Pennsylvania Epsilon Alumni Inc.

March 2012

Re: Pennsylvania Epsilon Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi

Dear Brothers:

It is important for you to be aware of the status of Pennsylvania Epsilon at Gettysburg College. Last year you heard from the Pennsylvania Epsilon Alumni Inc. (PAE) in a joint letter with Gettysburg College (GC) where we advised you of the challenges faced regarding maintaining membership levels and the rights of the undergraduates to live in Weiser Hall. We also shared with you in a summer issue of The Torch what the undergraduates and PAE were doing to try and meet recruitment objectives and occupancy requirements for Weiser Hall. For anyone who missed last year’s letter or the August 2011 issue of The Torch or would like to refresh their memory, a copy is posted on our website at www.pennsylvaniaepsilon.com under the Alumni Relations tab.

In summary, if we did not recruit enough pledges to fill Weiser Hall to 80% occupancy (22 beds) in the fall of 2012, we faced loss of residential rights to Weiser Hall for at least one year. Given that we entered this past fall with only 12 active brothers, several of whom were either graduating early or transferring out after 2011/2012, we required 15 pledges this past September to meet the minimum occupancy level for fall 2012. Despite an admirable effort of the undergraduates and PAE which included routine conference calls over the summer, only four men pledged in September 2011, most of them pre-med students. Although we had solid rush events that were primarily relationship building based events to get to know candidates, in the end we failed to meet our objective.

While it is tempting to play Monday morning quarterback regarding the effort, methods and results, we assure you that you that PAE and the undergraduates gave it their all. In truth, our current band of men is a solid group of outstanding young men with an aggregate GPA well north of 3.0. However, like all of us, they have their idiosyncrasies: In general the young men of PKP are not as involved in sports or campus life as we would have liked to see. As you may know, sports and campus involvement are important to recruitment. Strong at academics, active in intramurals and friendly, it may be that the law of momentum was just not on their side. Running a chapter, rush and academics are all hard work and to some extent the work of the chapter was falling on the shoulders of only about a dozen young men for the last few years. When many of us pledged PKP it was to have a social outlet, to be connected and to have a common place to gather and share our common interests. Technology has made it such that connecting can be done from anywhere and to some extent technology has changed the way people socialize, form bonds and accept responsibility. Not to say that fraternities at Gettysburg cannot or will not survive, we believe they can and that Pennsylvania Epsilon can live on, but something must change in order for us to survive.
In case you are wondering how the other fraternities did with recruitment last fall, here’s a quick summary. The ten social fraternities pledged 152 men, an average of 15 each. ATO and Phi Delt both pledged 26, Lambda Chi 25, Phi Sig and SAE 16 each, Sigma Chi 13, CROW and FIJI 9 each and Sigma Nu 8.

PAE Alumni met in Gettysburg in December to discuss our status and next steps for the chapter. We took stock of our situation and acknowledged the following during our review:

- **Strengths:** 150+ year legacy, Miller Hall, PAE engagement, upon loss of occupancy rights we have the ability to recover Weiser Hall for 3 years, good standing of chapter and PAE with GC, support of GC
- **Weaknesses:** Too few actives, weak recruitment skills by undergraduates, reputation as a dying fraternity
- **Opportunities:** 4 recent pledges are strong students, 900+ living alumni, future interest groups seeking residential status
- **Threats:** Permanent loss of Weiser Hall, general interest of men in fraternities declining, debt to GC, weakened resolve of PAE if insufficient support from full alumni base, competition with other fraternities, national requirements (administrative and financial)

We also met with GC officials in January to review the situation and plan for the future. Subsequently we had several discussions with our National office. Given our weak position, we have had to make a very sobering decision. Here is how we plan to move forward:

- In order to avoid the costs associated with maintaining our status as an active fraternity in the eyes of our National organization, we will voluntarily surrender our charter at the end of the spring 2012 semester. At that point the chapter will no longer be acknowledged by the college or National. The current undergraduates will be deemed to be PKP alumni.
- PAE will work closely with the GC and undergraduate alumni brothers to assess opportunities to recolonize at the earliest possible opportunity. We have the full support of our National office and GC in surrendering our charter at present and in recolonizing at our earliest opportunity.

Clearly, this is not something we are pleased to report. However, in the true spirit of a Phi Psi, all is not lost: there remains significant opportunity to reverse our fortune in the not to distance future. Here is some general information about current state of the chapter and how certain matters will be handled:

1. Approximately 12 undergraduates are returning in the fall of 2012 and are investigating common interest housing and/or living together off campus. If we can fill the house to 80% occupancy for fall 2013, 2014 or 2015 then we have the unilateral right to reclaim the house. In subsequent years, GC has discretion on whether to yield the house back to us.
2. All fraternity belongings and memorabilia will be removed from Weiser Hall this summer by the alumni for safe storage.
3. Miller Hall will continue to be used for alumni meetings and GC has not expressed any interest in diminishing our rights to Miller Hall. However, PAE is concerned that if PKP were to cease to
exist at GC, that over time, a lack of alumni involvement could threaten the sanctity of Miller Hall and the preservation of its exclusive use for PKP.

4. As a result of our low occupancy rate, we now owe the college approximately $107,000 and have not had sufficient funds to honor our commitment to repay them $2500 each calendar quarter. This financial obligation arose from three years of failing to maintain 80% occupancy and often being at 50% occupancy. Last spring we committed to a repayment plan over several years. Unfortunately, alumni donations are now down drastically from an annual average of $12K-$15K in recent years to less than $5,000 for the 2011/2012 year, so we are unable to meet commitments made to the college. GC anticipates filling Weiser Hall to capacity for the next 2 years which will generate a credit to PKPs benefit and over two years will come close to eliminating our debt to GC. This is testimony to GC’s willingness to work with PAE to mitigate our debt and help us eventually recover.

As a group, PAE has expended enormous effort and hours over the last four years in support of our chapter. It is disappointing and deeply discouraging to see these efforts fail to achieve their desired objective; please trust that we believe we did everything we could have done and then some. We have done our best and we sincerely hope you respect our efforts. We believe that we can rebuild the chapter in the years to come and that a “fresh start” might be exactly what we need to revitalize PKP at Gettysburg College. In our discussions with National and GC, they agree with this philosophy and have seen such a strategy be successful many times before. As you may know, at Gettysburg College other fraternities have disbanded for various reasons including under far more dire circumstances and then been resurrected and are now thriving: the most recent example is Sigma Chi.

This is not the end and we endeavor to view this as a new beginning. We continue to need your financial support and encouragement, even more so given our current circumstances. With your support, we believe we can recover and restore the Pennsylvania Epsilon chapter to its glory days.

Please feel free to get in touch with us if you have any questions or comments. We will be updating you as the situation evolves further.

Fraternally,

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Live Ever Die Never, Phi Kappa Psi!
With your help, our strong band can ne’er be broken!