Tau,

I would like to introduce myself to you all as the new Vice President of Alumni Relations. My name is Bryce Rowland; I am a member of the Pledge Class of 2014, and the Centre College graduate Class of 2017. I’m excited to continue the momentum which is being generated in our alumni relations programming which was started last year by Tanner Ball.

Any member of the chapter would be the first to admit that alumni relations has been an area in which we have struggled for about the last decade or so. We have been apathetic about getting alumni around Delta Chapter, and unengaged when alumni do chose to revisit their old stomping grounds. While this has been true for the past, I certainly hope we can do our best to change our course for the future. As VPAR, I will strive to build programming which is suitable for all alumni through effective and timely planning. I ask that you would be patient with the chapter as we begin to reinvent how we work with each of you as members of the graduate council, but know that change is on the horizon. There are some great things in store for the Delta Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau, and I’m excited to share them with you all.

**Homecoming this year is October 2nd and 3rd!** While a more detailed and final schedule of events will be sent out at the end of this summer, the tentative schedule consists of: a cookout Friday night at the Brockton Grill (behind the Phi Tau House), a party reception for actives and graduates at the house Friday night, and a catered lunch at the house Saturday with refreshments!
If you have any questions, ideas, or comments do not hesitate to reach out to myself, or any member of the chapter. My email is bryce.rowland@centre.edu, and would be more than happy to field any concerns that you all may have. Thank you for your undying commitment to the excellence which is bred in the Delta Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau. Please enjoy this issue of the Delta Digest, as you peer into the minds of our newest and most diverse class of new members, the Class of ’15.

In Phi,
Bryce Rowland XV
VPAR, Delta

Un Semestre Mexicano

Harrison Kirby ’14

Ancient pyramids, Cuban cigars, a whole lot of tacos, and an immersive experience in Mexican culture are just a few of the ways to describe my past semester in Mérida, Mexico. Centre sends around twenty students every semester and CentreTerm to live with families through its Centre-in-the-Yucatán program, and I was lucky enough to be one of them in the spring of 2015.

I stayed in a home with a Mexican Mamá, one of her sons, and one of her grandsons. The home cooked meals ranged from empanadas and quesadillas to hotdogs and hamburgers, and the house was always busy with her other children and grandchildren stopping by for visits. One of my favorite memories of my trip is simply watching Mexican game shows with my Mamá after dinner while discussing random topics about life. Staying with a family was wonderful because I didn't speak Spanish when I showed up in Mexico, so I definitely needed someone with the patience of a mother to help me learn. It also made me feel like I really did have a home in Mexico—my Mamá let me keep my key as I left, and I've been able to return this summer and stay with my family while working on a research project in Mérida.

My trip to Mexico felt very different from a usual travel experience—I wasn't just visiting; I really was living there. I had a room and a bed, I found favorite places around the city for tacos, drinks, exercising, and when I got back to Mérida from a trip it felt like I really was coming back home. I got to see the city change—restaurants open and closed; the Costco near my house had to close down and move. (It was unfortunately over a sinkhole.) I got to know some native Mexicans, and I would run into them
around town. Instead of merely getting a snapshot of a place like I had in my other travels, I felt like I was a witness to a movie that was continually changing around me.

While spending three months in a foreign country is an adventure in and of itself, Centre steps it up a notch in the Mérida program through numerous class trips. My favorite was our journey to Cuba, where we visited Havana, Trinidad, Santa Clara, and Cienfuegos (legally, in case you were wondering). We stayed in bed and breakfasts, and we were able to roam about the cities we visited. Cuba was unlike any place I’d ever been—it really did look like somebody had hit the pause button on the country during the 1960’s. The streets were filled with old Chevys and Fords, kept running for sixty years on Frankenstein-like concoctions of available parts. The buildings were beautiful and ornate, though unfortunately dilapidating due to neglect and economic misfortune. The country has a surplus of doctors and professionals due to its education infrastructure and all people are provided homes, though many Cubans struggle to meet their basic needs in terms of food because of the economic conditions. The country seemed simultaneously backward and poor in some respects and incredibly forward and rich in others.

Looking back, my journey to Mérida wasn’t anything I could anticipate. It encouraged me to adventure, to question, to learn, and to grow. I’m incredibly lucky for the number of wonderful gifts I receive from Centre: opportunities, adventures, and second (or third, or fourth) homes. It makes me proud to represent Centre and Phi Tau on my journeys, and I hope I can carry my Colonel spirit and my Phi Tau letters abroad with me again sometime soon.

Phi Kappa Tau Swims Their Way to Greatness at SAA Conference Meet

Logan Oatman ’15 - XVII

Eight brothers swam at the SAA Conference on February 11-14, 2015. This year, conference was held in Birmingham, Alabama at The Birmingham Crossplex. Seniors John Kelley, Wes McCrery, Nicholas Rauh, Jess Pritchett, and Nate Deaton finished their careers with a bang. John Kelley went a lifetime best in his 200 yard IM and 400 yard IM to place fifth and fourth respectively. Wes McCrery, Jess Pritchett, and Nicholas Rauh all had notable swims in the sprint freestyle events. Jess placed second in the 50 yard freestyle closely followed by Wes, who got third. Two school records were broken by Wes, Jess, and John in the 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle relays. Associate brother Logan Oatman broke three school records in the 100 and 200 yard backstroke and the 500
yard freestyle. Logan also broke the SAA Conference Records in the 100 and 200 backstroke. The
time that Logan went in the 200 backstroke placed him nineteenth in NCAA Div 3. Fellow associate
brother Jack Miller placed sixteenth in the 50 yard freestyle and fifth on both the one meter and three
meter diving board. Altogether, the men scored 780 points and placed second for a very successful
conference championship.

Delta Raises $5,000 for St. Baldrick’s

Stephen Orr ’14 - XV

Once again this Spring, Delta put on the St. Baldrick’s event in collaboration with the St.
Baldrick’s Foundation. The St. Baldrick’s Foundation is an organization that funds essential childhood
cancer research. Each year more than 175,000 children are diagnosed with cancer, and childhood
cancer is the number one cause of death of children in the United States. The foundation funds
research to help find treatments for the many different kinds of childhood cancer and eventually cures.
The St. Baldrick’s Foundation raises money to fund research by putting on head shaving events. At
these events volunteers agree to shave their heads to raise money for the foundation. Prior to these
events, Shavees at Centre collect donations throughout the Centre community, out in Danville, and
back home in their respective communities. At the event, all the money is donated and the Shavees
have their heads shaved as a symbol of their support of the fight against childhood cancers. The St.
Baldrick’s event has become Delta’s biggest philanthropy event of each year.

This year, the event was held during the Student Activities Council’s “Carnival” on May 8th in
front of Old Centre. We had 5 brothers shave their heads: Jeff Podis, Stephen Orr, Brady Wehmiller,
Alex Chumbley, and Justin Nguyen. These 5 brothers formed a fundraising team that they called
“Unicorn Dynasty” and ended up raising about $3,000. Prior to the event our brothers prepared by
dying their hair many colors, and sporting St. Baldrick’s pins, shirts and buttons to raise awareness
and support of the cause. The week of the event many brothers helped to work a table in front of the
Cowan dining commons to collect cash donations and encourage attendance at the event. This
resulted in almost $850 in donations. Overall, the event raised about $5,000 to donate to the St.
Baldrick’s Foundation.
While we will continue to grow the St. Baldrick’s Event to raise more money for the foundation, we are hoping to also put on more philanthropy events for our national philanthropy, SeriousFun Network, that will hopefully challenge the St. Baldrick’s Event as our biggest philanthropy event of each year.

Associate Ambition: A Letter to Alumni and Actives

Moses Ngong ’15 - VII

“Phi Kappa Tau, by admitting me to membership, has conferred upon me a mark of distinction in which I take just pride.”

As one of the new 16 associate members of this fraternity, I was surprised at just how quickly this statement became true to me and the rest of my associate brothers. Indeed, we are a proud group of men anxious to represent this organization and demonstrate the values that we admire in it. We chose Phi Tau because we felt a connection with the members of the organization, and recognized it as the most respected fraternity on this campus. Now, all of us get the pleasure of saying this sacred creed as a member of a brotherhood that has embraced us as their own from day one. As an associate class, we only have one goal: to make the best better. That means we're already and actively considering how Phi Tau can become the strongest in philanthropy, scholarship, and extracurricular involvement here at Centre. We understand that the journey won’t necessarily be easy, but we love a challenge. Through cooperation, dedication, and most importantly, brotherhood, we’ll enhance this fraternity’s already impeccable reputation in new and unexpected ways.

Delta chapter is a special place, with an impeccable history, a vibrant present, and a bright future. As an associate class, we want to do it justice, and are excited for you to witness the results of our passion. We’ll see you when you return to the mountaintop (which hopefully means founders day!).

Right On,

Moses Ngong

Associate Class President ’15
In my high school, the club with the most brotherhood was the football team. Every time AC/DC’s Thunderstruck resonated throughout the stands, the football team could be heard singing, screaming, and building each other’s spirits before they would rush out of their inflated helmet. I always wanted to feel the unity of being on that team, however, being visually impaired makes playing football extremely difficult.

Although I had many amazing friends in high school, I always wanted to be part of an influential organization larger than myself. The main problem was that most of the active clubs and teams in my school were physically orientated. The fact that I had no peripheral vision or depth perception limited my abilities to be an active member of the teams. To add to more problems, the service and academic clubs were not extremely active in the community, so the best way to make a name in the community was to play a sport.

Once I arrived at Centre College, I was extremely excited to enter the diverse community of service and scholarship that was not as present at my high school. During Orientation, I learned about Greek Life and decided to look further into it. When the houses first opened, I spent time in each house, but my visit to the Phi Kappa Tau house was different. The brothers who were talking to me showed me one of the words stenciled in the basement, Zenophilia, friend to the outsider. I felt like this idea surrounding this word exemplified how I felt about the clubs from my high school.

After learning more about Greek Life, talking to my non Greek friends about my choice, and becoming friends with some of the active brothers in Phi Tau, I knew deciding to rush was a great choice. On bid day, I was pretty nervous and sat anxiously calling my parents and talking to my roommate until I heard the card slide under my door. When I learned I was accepted, I knew I was part of a brotherhood, I knew I was home.
Let’s face it. The media and entertainment business portrays fraternities as really snobby dudes who drink every weekend and have no care for academics and life outside of their bro-circle. These ideals influenced my perspective of fraternities greatly, and when I visited Centre College and I was guided to Greek row, my eyes rolled.

Great, here comes the fraternity houses where everyone is probably drunk and hazing each other in the basement, doing ridiculous things to join a friend group.

That was a very negative perspective of fraternities, but it was mine solely due to the influence of movies and the media. I was proven wrong very quickly.

The brothers of Phi Kappa Tau proved me wrong. They welcomed my group and myself to Centre College with open arms. To this day, I still remember playing pickup basketball with a group of strangers as we laughed at how bad I was shooting the ball.

Back home, this behavior would be considered very pretentious and almost two-faced because friendliness wasn’t necessarily a positive thing in an urban city. It’s tough to say, but people usually aren’t that nice in the city without wanting something. I thought maybe they’re just being nice to recruit me and hopefully give Centre another $46K a year. But that was absolutely not the case.

When I came on campus as a first-year, my perspective of fraternities was changed drastically. I began socializing more with brothers of different fraternities, and the whole idea of fraternities was clear.

Every brother I spoke with was familiar with the stereotypical perspective of fraternities. But they proved to me that there was more to that. The brothers of Phi Kappa Tau showed me that they weren’t trying their hardest to recruit me; they were just being themselves. Initiating and pledging a fraternity showed me that I don’t have to follow stereotypes or the social norm. Phi Kappa Tau puts an emphasis on being yourself; let your image dictate the image of the fraternity. As a city kid who
refused to let stereotypes define who he really is, this motto was very important to me. It showed me that the stereotypes of a fraternity are still just simply stereotypes. And it makes me prouder to call myself a member of Phi Kappa Tau.

Phi Kappa Tau Delta Chapter Showed Me the True American Spirit

An International Perspective on Zenophilia

Jenga Zhao ’15

Being in a foreign country can be stressful, especially in a country like the United States where many different ideas and people collide. Two years ago, full of inspiration and hope, I arrived at Centre College and started my journey as an undergraduate student. The new environment was intimidating, as it is the first time that I was all by myself, taking care of everything. A sense of nostalgia was simmering.

All the trepidations were dissipated after I met the people in Phi Kappa Tau. There is a common misunderstanding that fraternities are all about party and alcohol; however, what I see from the people in Phi Kappa Tau is different. They have fun on the weekends, but at the same time, they value the academic merit of each member. What I hear when I am conversing with them at dinner is insightful and informative.

They accept me as part of the fraternity and embrace all the difference of opinions and ideas. Being a foreigner in Phi Kappa Tau is not stressful, but on the contrary, is an honor, and a perfect epitome of Phi Kappa Tau’s motto, Zenophilia. In Phi Kappa Tau, people can exchange their ideas, thoughts, or even whimsies that other people may consider absurd, without worrying about any ridicule or derision. Phi Kappa Tau makes me feel like I am actually at home with brothers with whom I can share anything.
A Different Perspective on Fraternity

Bingxu Ren ’15 - 0

Born in a traditional family in China, I was told how extreme and bizarre fraternities are since I was a little kid. Especially under the influence of communism, such organizations are never tolerated in my country and would be considered as cults. I never had a chance to know what a fraternity really is until college.

Most of my orientation assistants were greek affiliated and most males from that group I met are current Phi Taus. They received me from another country at the airport and treated me well throughout my first semester in college. I received a lot of help from those Phi Tau guys and realized how disciplined and well behaved they are. This has really changed my view of fraternity brothers from alcoholic problematic students to men of character. I remember once I needed to go the bank three blocks away, Nick Rauh heard it and immediately dropped his tasks and drove me there. It is easy to just walk to the bank and not bother anyone at all. But Nick was still able to put his things aside in order to give me as much help as he could. I had never received such generosity without even asking for it back at home. Then I started spending more time with these Phi Taus and saw how strong their tie is.

From what I saw in movies, fraternity men may be really nice socially but they do not have good grades as students. The phi tau brothers proved me wrong by their own actions. As a computer science major, I had several classes with a graduated phi tau brother Cyrus Xi. Cyrus was a top student in Centre’s computer science department, he has a renowned reputation for being smart and hardworking. Whenever I had a question, Cyrus was able to help me with my academics. I saw him with Phi Tau brothers studying in the library almost every day. They not only study together but also help each other if needed.

I see the spirit of brotherhood, strong responsibility of good citizens, and desire to learn, to lead, and to serve from these fraternity men. Because of that, I see a better version of me through phi kappa tau, I see how wrong I have been educated in fraternity life, I want to be a part of this great organization Phi Kappa Tau.