



Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma

Alpha Particle

To Bind. To Strive. To Aid.



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Fall 2021

Hi Brothers, one and all,

My name is Jim Maynard, and I am still the chapter adviser for Alpha Chapter. It has been an eventful 18 months or so, and with every good story, there are some highs and lows. I have been chapter adviser a long time now, and the first time I visited the houses was in 2006. They looked old and worn. They were still clean, but they were cramped, and they were lacking

basic amenities and safety features needed in all public buildings. That was when I started looking into getting new ones. It was a proposition littered with obstacles: funding, permits, bureaucracy. The chapter thrived despite the backdrop, and we have overseen a great revival of the fraternity in Madison.



In the last year or so, we have come a long way, but a lot of events have transpired since then, not the least of which was the Pandemic. We pared down the AlphaCorp board to an executive committee to enter into agreements and asked all our actives about which way to go in the future. We found a builder and prepared for the best-case scenario. A new house. The actives over the past year have done an amazing job of carrying on through the housing trials and tribulations. We moved out, paid the bills, and kept our hopes up. I went to a virtual district conclave, the first one I ever attended. I went to a lot of chapter meetings on Zoom. In a way it was easier to attend. I look forward to the day when we can first walk into our new house. It will be like a dream for me. Now we are on the way towards the goal, but a lot of work will be necessary. We need to reach out to our alumni. They are a part of this new venture also. I am very proud of those who have stuck with this through all the hard stuff, both the students and the Alumni who have not forgotten what it means to be an alpha. It is our job to remind all our former house mates what that really means: Friendship, Honor, Support, Love.

James Maynard, *Alpha '06*
Alpha Chapter Advisor

Master Alchemist

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Nicole Haderlein

I am very excited to be the Master Alchemist of Alpha Chi Sigma for Fall of 2021. This semester is going to be a great one. We will return to in-person chapter meetings with an option for brothers to call in virtually on Zoom. Our chapter meetings and events will follow university COVID policies and Registered Student Organization event guidelines.



Last semester, the Alumni Secretary and Health and Safety Chair collaborated to create a Climate Survey to assess the climate of our chapter and areas in which we can improve. This summer, we met and discussed the survey results and brainstormed ideas to improve the climate of our fraternity. One idea was for the Social Committee to plan more activities this semester as an opportunity for members to bond outside of chapter. These include AXEletic events and game nights.

These past few months I have gotten more involved in the housing project. I spoke at the appeal meeting for the Common Council on the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our chapter. I also have attended the biweekly AlphaCorp meetings. This has been quite an informative experience and I am glad that I am helping in the process of creating a new space for our brothers to live.

Vice Master Alchemist

Ally Steinberg

This semester, I held a hybrid form of rush! I was happy to hold rush in a both in-person and virtual setting, so actives and rushes could attend depending on their comfort levels with Covid-19.

To kick off Fall 2021 Rush, I attended an in-person organization fair hosted by UW Madison Center for Leadership and Involvement. Next, our informational meeting was held in a hybrid format, with both an online and in-person portion. I was happy to hold masked in-person events, as I have found a greater feeling of community in-person than felt on Zoom. In-person rush events included a speed friending/ game night event, which is my personal favorite rush event. It allowed the actives and rushes to learn more about each other in a casual setting. Other in-person rush events included trivia, paint night, and beach volleyball. Virtual rush events included virtual game night and virtual journal club.

I am very excited to hold the VMA position this semester. I am very happy to be serving this position one semester before I graduate, and I am excited to see what the other position holders and actives have planned for the Fall. Go AXΣ!!

Marah Williams and Ally Steinberg at UW-Madison organization fair!



Professional Committee

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Emily Cheng, Nicole Haderlein, Erika Kay-Tsumagari
Jake Lapiere, Deep Kapadia, Ryan Quinn

Last semester, the Professional Year committee scaled back on activities and events in response to COVID-19 restrictions. We gave members the option of attending virtual talks, seminars, or workshops. One of the more popular talks was a Citizen Science and STEM Outreach panel featuring graduate students, scientists, and educators from underrepresented backgrounds. Members especially enjoyed hearing the firsthand experiences of graduate students. The panelists emphasized the importance of promoting equity and inclusion in STEM fields via citizen science and public outreach. We hope to continue working towards these goals in our chapter events.

This upcoming semester, we are planning on resuming Family Science Nights at elementary and middle schools in the greater Madison area. The soonest one will be in October. Children will be led through a hands-on activity or demonstration and encouraged to reason through, predict, and reflect on results. We are excited to engage with young and curious minds about the wonders of science!

For our own members, we intend on hosting journal clubs and professional workshops this semester. Journal club has proven to be a fantastic way for members to teach each other, co-construct knowledge, and discuss novel concepts and findings. We hope to feature a diverse array of scientific articles in our next journal club meetings! We also hope to provide members with resources directly related to their professional goals. This may entail workshops centered around graduate school applications, research funding/awards, or resumes. The UW-Madison Writing Center also regularly hosts informational talks that we will encourage our members to check out. If the need arises, we expect that both journal clubs and professional workshops can be easily transitioned to a virtual format. Whether virtual or in-person, we are looking forward to an unforgettable semester back on campus!

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the professional semester branch consistently provided its free biweekly tutoring service. The virtual format on Zoom proved to be an adequate replacement, although participation was relatively low. This upcoming semester we are planning to continue to provide the virtual tutoring services and return to in person tutoring. We will have a hybrid format in which participants can either join on Zoom link or join us in a classroom. We hope to boost participation this year by advertising our free tutoring services at UW-Madison's Academic Support Resource Fair.



The fall 2019 initiates at their banquet ceremony. Listed left to right.

Back row: Laura Kelley, Lillian Smith, Lauren Verhulst, Madelyn Lacroix, Mitchell Hausback, Matthew McGill

Front row: Arushi Gupta, Nathan Lor, Virginia Mathu, Chloë Mitro, Pledge Trainer Olivia Rasmussen, Regina Golding, Jessica Peterson, Nicole Haderlein

Jessica Peterson

Hi everyone! My name is Jess and I'm the Alpha Chapter's Master of Ceremonies this semester. For this semester, although the pandemic is ongoing, the hope is that initiation will be in-person. The university is having in-person classes, allowing student organizations to reserve in-person meeting places and is optimistic about our vaccination rates. My personal goals as MC include having an in-person initiation and working with pledges, actives, and alumni to make sure that it is an initiation where brothers feel they can attend safely.



There are still challenges for returning to initiation in-person. The Chemistry Building, where the Chemistry Department graciously allowed us to hold initiation Fall 2019 in the wake of being unable to use the houses, is still under construction. While the university is allowing students to use spaces, they do have extra guidelines and restrictions given the ongoing pandemic. Finally, COVID is still a safety concern. As important as having in-person initiation is to me, it does not take priority over the safety of brothers. Provided there is an in-person initiation this semester, as I'm planning on, we will be enacting COVID safety measures for those who attend.

I hope to see many of you for initiation on December 4th! Stay safe this fall!

Housing Project Update

Lina Haag, *Alpha '11*

For nearly 100 years, undergraduate members of Alpha Chapter have lived in two houses near the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, 619 and 621 N Lake St. After decades of lovingly caring for them, Alpha Chapter has reached a point where the century-old houses are no longer livable due to significant structural issues and ever-increasing maintenance costs.

Over the last seven years, the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity Building Corporation, Inc. (or "AlphaCorp") has been searching for a sustainable, long-term solution to our housing challenge. AlphaCorp partnered with developer Patrick Properties and architecture firm Gary Brink & Associates (GBA) to discuss options for demolition of the existing houses and constructing a new residential building in their place. By working side by side with our local partners, however, we were able to draw up plans for a new building. The two houses will eventually be replaced by a new, eight story apartment building, with our fraternity occupying two floors while the remainder would be publicly available apartments for rent, primarily to other students.

The houses' age and location, however, were of monumental importance to a small but vocal contingent of historic preservation enthusiasts. They believed that the houses' inclusion in the Langdon Street Historic District gave them significant historic. This posed a challenge for obtaining demolition and conditional use permits.

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The Plan Commission meeting took place in November of 2020 - the first time the proposed plan was presented to and reviewed by City of Madison officials. Prior to this meeting, Alpha Chapter brothers garnered alumni support via signatures on a group letter, prepared template emails and letters for supporters to send to elected officials, and organized speakers to deliver testimony in support of our project at the meeting. Despite an impassioned delivery and seemingly overwhelming support for our proposal, we received a unanimous rejection of our requests for demolition and conditional use permits due to a preference for “historic preservation”. This initial interaction with the City’s committees taught us a valuable lesson, and the frustration and disappointment with the outcome changed our game plan. Channeling our emotions into action, we resolved to keep trying and filed an appeal to the City of Madison Common Council. Re-energized with purpose, our brothers delivered another compelling series of speeches at the May 18, 2021 Common Council meeting. After a stressful and lengthy three hours of public comment, alder debate, and incredible support from Alder Bennett, we are thrilled to report that we succeeded in our campaign. Our appeal, which required a minimum of 14 votes to overturn the Plan Commission decision, passed 16-3. Though we have conquered the most significant obstacle thus far, we still have several exciting next steps and the challenges ahead. Our development team is seeking to proceed quickly with construction with the aspiration of opening the new building in August of 2023.

Unfortunately, we are facing increased costs of construction, depletion of our financial resources due to the unexpectedly long timeframe between vacating the previous houses and receiving city approval, and the uncharted territory of the unique mixed-use residential property we are constructing. We are exploring all financial options but will still need your help to make this a reality. When construction is complete, we look forward to officially inviting all brothers, friends, and family to help us create the next century of memories. If you wish to donate online, please visit <https://alphachisigmauw.com/donate>.

Please note that donations made to the Alpha Chapter Building Fund are not tax-deductible.

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