



Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma

# ALPHA PARTICLE

To Bind. To Strive. To Aid.

University of Wisconsin - Madison • AXΣ • Spring 2019 Newsletter

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## ALPHA CHAPTER HOUSES: THE PATH FORWARD

To my brothers in Alpha Chi Sigma,

I come to you with bittersweet, yet hopeful, news about the Alpha Chapter Houses. Earlier this month, the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma, Building Corporation, Inc. (Alpha Corp) signed a letter of intent with a local developer

to pursue an ambitious new construction project on the land currently occupied by the chapter houses. This marks a significant turning point in Alpha Chapter and fraternity history.



As many of you are aware, the chapter houses—located at 621 and 619 North Lake Street—have been deteriorating with age, well beyond the ability of regular maintenance and upkeep. In 2014, we discovered that 621 had significant structural issues including a crumbling foundation underneath the north wall (nearest the lake). Alpha Corp managed to secure temporary relief through construction of a shoring wall, but this fix only bought a few years' time for our organization to find a sustainable long-term solution. The situation was further complicated due to financial challenges. While Alpha Corp has been able to maintain a stable operating budget, cashflow, and emergency savings, our organization did not have a capital reserve in place for major rehabilitation or reconstruction of the properties. With the clock ticking down, the board faced a challenge unlike any other and needed to take decisive action. As the custodians of the Alpha Chapter houses—the first of the fraternity—we needed to ensure the security of our home for generations to come, just as our predecessors had.



*Members enjoying an athletic event- Ice skating at the Shell!*

# POSITION HOLDERS

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*Executive Board members that attended District Conclave at Alpha Theta in Iowa City, Iowa.  
Left to right: Julie Wessel, Lucas Dinh, Sarah Hall, Claire Melidosian*

## MASTER ALCHEMIST

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Cara McMahon  
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## EXPANSION

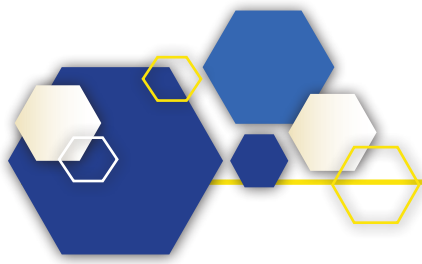
Jake Laperie  
Max Scheleck  
Ethan Leung  
Arnav Bhat  
Lapeire@wisc.edu

## FUTURES

Kory Byrnes  
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## SAFETY

Kory Byrnes  
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As such, we have explored numerous strategies for the chapter. We reached out to our alumni for professional expertise. We engaged outside consultants to assess the viability of a capital campaign to establish principal funding for new construction. We contracted with property management companies to stabilize ongoing maintenance/operations and simultaneously leverage their professional relationships with construction companies, architects, and real estate developers. We connected with all kinds of lenders, from private banks to public bonds to special financing programs for historical rehabilitation. We considered every option, up to and including an outright public listing and sale of the properties. Many of the least desirable options were also the easiest and least risky to execute, and they would have ensured long-term financial stability.

The choice was not easy. As brothers, we all have fond memories of our collegiate years, and for Alpha Chapter alumni, many of these memories were made in these two houses. The activities they have hosted are too numerous to count, from chapter meetings, tutoring, dinners, parties, celebrations and impromptu gatherings, to deep conversations, solemn remembrances, and the initiation rites of hundreds of Alpha brothers—the houses are truly a special part of the Alpha Chapter. Every brother with whom I have spoken, no matter how many years have passed since their days as collegiate, can point to a space in the houses and recall a memorable moment that took place there. The sentiment of “if these walls could talk” is truly real for 621 and 619.

As a board, we could not resign ourselves to the easy way out. Divestiture of even one house felt wrong, as though we would be selling off one family member to save the remainder. Neither could we part with our cozy little corner of Lake Street and relocate elsewhere in the downtown/campus area of Madison. Yet, we could not deny the reality of the situation before us, and it was in these values and decisions that we came to our chosen path forward. It has long been a dream of many brothers to tear down the houses and rebuild one large structure in their place. That dream will soon become a reality, but perhaps in a different sense than originally envisioned. Due to financial constraints, funding new construction would be impossible for Alpha Corp on its own—an outside source of cash was

a necessity. As the prospects of a successful donor-funded capital campaign were slim at best, we reached out to real estate developers (both local and regional / national) with the offer of a joint venture on the existing footprint. In many ways, a joint venture is the ideal solution for our organization. We would provide land in a highly desirable location, and our partner would provide capital and development expertise. Together, we would pursue an eight-story development on the existing footprint. We thus defined our high-level future vision: the ground floor would be shared space for the building tenants. Two stories would be allocated to the fraternity: one as common space for all brothers, and the other as apartment-style residences rented out to brothers. Our developer partner would retain the remaining five floors as rental apartments.

Such a project carries numerous risks beyond those typical of new construction. Joint ventures, much like marriages, are fraught with potential issues, but the key to success lies in finding the right partner. Through a rigorous search and vetting process, we, the Alpha Corp board, believe we have found such a person and company: Patrick Corcoran, owner of Patrick Properties in Madison, WI. In many ways, Patrick is an ideal fit for our vision. He completed a similar development a few years ago just around the corner from our houses: 621 Mendota Court. The eight-story apartment building sits on a plot formerly occupied by two discrete rental houses. Patrick worked with the City of Madison to obtain all the necessary permits and approvals in addition to partnering with architects and a general contractor to complete the construction. He has navigated the process from concept to completion before.





## Continued, Letter from Vice President Jay Sekhon

The most critical factor in any relationship, especially one as permanent as this, is trust. As a board, we have done an extensive amount of due diligence, from background checks to professional references to a full-blown RFP process to vet Patrick. In all aspects, he has passed with flying colors. Throughout numerous conversations, both formal and informal, he has conducted himself with the utmost professionalism, integrity, and candor. I have no doubts that he is the right partner for Alpha Corp to execute on this vision.

And thus, we come to the present day. Our two organizations have signed a letter of intent, but this is merely the start of the long and arduous process to replace the existing structures. Patrick and Alpha Corp are working towards an ambitious goal, which includes the aim of beginning construction as early as summer this year. However, there are a lot of unknowns and variables to consider, and even the timeline itself may change. Despite the ambiguities, we are in good hands for successfully executing this project. We are fortunate to have the assistance of alumni with extensive professional experience in mergers & acquisitions who are helping guide this effort.

That said, we still need help from our brothers. The current incarnation of our home may be disappearing, but the fundamental challenges of property ownership will remain. Our new space will need funding to provide building finishes, furniture, and other improvements to turn the bare walls into a new home. There are many ways to get involved and contribute to the future home of the Alpha Chapter, and especially to leave a legacy behind for generations of brothers to come.

And lastly – please rest assured that we will have the opportunity to properly say goodbye to the houses. Change can be hard, but the fabric of our brotherhood is fundamentally built upon the study of change. And though we must continue to strive for progress, we cannot forget the ties that bind us together. These houses have sheltered us in innumerable ways for decades, and it is only fitting that we send them off with same love and warmth they have provided us for so long.

We will continue to provide updates and communication on our progress and ways to help the housing effort. Recognizing the early stage of this development, I ask that this news not be broadcast outside of the fraternity at this time, as we do have certain public disclosures of which to be mindful. At any time, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.



Yours in the double bond,  
Jay Sekhon, A'07  
Vice President  
Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi  
Sigma, Building Corporation, Inc.

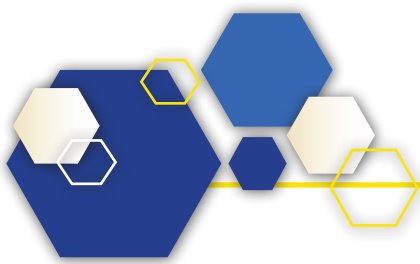


## HELP ALPHA CHAPTER START A CAREER NETWORK

- Are you willing to take a call from an undergraduate about their career plans?
- Are you willing to serve on a career panel in the fall or spring?
- Are you interested in being part of a career network of chapter alumni & undergraduates?
- Are you willing to share with other alumni & undergraduates internship and full-time job opportunities?

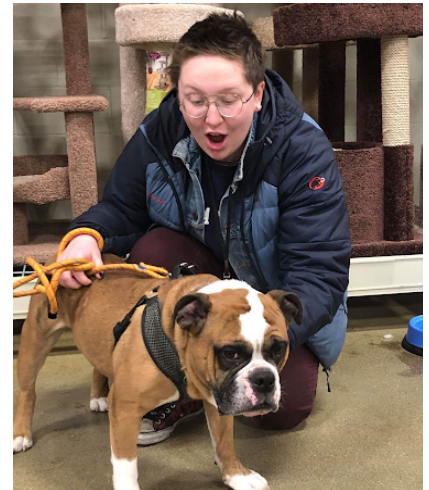
If you can answer yes to one or more of the above questions, please email Sarah Hall-MacKenzie at [hallmackenzi@wisc.edu](mailto:hallmackenzi@wisc.edu) and we will forward you further information about our new career network.





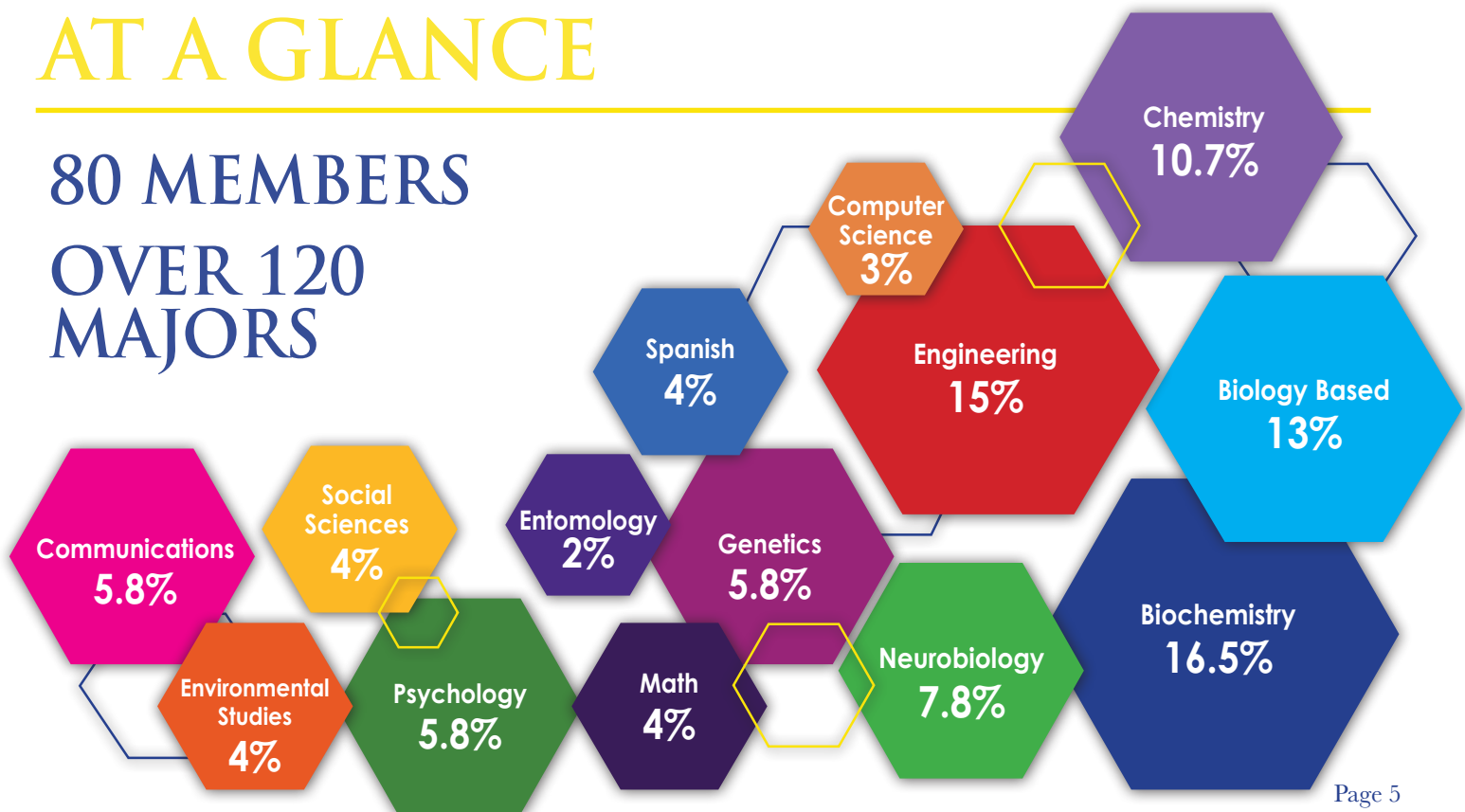
# GOOD IN THE COMMUNITY

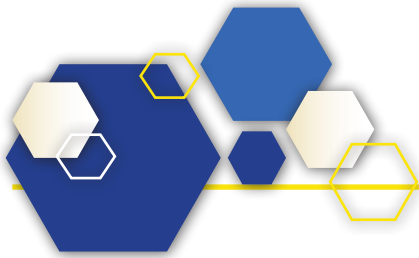
During the fall 2018 academic semester at UW-Madison, the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma had a very productive timetable. Throughout the semester the Outreach Committee worked diligently, which effectively contributed to that productivity. The committee helped get active members of AXS involved in the community through various events including Dane County Humane Society Pet Adoption Clinics and the Succulents for Science Fundraiser. Over 50 volunteer hours were dedicated by active members towards the Madison community and fundraise \$1,148 for science programs at the Madison Metropolitan School District. This coming spring 2019 semester, the Outreach Committee is aiming to get active members more involved by adding a couple new events, in addition to most of last semester's events, to the Outreach timetable including Habitat for Humanity's UW Souper Bowl on February 2 at 10:30am-8pm and a Chipotle Fundraiser on March 9 at Chipotle on State Street from 5pm-9pm. Additionally, this semester there is an outreach event included in the rush calendar. Rushes and actives will make tie blankets for the Ronald McDonald House Charities in Madison, WI. Furthermore, Outreach Committee has set up and will eagerly implement a very exciting spring 2019 semester schedule of activities for actives to contribute to the local Madison, WI community.



## AT A GLANCE

80 MEMBERS  
OVER 120  
MAJORS





# SEE THE WORK OF OUR MEMBERS!

Over 75% of our current members work as undergraduate researchers here on campus!



## Claire Melidosian '16

I am a Junior pre-med entomology major. I have been working in Russell labs with Professor Dan Young for two years. We focus mostly on taxonomy which examines how insects are related to each other, and how they have evolved. A recent project we did was a survey of the Beetle families Mycteridae and Boridae in the Great Lakes region. I also have done survey and curation work with the Field Museum in Chicago. After graduation, I hope to get my masters and then go on to medical school.



## Dan Cappabianca '16

I do undergraduate research in the Raval lab in the Wisconsin Institute for Medical Research. Our lab is in the Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Center specifically in the Cardiovascular department. We use fibroblast cells which build the extracellular matrix (ECM) that houses all of the cells in our body and provides structure to regenerate heart tissue. The current research involves using this created ECM seeded with stem cells to see if heart damage can be reversed. Clinical research is still underway to confirm our hypothesis and the exact mechanism is also being studied. This lab is wonderful because it has introduced me to the world of stem cells and the curative potential they have. My current goals are to get a PhD/MBA, do research in stem cell therapies on neurodegenerative disorders, and eventually do a startup where I can move the developed therapy into the market.



## Jacky Lor '16

I'm a senior majoring in microbiology. The lab I research in is the Pelegri Lab in the Genetics/Medical Genetics department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Our lab does a lot of work with aspects in early developmental biology using the zebrafish as a model organism. In the past, the lab has done a significant amount of research with the maternal factors of development, i.e. what the egg brings in (other than DNA) to help facilitate early embryo development. While maternal factors have been well researched, paternal factors of early development have been overlooked, and that is where my specific project comes in. I am currently working on characterizing the function of a sperm specific gene, *cep41*, to see how it

plays a role in early development of the embryo. Using CRISPR/Cas9, we knocked out the gene in a generation of zebrafish to create mutants. Analysis of these mutant fish will tell us many things, such as the function of the gene, the importance of paternal factors in development, and potential genetic causes of male infertility. I have been working on this project for about 2 years now and in that time, I was lucky enough to receive an undergraduate research fellowship to help fund my project. Publishable results are expected by the end of this coming summer, which is very exciting!



# ALUMNAE NEWS

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## LAWRENCE JASSIN '80

Larry and his wife, Lisa, live in Marietta, Georgia. He is a Global Marketing Director for Eckert & Ziegler Analytics.

## ELLEN NEMETZ '81

Ellen and her husband, Jim, live in Phoenix, Arizona. She no longer works in any scientific field. Instead, she works as a professional artist in Phoenix.

## MARY DOYLE '82

Mary lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She works for Millipore Sigma as a Senior Scientist.

## STANLEY FREY '82

Stan and his wife, Laurie, live in Palatine, Illinois. He is a R&D Fellow for Honeywell/ UOP LLC. Stan is thoroughly enjoying the capstone period of his career as at-large process development Fellow working on all things of interest in Chemical Engineering process and equipment development for UOP in Des Plaines, IL. He rode 400 miles on the annual Erie Canal Bike Tour on a tandem. Stan and his wife enjoy riding tandem and joined the Wisconsin version of Midwest tandem societies known as Couples on Wheels (COWs). He bought their dream house in Madison which they will be renting for a few years before retirement. If you are interested in renting a beautiful home with a deck view of the lake, let him know!

## BRIAN OTTUM, PHD '82

Brian and his wife live in Saline, Michigan. He is the President of Ottum Research & Consulting. Brian is a lifelong "Watcher of the Skies" and uses his remote-control telescope, located in the desert southwest, to take pictures of galaxies, nebulae and star clusters.

## MARGARET MUCHA '85

Meg and her husband, Bob, live in Germantown, Wisconsin. She is the Senior QARA Leader for IBM. Meg and her husband traveled to the Greek Island of Santorini for their 30th anniversary vacation in 2018. Meg said, "it is a beautiful island with a lot of history to see and very friendly Greeks to meet".

## CASSANDRA WATSON '00

Cassy and her husband, Rod, live in Shawano, Wisconsin. She is part of the Teacher Education Faculty at the College of Menominee Nation. Her family just welcomed their third child, Eleanora, in December 2018.

## ANDREA ZUCKERMAN '01

Andrea lives in Lakewood, Ohio. She works for Cleveland Clinic as a Pharmacy Informatics Specialist.

## REBECCA DAHMER '03

Becki and her husband, Neil, live in Plymouth, Wisconsin. She is a Registered Nurse and works for Aurora Health Care. In the past year she became the owner of a puppy named Uecker and is pregnant with baby girl #2.



*Photo taken by Brian Ottum '82*



*Photo of Santorini, Greece, taken by Meg Mucha '85.*

## RACHEL EGGER '07

Rachel and her wife, Elizabeth Karn, live in Cary, North Carolina. She is a Senior Scientist that works for the company, Syngenta.

## DR. ANDREW LACROIX '09

Andy lives in Lillington, North Carolina. He is an Adjunct Instructor for Duke University.

## DR. AMANDA BAUM-WAGNER '09

Amanda and her husband, Thomas, live in Chicago, Illinois. She is a Visiting Assistant Professor at DePaul University.

## KELLY ALLEN '10

Kelly and her husband, Logan, live in Greenfield, Wisconsin. She works for Rockwell Automation as a Chemist.

## PATRICK BRADY '10

Patrick lives in Iowa City, Iowa. He is a Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Iowa.

## JACQUELYN DEBOTH '10

Jackie lives in Madison, Wisconsin. She is a QA for Epic Systems Corporations.



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*Address Service Requested*

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SPRING  
2019  
BANQUET

*Please join us in welcoming*  
**THE SPRING 2019  
PLEDGE CLASS**  
**SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH**  
*for the last initiation  
in the original Alpha houses*

For info on the Initiation Ceremony  
Contact Julie Wessel at [jwessel2@wisc.edu](mailto:jwessel2@wisc.edu)

Madison Masonic Center  
301 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703  
6:30-9:30 | Dinner will be served at 6:30  
Contact: Olivia Rasmussen at [olrasmussen@wisc.edu](mailto:olrasmussen@wisc.edu) or (715)302-8147

RSVP: Friday, March 15th for an  
early bird special of \$30 or by  
March 29th for regular pricing of \$35

*Please join us after banquet for an open house event to say goodbye to the Alpha Chapter houses*