

THE THETA RECORD

Official Newsletter of the Theta Chapter of Chi Phi Fraternity

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RPI RELATIONS

The Chapter has begun to work on returning to normalcy as the pandemic begins to subside. This includes in-person operations with more standard house meetings, recruitment, philanthropic efforts, educational support, ritual, social events and brotherhood events. RPI now acknowledges and does not prohibit our operations and officially allows us to continue living in-house again.

There are a number of important developments in the organizations we are affiliated with. RPI has finally hired a new permanent Greek Dean, Ethan M. Stubbs, (after two years of interim administrators in the position) who has been working to meet with Chapter leadership as well as Alumni Associations and Housing Corporations. Alongside this, RPI is now requiring that Chapters have a “Peer Advisor” (PA) if they do not already have a live-in advisor. This PA must be a Junior, Senior or Graduate student that is living in-house and will have responsibilities similar to the RAs do in residence halls. Currently, our Chapter has maintained 3 members on IFC (Ethan Fovel as Treasurer, Roberto Lopez as a general director and Chistian Winicki as IFC Greek Senator) and 1 Brother on the Greek Judicial Board. Two of our Brothers were elected to the IFC Executive Board for 2022, Noah Prisament as Executive Vice President and Alex Liu as Chapter Success Committee Chair.

Recruitment this semester went very well for us here at the institute with the first fully in-person recruitment since Spring 2020. Our Chapter had 7 newly initiated Brothers this semester, all sophomores. This was far above the average as only 126 people signed bids across the 20 IFC Chapters in good standing. We had the third highest number of signees (10)! This semester we have only 24 active Brothers (and 1 away Brother), but, hopefully, this influx will allow us to begin rounding that corner.

We received back our Chapter Profile score from RPI for Spring 2021 in which we scored a 3.75 out of 4, putting us in the Excellent category of Chapters alongside only Lambda Chi Alpha, Pi Lambda Phi, Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Phi and Pi Beta Phi. This system aims to assess Chapters on the aspects that they want to “show off” as opposed to a strict set of somewhat arbitrary standards imposed by the institute. It consists of 5 essays compiled into a cohesive submission that may one day be advertised as informational material on school or IFC websites. These Chapter Profiles will be posted on our website alongside the newsletters for any interested alumni under the TAA (Theta Alumni Association) page.

Earlier this semester, Br. Noah Prisament was one of the 6 students involved in the interviewing process for the new RPI president. The candidate that was selected to be the incoming president, is one of the candidates that he had decided he would like to have serve as the next president. Per Br. Prisament, Martin Schmidt showed genuine willingness and effort to listen to the opinions of stakeholders as to how he should formulate his decisions, plan and vision for RPI in the future. He showed an ability to listen to and address feedback, to communicate openly and proactively, and to try to find the best solutions for those that give input. Br. Prisament plans to work to leverage his participation to directly promote the Greek Community and our Chapter to Dr. Schmidt as he starts in this position.

Overall, the Chapter is continuing to uphold our high standards and we are working towards returning to more normal operations.

The Chapter recommends that alumni stay aware of the controversies happening within the Rensselaer Alumni Association concerning bylaw changes. A good source for important updates is <https://renewrensselaer.org/>.



UPDATES FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

Academics

Similar to the past few years, the Brothers continue to maintain outstanding grades and our Chapter ranks among the highest on campus. Our average cumulative GPA is a **3.30** while the men’s’ average at RPI is a **3.23**. This cumulative GPA ranks fourth highest among all fraternities at Rensselaer.

We continue to institute strong academic programs which promote Brothers’ academics. Study hours are held twice weekly and attendance this semester has been extremely high. We created a tutoring program for our new members to help them succeed in their classes, on top of tutoring for Brothers which already existed. Furthermore, our Scholarship Chairman has been working personally with Brothers on academic programs to help them improve their grades and build stronger study and time management skills. Academics continue to be at the forefront of our Chapter’s values and Brothers are constantly reaching new heights.

Philanthropy

This semester, Chi Phi brothers were able to increase volunteering efforts as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic began to wane. Over the duration of this semester, the Brothers provided service to multiple organizations in the capital region, including sorting food at the Regional Food Bank, helping with clean-up for His Table at Victorious Life Christian Church, and helping to provide groceries to families in need at Provisions Food Bank. We also rekindled our relationship with the Boys & Girls Club of Albany. Notably, we were able to provide a large volunteering effort for their “Spooktober” event, which occurred during the Halloween weekend. Brothers that attended dressed up in costumes and participated in a haunted house while handing out candy.



The Brotherhood came together to put on a new event we named “Casa de Quesadillas”, where brothers cooked and delivered 4 styles of quesadilla and side dishes on a Friday night. We made a profit of almost \$500 from the event, which was donated directly to RAINN, America’s largest anti-sexual violence organization and Chi Phi’s official national charity. Overall, the brothers of Chi Phi put in 242 hours of community service and raised \$668.17 for charity. The Theta Chapter has been very successful in servicing our local community, and we hope to continue upholding our charitable reputation in the community.



Yard sale to raise money for RAINN



Brothers at the Boys & Girls Club Spooktober event

Staying Social

This semester has been particularly challenging, but also exciting in the same regard. With RPI's strict initial policies in response to COVID-19, much of the campus, especially the freshman and sophomore classes, felt fragmented. The social scene coming into this semester was challenging but gave way to the possibility to make this semester especially productive. Our goals were to restore sorority relations, engage with fraternities to form strong, beneficial connections, and increase our presence on campus. We are proud to say that we did exactly what we set out to do. We have had 4 mixers with multiple sororities. We also had an event with TEΦ and one with AXP & ΦIA, and continuous events throughout rush and onward. We have also had some really great internal events as well. This year we did the Cabin trip for the first time since Fall of 2019 (pictured below), we had formal, movie nights, and other events that had been popular in the past. We had something happening every week but our schedule was well balanced between brotherhood and external events. This semester has been a truly busy yet rewarding one, as we reformed and grew both our external and internal bonds.



Brothers at the Fall 2021 Cabin Trip

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



Br. Jacob Szottfried (left) graduated with a Bachelor's in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and Br. Carlos Fernando Salgado (right) graduated with a Master's in Aerospace Engineering. Br. Szottfried is currently pursuing positions at Felton and Commonwealth Fusion Systems. Br. Salgado recently accepted an offer as a Computational Fluid Dynamics Engineer at Boeing in Philadelphia. Congratulations to both of these hard-working gentlemen — may their futures be bright and their careers high-paying.



CHAPTER OPERATIONS

Finances

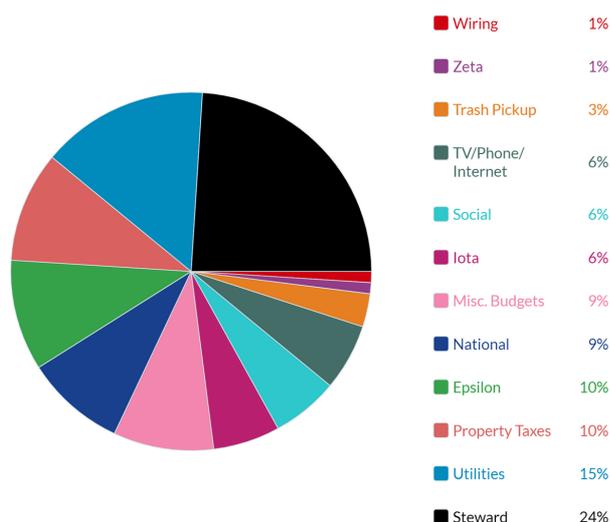
For the past four years, our Chapter has not had our rightful tax-exempt status as a social club. Thankfully, our Chapter has finally regained our tax-exempt status thanks to the hard work of our 2021 Alpha, and previous Delta, Br. Noah Prisament. With the help of his committee and Executive Board officers, Br. Prisament spent over a hundred hours working to get our tax-exempt status back. Finally, a year later we have finally received notice from the IRS that we are now tax-exempt again.

The Chapter has been struggling with rising costs and a declined membership for the past several years, but thankfully that situation is turning around. This past tax year we had \$171,662.5 in total income and we netted \$13,965. However, our true income will be significantly less once Housing Corp. accepts our rental payments. We have also been spending a sizeable amount on house repairs and renovations. In the past year, we have renovated three rooms in The Chi for around \$1,000/room, purchased a new boiler for Stroud Hall for around \$8,000, spent thousands in plumbing bills, and installed a new attic floor in Stroud Hall for a bit above \$2,000. Housing Corporation has thankfully agreed to cover the cost of these expenses to encourage the proper maintenance and upkeep of the Fraternity.

Risk Management

This semester, we had our first regular in-person Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) inspection since Spring 2020. The standards expected were fairly consistent with those from non-COVID semesters. However, there was an emphasis on starting anew with inspections of every residential room instead of only a sampling of them. Even with these changes, we still passed both inspections with scores of **78%** and **86%** for the Main house and Stroud Hall respectively. Because of the transition to in-person classes, and to ensure the safety of the Brotherhood, the house has increased its supply of first aid kits and additional medical supplies, along with providing masks upon entry.

Fall 2021 Budget Distribution



Brothers and Bylaws

There have been a few bylaw changes this past semester, the most notable being the addition of a the Peer Live-In Advisor; as newly required by the Institute. Br. Connor Hanggi has stepped up to this position for these Fall and Spring semesters. The position itself has similar responsibilities as that of an RA, and we're interested to see what positive impacts it can have on the chapter this coming semester. We are also proud of our Brothers who have secured internships and full-time roles at locations such as MathWorks and Anheuser-Busch (pictured right: companies where Brothers have secured internships and jobs).



Housing

This semester we have completed many projects around both houses. The biggest ones were the renovation of the Stroud Hall attic floor, the Renovation of M22 and M34, the replacement of the water heater circulator in The Chi and the warranty work to fix one of the two boilers in The Chi. Apart from that we have also done lots of touch up and maintenance work on the plumbing in both houses, most specifically the A2 toilet and the ongoing work with installing a new dishes sink. The sink replacement was a part of the fixes required following our EHS inspection which also included some electrical work on the outlets and light fixtures in M25 and M34, as well as general ceiling work in the basement of The Chi and parts of the Stroud Hall. We have also worked on mitigation efforts such as pumping after storm flooding to help maintain the longevity of the houses while longer term plans are in the works for things like foundation repairs in The Chi. Brothers spent hundreds of hours in total this semester working on house related projects. Upcoming projects include repairing significant portions of the trim in both houses and completing the installation of the new dishes sink and garbage disposal.

Attic Floor Renovation

Before



After

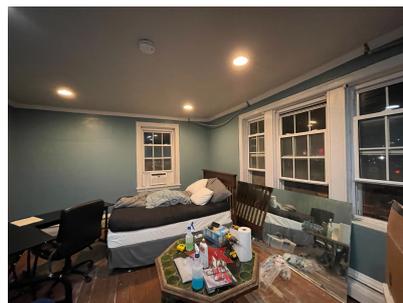


M22 Renovation

Before

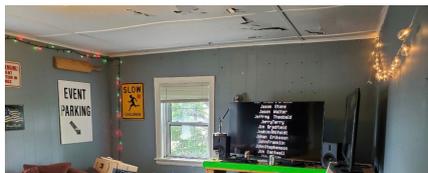


After

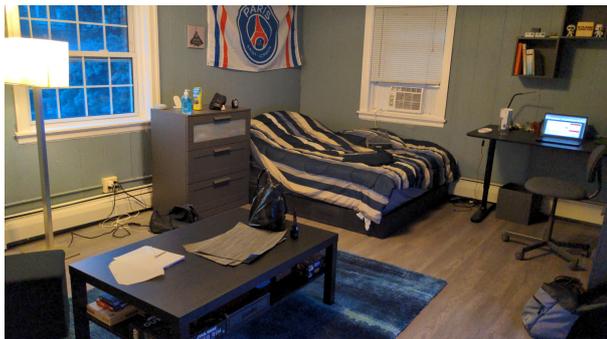


M34 Renovation

Before



After



CHAPTER GROWTH

Rush

We had a very successful rush this semester. As RPI loosened its COVID restrictions, we were able to hold larger open events. We brought back Chi Phi staples such as Wingstock and Lobsterfest and had overwhelming attendance at both. Our BBQ & Lawn Games and Surf & Turf Dinner events were also popular amongst the RPI community. In addition, we added new events to our calendar, like Laser Tag and Build-Your-Own Ice Cream Sundae. Through smaller efforts, we built more personal relationships with potential new members (PNMs), which ultimately allowed us to extend bids to candidates who we believe will become outstanding Chi Phi gentlemen.

Next year we hope to build off of these successes. We anticipate attracting many new members next semester because freshmen will be able to rush under RPI's deferred recruitment policy. Many of the events mentioned above will surely be brought back alongside new engaging ideas. Starting next semester IFC is implementing new systems for formal recruitment that aim to help make the process more streamlined, improve the PNM experience, and increase new member signings. These changes include requiring PNMs to register for recruitment, implementing an alternating schedule for chapters to host rush events, and returning to shorter recruitment schedules akin to 2017 and 2018. The Chapter remains cautiously optimistic as we begin working to modify our practices to function within these strict new guidelines. Overall, the active Brotherhood will continue to work diligently during rush to plan fun events and to build meaningful relationships with men who we believe will fit well in our brotherhood.



New Members

We are pleased to introduce the Kappa Triton pledge class, all of whom are sophomores in the class of 2024. Our Theta, Br. Marcello Degani, ensured all aspects of the pledging process were accomplished to make these men our Brothers. The Chapter is proud of everything these young men have accomplished and look forward to seeing their contributions to our Fraternity. Already, they have reworked the lighting in the main house basement. We know that as long as we continue to recruit dedicated men like the Kappa Tritons, our Chapter will continue to thrive.



Pictured (front to back, left to right):

- Joel Foley - Mechanical Engineering - Wells, ME
- Shankar Veludandi - Computer Science - Belmont, MA
- Alexander Liu - Computer Science and Mathematics - Melville, NY
- Sean Rufus - Biological Neuroscience and Psychology - Manhattan, NY
- Daiki Sai - Physics and Mathematics - Brooklyn, NY
- Aaron Rice - Mechanical Engineering - Brooklyn, NY
- Aadith Ratish - Physics - Green Brook, NJ

NATIONAL AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

National Relations

We were accredited Nationally with one of the top three scores of all Chi Phi Chapters with a new 3-star system that is being implemented following the work that Br. Sposato put in at previous Congresses. we initially got 1 star out of 3 on the inaugural submission of the 3-star system; however, this score should be increased (to as high as a full 3 stars) once we hear back regarding our grading appeals. This new system aims to make it easier for Chapters to be accredited and more clearly set the standards that Chi Phi National is expecting. The Chapter has also been participating in an undergraduate accreditation advisory board that was spearheaded by the congressional committee to review every point of the new accreditation system in preparation for revisions going into 2022 following the first submissions of the program.

Br. Noah Prisament and Br. Christian Winicki attended Congress this past Summer. Br. Steven Hopkins, the former Grand Eta, was elected to be the new Grand Alpha. We also passed a resolution for Congress in the Summer of 2028 to be hosted in Albany, New York for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Theta Chapter! In addition to all of this, there were many updates regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and there was a new National committee made to work with Chapter Housing Corporations; at Congress, the term Colony was replaced with the term Associate Chapter in the Chi Phi Constitution. Additionally, Steve Hopkins decided to appoint more undergraduate members to the Grand Council and to make a new Grand Council position for Alumni Relations.

This year at congress, the Chapter received the Thomas A. Gehring Award for Chapter Excellence for the fifth time in a row! Additionally, we received the Outstanding Community Service award and alongside two individual awards: The Carl J. Gladfelter Leadership Award for Br. Daniel Celic and The Ben Wayne Greig Jr. Award for Outstanding Scholastic Chairman Award for Br. Trenton Squires.



Chi Phi Fraternity Awards received by the Chapter

Alumni Relations and Updates

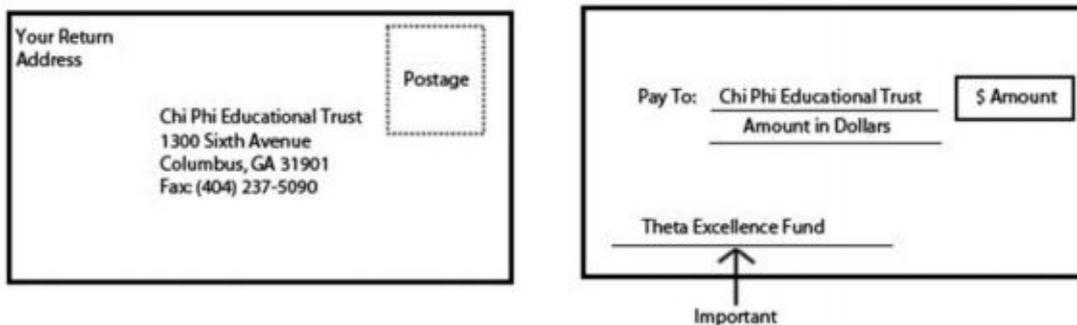
This semester, the TAA was able to host its first in-person Alumni Weekend since 2019. Due to RPI restrictions, we were unable to host at the Theta Chapter. A special thank you to Dinosaur BBQ in Troy, who were able to host us alongside excellent food and service. The total attendance including brothers was 54, 26 of whom were Alumni.

Upcoming Events

There will be an Alumni Weekend planned for the Spring 2022 semester and we encourage everyone to attend! Details will be sent in the email chain once they are finalized. If you are not currently on the email chain, contact the current Gamma at gamma.theta.chiphi@gmail.com or via the discord server to be added. Unfortunately the campus remains closed to individuals not in the COVID testing pool, but we will let you know when that changes.

THETA EXCELLENCE FUND

With the Theta Excellence Fund active, our first goal has been to provide an annual scholarship in honor of Brother Andrew Colditz, who passed away in 2005. The scholarship is for a new member in each pledge class who was found to represent the values of Chi Phi best and met a minimum GPA requirement. A second scholarship for leadership, in honor of Stephen “Rusty” Gordon, was established. This scholarship is for any Brother showing leadership through his activities with the house. If you would like to help the chapter by donating directly to the Theta Excellence fund, please follow the instructions below:



CHAPTER DONATIONS

Want to have a direct impact on the chapter?

Please contact the new 2022 Alpha (alpha.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Jared Zornitzer, or Delta (delta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Noé Horowitz, to discuss room dedications and contributing to housing renovations in the Chi or Stroud Hall.

All donations from alumni towards housing renovations are honored with plaques and room dedications for contributions and generosity. Get involved and invest in the future of our chapter!

CHAPTER CONTACTS

SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to follow the Theta Chapter on social media for more frequent updates on the chapter and events we are hosting.



@chi_phi_rpi



@chiphi.atrpi



@chiphi.atrpi

CHAPTER WEBSITE AND DISCORD

<http://www.thetaofchiphi.org/>

<https://discord.gg/Wepf99Q>