

# The Fraternity and Sorority Connection

Spring 2025

## Advisor's Corner

Here we are at the end of another year.

As our students prepare for final exams and summers filled with work, coursework, recruitment and fun, it's great to be able to reach out and provide an update on what's happening!

This year saw some great highlights.

- The Mavathon Team, guided by Kurt Ohlhues, our graduate advisor, raised \$10,000 for Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare.
- Between Fall and Spring, 139 new members joined our community, an increase over each of the previous two academic years.
- Our annual Greek Week was celebrated. Highlights included the annual lip sync battle, a canned food drive benefitting the Maverick Food Pantry, and a change drive that raised \$300 for Dance Marathon and the Committee Against Domestic Abuse.
- Two of our chapters celebrated milestone anniversaries. In November, Lambda Chi Alpha celebrated 60 years since its initial founding, and this March, Phi Delta Theta celebrated 60 continuous years on campus.

Below, you'll find chapter highlights submitted by chapter leaders.

-John Bulcock, Assistant Director of Student Activities



*Mavathon leaders reveal the amount raised through year-long fundraising.*



*Members of Phi Kappa Psi compete in the Boat Regatta, in their boat made of nothing but cardboard and duct tape.*



*Members of Alpha Chi Omega attended the Fraternity & Sorority Life Banquet in April, where they won several awards.*

### Alpha Chi Omega

Alpha Chi Omega's greatest accomplishment this semester was being honored with the Chapter of the Year award for 2024. Our biggest goal for the summer and fall is to be prepared for primary recruitment taking place in the fall. We would love to continue to grow our sisterhood and ensure every member is prepared to help facilitate a great recruitment.

### Alpha Sigma Alpha

This Spring semester, Alpha Sigma Alpha successfully relaunched our Dinner For Heroes philanthropy! We provided a homemade spaghetti dinner to the Mankato fire department. We hope to continue this philanthropy next semester and in the years to come!



*Members of Alpha Sigma Alpha gather for their "Dinner For Heroes" event.*

### Gamma Phi Beta

This past school year, we welcomed 21 new members! Looking ahead, we seek to continue building a sisterhood that intentionally supports both active and new members, ensuring everyone understands their unique role and significance within our chapter. We aim to continue expanding philanthropic opportunities and strengthening our academic success, building on our achievement of earning the highest Panhellenic GPA of 3.44 in Fall 2024, while encouraging our members to display all four of our core values.



*Members of Gamma Phi Beta gather for their Fall Retreat in Okoboji, Iowa.*

## Lambda Chi Alpha

Over the 2024-2025 academic year, our chapter overcame obstacles that served as learning opportunities. We grew our chapter membership by 60% while maintaining a positive culture of growth and accountability. We accumulated over 350 hours of community service, working within our neighborhood and the greater Blue Earth County area. We also hosted two large alumni events; in the Fall we celebrated the 60th anniversary of our chapter starting here in Mankato, and in the Spring we enjoyed an afternoon of Twins baseball. To wrap up the semester, we had Greek Week as well as the Fraternity & Sorority Life Awards where our president Noah Landwer accepted the 2024 Fraternity President of the Year award. We hope to do all of this and more in the 2025-2026 academic year.

## Phi Delta Theta

This Spring, we welcomed four new members, and we're on track to reach 30 members by the end of the Fall semester. We also had the honor of celebrating 60 years of Phi Delta Theta at Mankato, with more than 200 people in attendance at our Founders Day event in the CSU. Chapter President, Aedan Bertrand, was named Fraternity Man of the Year—the first Phi Delt to win the award since Alex Beck in 2017!

Fall 2025 will be a huge semester for Phi Delt as we work toward becoming an Iron Phi Chapter.

## Phi Kappa Psi

Phi Kappa Psi is proud to share that we were honored with Chapter of the Year, recognizing the hard work, dedication, and brotherhood that define our chapter. As we look ahead to Summer and Fall, our top priority is recruitment, welcoming new members who embody our values and will carry our legacy forward.



*Fall 2024 Homecoming King Eddie Nguyen and Homecoming Queen Kalina Vandeputte. The two organizations will partner up for Fall Homecoming 2025.*

## Sigma Chi

During the Fall semester, we had one member run for Homecoming royalty. Brother Nguyen ultimately ended up winning the whole thing alongside counterpart Kalina Vandeputte. The guys' intramural squad went undefeated and fell just short in the championship game, making their record 7-1. The biggest goal for the chapter going into the summer and fall is attending more diversity events and taking advantage of all the opportunities the university provides.

## Sigma Nu

This year, Sigma Nu has been very successful in

raising money through our fundraising chair, by creating new annual events such as Sun Madness and Dunk-a-SNU! We graduated a large class this year and can't wait to start on our new summer recruitment plans to build up another great class in the fall!

## Sigma Sigma Sigma

Our greatest accomplishment of this year is being awarded Sisterhood of the Year. Our biggest goal going into next semester is to have a successful recruitment and reach the campus total. We are excited to be back with each other in the fall!

## Tau Kappa Epsilon

Our greatest accomplishments were initiating six new members this year and earning the Brotherhood award out of all fraternities. Our biggest goal is to attempt summer recruitment and hopefully have 10 initiates next fall.

## Alumni Volunteer Spotlight

In this edition of our newsletter, we highlight Tarah (Bjorklund) Sachdev, B.S. 2005 and M.S. 2007, an alumna of Sigma Sigma Sigma.

*How have you given of your time, talent and/or treasure, back to your chapter or the community?*

I have volunteered as a Sigma Sigma Sigma Chapter Advisor for over 15 years. Fall Recruitment is my favorite time of the year, and you will always catch me back in Kato around that time!

*Why do you give back?*

I give back as a chapter advisor because I believe in leaving a legacy. It's important to me that the chapter not only succeeds today but continues to thrive for years to come. I want to help guide and support the members so they have the tools and confidence to lead with purpose. Membership is for life, and that means showing up, staying involved, and ensuring

the values and traditions we stand for are passed on.

*What advice would you give to other alums looking to re-engage with their organizations or our community?*

My advice to other alumni looking to re-engage is to just take the first step. Reach out, show up, and be open the experience. You don't have to have all the answers—just your time, your perspective and your support can make a huge difference. Reconnecting with your organization is not just about giving back; it's about rediscovering the values and relationships that shaped who you are. Whether it's mentoring, advising, providing financial assistance or just attending an event, your presence matters. Our community is stronger when we stay connected!



*Tarah (Bjorklund) Sachdev, Tri-Sigma Chapter Advisor*



*Members of Phi Kappa Psi gather for their annual formal.*



*Members of Sigma Nu attended the Dance Marathon (Mavathon) to help raise money for our local children's hospital.*



## Awards Recipients Recognized

At the annual Fraternity & Sorority Life Awards banquet, held on Sunday, April 13, the following organizations, community members, and alumni were presented with awards.

## Scholarship Recipients

John and Kristy Buck Leadership Scholarship for Phi Kappa Psi & Alpha Chi Omega

- Alex Cieniciwa, Phi Kappa Psi
- Abbygail Cano-Clemente, Alpha Chi Omega

Reichert Family Leadership Scholarship for Phi Delta Theta

- Jake Miller, Phi Delta Theta
- Ian Schaefer, Phi Delta Theta

Stephen C. Jensen Scholarship for Phi Delta Theta

- Riley Regan, Phi Delta Theta
- Kayden Buckmaster, Phi Delta Theta

## Award Recipients Recognized for Achievements and Contributions During 2024

**Order of Omega & Gamma Sigma Alpha Faculty/Staff Member of the Year**

- Sandi Schnorenberg, Director of University Security

**Vawracz Award for Community Service**

- Sam Meyer, Phi Kappa Psi

**Outstanding Alumnus Volunteer Award**

- Judi Greenwood, Gamma Phi Beta

**Rissa Amen-Reif Award for Advocacy and Awareness**

- Kenna Berends, Gamma Phi Beta

**Scholars of the Year**

- Kaylee Plahn, Gamma Phi Beta
- Ryan Schmidt, Phi Kappa Psi

**Sorority & Fraternity Chapter Presidents of the Year**

- Amber Adams, Gamma Phi Beta
- Noah Landwer, Lambda Chi Alpha

**Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council Executive Board Members of the Year**

- Kaden Schafer, 2024 Interfraternity Council President
- Kaylee Plahn, 2024 Panhellenic Council VP of Risk Management

**Outstanding New Members**

- Landon Sabelko, Sigma Chi
- Erica Kemp, Gamma Phi Beta

**Marie Bruce Fraternity Man and Sorority Woman of the Year**

- Kaylee Plahn, Gamma Phi Beta
- Aedan Bertrand, Phi Delta Theta

**Public Relations & Marketing Award**

- Sigma Chi Fraternity

**Panhellenic Council Sisterhood Award**

- Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority

**Interfraternity Council Brotherhood Award**

- Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity

**Most Improved Chapter Award**

- Alpha Chi Omega Sorority

**2025 Greek Week Winners**

- Sigma Sigma Sigma



Award recipients were recognized at the April 13 FSL Awards Banquet

This year, eight of 10 chapters submitted their Chapter of the Year Award applications and completed a presentation before a panel of judges. This is a greater number of chapters than we have seen in several years. All eight chapters that submitted were recognized for achievement in at least one category of chapter operations.

## Chapter Achievement Awards

### Alpha Chi Omega Sorority

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Community Service & Philanthropy
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Scholarship
- Recognized for Achievement with Honors in the areas of
  - Recruitment & Retention
  - Risk Management

### Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Member Education & Development
  - Recruitment & Retention
  - Risk Management

### Gamma Phi Beta Sorority

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Community Service & Philanthropy
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Member Education & Development
  - Recruitment & Retention

### Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Risk Management
- For Achievement with Honors in the areas of
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Member Education & Development

### Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Recruitment & Retention
  - Risk Management

### Phi Delta Theta Fraternity

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Member Education & Development
  - Recruitment & Retention

### Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Campus Involvement & Outreach
  - Community Service & Philanthropy
  - Risk Management
- Recognized for Achievement with Honors in the areas of
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Member Education & Development
  - Recruitment & Retention

### Sigma Chi Fraternity

- Recognized for achievement in the areas of
  - Campus Involvement & Outreach
  - Community Service & Philanthropy
  - Fraternity & Sorority Community Involvement
  - Risk Management
  - Scholarship
- Recognized for Achievement with Honors in the area of
  - Recruitment & Retention

## 2024 Chapters of the Year

In order to receive this designation, a chapter must complete a full award application, receiving recognition in at least five of the seven core areas of excellence. Additionally, they must complete a presentation before a panel of judges.

- Alpha Chi Omega Sorority
- Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity



*Members of Alpha Sigma Alpha compete in the 2025 Greek Week Lip Sync Battle*



## Sharing "The Ultimate College Experience"

Minnesota State University, Mankato has a large number of international students enrolled at the university, hailing from more than 90 countries. Many of these students are degree-bound students and will earn a bachelor's or master's degree from MSU. One thing that many people may not realize is that we have a fair number of students who come to us for a brief period of time – a single semester or, in some cases, a full academic year. These students will likely earn their degree from their home university somewhere else in the world.

These exchange students come to the U.S. looking to further their studies, but they also come looking to immerse themselves in the "American college experience." One way that they're able to do that is through Fraternity & Sorority Life. Our organizations take multiple facets of the college experience and wrap it into one nice package.

This year, no fewer than five exchange students, from Japan and The Netherlands, joined our chapters, with groups welcoming these students with open arms and helping them enjoy part of our "Ultimate College Experience."

Sander Stitselaar, a student from the Netherlands who joined Phi Delta Theta this Spring, took a few moments to answer our questions, sharing a bit about his perceptions and experience.

*Home city and country:* Hoevelaken, the Netherlands

*Home University:* Hogeschool Windesheim, Zwolle

*Field of Study:* Computer Science

*When will you graduate?:* Fall semester 2025

*How long will you be enrolled at Minnesota State University, Mankato?:* Only for a semester!

*Were you aware of what fraternities and sororities are before you arrived on campus? If so, what was your perception of them?*

I was not aware of what fraternities and sororities were.

*Why did you choose to join a fraternity at MSU?*

After getting a little more informed at an event for fraternities and sororities in the first week. I was invited by Mark Davison to come and take a look at the house of Phi Delta Theta. One of my goals was to leave a bit of a legacy before I go home, when Mark told me more about fraternity life I was intrigued and decided to take a leap and sign up for it!

*Do your family and friends back home know that you joined one? What are their thoughts about it?*

I told them about it, and at first, they were a bit skeptical, not exactly knowing what it would entail and how it would affect my school performance.

*What are the biggest benefits you got out of your experience as part of a fraternity?*

Getting to know a lot of the guys has been a huge advantage on feeling more at home in MSU. Getting introduced to new people every day and often getting recognized as "The international guy at Phi Delta Theta."



*Sander Stitselaar (right) celebrates Phi Delta Theta's 60th Anniversary with some of his brothers, including Mark Davison (2nd from left), who recruited him.*

*Was your experience what you expected it to be? In what ways was it, and in what ways was it different?*

I don't know what I expected. Initially, everything was quite new and felt very foreign. But eventually it felt more normal than anticipated. All the guys were close and involved, and that caused me to be more at ease with a concept that I wasn't familiar with.

*What advice would you give to other international or exchange students about joining?*

Take the leap! It will seem scary and maybe even weird at first. But the connections I made as part of Phi Delta Theta and being involved in Greek life has been an enriching experience. And looking back, I am glad that I signed up. I would've never made the friends that I have today!

## HELP SUPPORT THE MARIE BRUCE AWARD

This award, the highest honor a member of our community can receive, is named after Marie Bruce, our university's former Dean of Women. She was instrumental in developing Fraternity & Sorority Life here. Recipients of this award have been benefitting from an endowment that was established at the time of Ms. Bruce's death. Thanks to generous gifts, we were able to award two \$1500 scholarships this spring.

Additional support is needed in order to continue awarding the scholarship beyond the next two years. If you are interested in honoring Marie Bruce's legacy and helping us continue to honor the best our Fraternity & Sorority Community has to offer, please consider a gift to the Marie Bruce fund, which is administered by the Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation. Gifts may be made online at [www.mnsu.edu/giving](http://www.mnsu.edu/giving), or they may be sent to:

**Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation  
126 Alumni Foundation Center  
Mankato, MN 56001**

Please reference "Marie Bruce-335020" when making your gift.

Our ultimate goal is to be able to present this award to one man and one woman perpetually. In order to reach that level, the scholarship endowment must increase by \$75,000. If you are interested in discussing a larger gift or pledge that would bolster the endowment and allow us to increase the scholarship award and ensure its long-term sustainability, please contact John Bulcock, Assistant Director of Student Activities for Fraternity & Sorority Life, at [john.bulcock@mnsu.edu](mailto:john.bulcock@mnsu.edu) or 507-389-6076.