

# THE ILLINOIS SIG

Sigma Chi Fraternity at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | Fall 2022 | Alumni Relations Office | P.O. Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851-0876 | [www.illinoisigs.org](http://www.illinoisigs.org)

FROM THE  
HOUSING CORPORATION PRESIDENT

## If There Are No Setbacks, There Can Be No Comebacks



Your fraternity has faced setbacks and challenges over the last couple of years. While there remains a strong desire for the men and women who come to our beloved university to belong to our vibrant Greek system, COVID was a “gut punch” and temporarily changed the “rules of engagement.”

During the last few years, there have been many challenges across the country at each university that supports and welcomes the Greek system. Some have shut down their Greek system entirely; the press coverage has been relentless. The universities have had to respond with less latitude and stronger measures, and congregate living under COVID has disappointed many who were expecting a much different “college experience.” The University of Illinois, through its Certified Housing and Interfraternity Council organizations, continues to provide support for the strongest Greek system in the US.

Here is a recap of both the “setbacks” and “comebacks”:

### Setbacks:

- COVID: The time, money, and efforts involved in operating under COVID is unparalleled to any other time in our chapter over the last 20 years.
- Membership Review: We have been through a tough time, having to change our culture to better represent who we are and what we stand for. This setback brought financial and membership challenges. The accompanying result was a decrease in our membership by 50%.
- Due to some long-standing ΣΧ National leadership challenges, the number of weeks allowed for preparing our pledges to enter our fraternity has been reduced from 12 weeks to eight weeks, and now further reduced to five weeks. This change now makes the post-initiate training period more important than ever.

Corporation President (continued on page 3)

## Alumni Spotlight

## Paul Biasco '10



Paul Biasco '10

Could you please share your story? How did you go from a U of I student to a journalist, then to a journalist and restaurant owner, and then to a journalist and restaurant owner overseas?

I'm not used to telling my own story; I prefer those of others, but I'll try. My story is a winding one that started working as a reporter and copy editor at the Daily Illini while living at the chapter house. After graduation, I was lucky to land a job at the *Daily Herald* in the Chicago suburbs working the night police beat: the classic beat to cut your teeth, although it was quite brutal at times. I later helped launch DNAinfo Chicago, a news startup, and after a few years had the opportunity to open a restaurant with a colleague in Logan Square called Quiote and couldn't pass up on the moment. I have always been interested in food, especially after studying food and media in Rome during a semester at U of I.

I never stopped making pizzas after learning from some of the best pizzaiolos in the world and continued hosting pizzas nights in my apartment for friends for years after.

After a few successful years with the restaurant, a turn of events led me to Mexico City, where I had planned to spend a month or so with my now-fiancé to clear my mind. I never left.

A restauranteur in Mexico City happened to know about my restaurant in Chicago as well as



those epic pizza parties and offered to help open a pizzeria in Mexico City. A few months later, Dr. Pizza was born. There are now three Dr. Pizzas: two in Mexico City and a third in Ensenada.

I still remain committed to journalism. I edited a book on mezcal a few years back called “Understanding Mezcal” and have been working on a documentary over the past three years in Mexico City that focuses on young, deported Dreamers who formed a community here. It very well may be the first pizza-funded documentary of its kind.

Alumni Spotlight (continued on page 4)





## FROM THE CONSUL

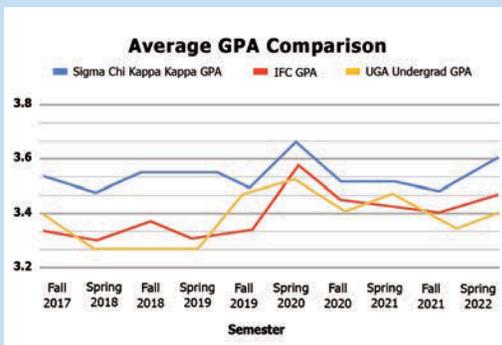


*Brothers,*

It has been an honor to be consul for the Kappa Kappa chapter this past spring semester. As an entire chapter, we achieved the sixth highest academic standing among fraternities, raised a great amount of money for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation through our Derby Days and Moms Weekend events, and also gained better relationships among the university's Greek life support team. We brought in nine new brothers with the 25.50's class and hope to bring in many more in the future. As we proceed into the fall semester, we hope to continue to uphold the three pillars and seven virtues that we hold ourselves accountable to.

In Hoc Signo Vincens,  
**Charlie Williams '24**

## KAPPA KAPPA LEADING THE PACK



The brothers of Sigma Chi Kappa Kappa chapter had another outstanding semester academically, placing sixth among the IFC fraternities with a 3.36 GPA this spring semester. This continues a long tradition of academic excellence among Sigma Chi members, consistently placing at or above the all fraternity and sorority GPA. When compared to the average GPA for all undergraduate students, this GPA standard becomes more impressive. Academics remain a priority for the Kappa Kappa chapter as we continue to hone our Scholarship Awards program. Our chapter continues to set the bar for academic excellence and career achievement among IFC fraternities and the university while also maintain a high standard for all other aspects of the college experience.

## Chapter Spotlight

## Luke Colewell '23.50

### What led you to join Sigma Chi?

When I came to UIUC as a freshman, I knew I wanted to join a fraternity. I immediately noticed the sense of brotherhood the first time I stopped by the chapter house at Sigma Chi. Everyone was very welcoming and eager to get to know me as an individual and a potential new brother. It did not take long for me to form positive relationships and I could quickly see myself fitting into the chapter. Joining Sigma Chi is one of the best decisions I have made during my college journey; it has been a tremendous benefit to my educational experience. I will cherish the friendships I have made here for a lifetime.



Luke Colewell '23.50

on their initiation day is an experience that I will never forget.

### How would you like to apply your degree after graduation?

I have long aspired to obtain my JD and pursue a career in the legal field after college. This summer, I am interning on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, under Congressman Darin LaHood. I am hoping this experience will give me some valuable insights into the policy-making process and the role of government. I know these insights will serve me well as a corporate attorney down the line.

### Outside of school, what do you like to do for fun?

I really enjoy reading, whether it be a good book or an article online. I find that reading is a good way to start my morning or end my day and helps me relieve stress. Working out is also a huge priority for me and something that I enjoy doing with friends. I love exploring new cities and going to concerts, and I also enjoy my job as a bartender at The Red Lion. More than anything, I value spending time and experiencing new things with friends and family.

### What have you enjoyed most as a member?

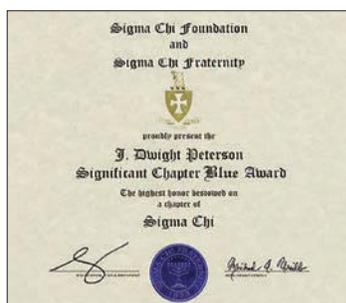
The camaraderie: having 100 best friends that you do everything with, from eating lunch together to walking to class together, and hanging out together every day. Being a Kappa Kappa Sigma Chi has made me a better person, as it has surrounded me with guys who are driven academically, professionally, and socially, and provided a support network that I can rely on during the ebbs and flows of a busy college semester. 410 E John Street truly is my home away from home.

### What position with Kappa Kappa do you feel most accomplished in?

In spring 2021, I had the honor of serving as magister for the Kappa Kappa Chapter. This has easily been my favorite position that I have held and the one that I feel the most accomplished in. Over the course of the semester, I was able to lead the pledge class on their journey toward brotherhood and play a role in their growth as individuals and as a collective. The opportunity to teach them about the fraternity and the chapter and how they could ultimately contribute to it was not one that I took for granted and seeing the joy that they felt



## Kappa Kappa Honored with Peterson Award



Kappa Kappa is honored to be awarded a 2022 Peterson Significant Chapter Award! Named for 38th Grand Consul J. Dwight Peterson, the award recognizes chapters that achieve excellence in all operations, including academic, philanthropy, recruitment, and ritual performance. The Peterson Award is the highest honor a Chapter may receive. This is Kappa Kappa's second Peterson Award since the 2016-2017 school year—keep up the great work!



## Philanthropy Update

This past semester we were able to raise a ton of money for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation. Starting in the fall semester of 2021, we held our annual Derby Days philanthropy week. Coming out of COVID-19 we had to improvise quite a bit but were able to host a variety of community-involved events outdoors which included a dodgeball tournament at The Red Lion, inflatable obstacle courses, a volleyball tournament, a blood drive, a hot dog eating contest, and various promotional events at Champaign restaurants. We were able to get many sororities and fraternities included in these events to support our cause as well as many other members of the Illinois community.



In the spring, we held our annual Mom's weekend during which we hosted events with our mothers who had traveled down for the weekend. We held a charity auction event where families bid on prizes and the majority of the money went to the Huntsman Cancer Foundation as well. Overall, we hope to continue to give back to the community and aim to raise even more this upcoming academic

## Recruitment Update

Given an ever-changing campus atmosphere and landscape in a post-COVID-19 world, we have continued to plan and execute rush events that showcase all the aspects of our strong brotherhood to potential new members. In line with recent successes, we will meet with incoming freshmen this summer with trips to Top Golf and other excursions, which will make the acclimation and rushing process smoother for both parties. We anticipate another successful semester of rush, and the entire house looks forward to welcoming our new brothers.



## CORPORATION PRESIDENT

(continued from page 1)

- The Sigma Chi membership review a few semesters ago clearly was necessary and challenged our very existence.
- The financial and mental stress put on the board, students, university, and the chapter has reverberated through the chapter, as it has throughout the entire Greek system.
- The mere expense of college is daunting to all, which leads to many issues that require some tough decisions and extra time to resolve.

We are a little bloodied and brushed, but despite these setbacks, our Kappa Kappa Chapter has come through it all. Our leadership and learning principles and values-based programs continue to be a strong draw to our chapter, and we look forward to fully turning the corner in the coming semesters.

### Comebacks:

- Our chapter has responded resoundingly well! Our GPA has been and is among the top-10 fraternities on campus over the last two to three years.
- Our executive committee at the chapter desires to be more empowered and seeks more challenges, and we are working with them to accommodate their belief in themselves to learn and to carry on our excellence on campus.
- We are building back our membership with better quality rather than quantity.
- There is no doubt in my mind that Kappa Kappa and the entire Greek system enhances a student's college experience by "belonging" to "achieving" a bigger college experience. Sigma Chi brothers are better prepared to meet "life" beyond college.
- Our facility upgrades have enhanced our position on campus. We spent about \$600,000 over the last few years, where others have not. Your board saw the challenges of all the competing new facilities that have sprouted up at Illinois and on all college campuses across the country, and we felt we had to "go big or go home"!

Your board and chapter are committed to you, the alumni of 410, to be the best we can be and are making the necessary "comebacks" to meet the challenges of the "setbacks"!

In Hoc Signo Vincens,

**Peter F. Steger, KK'79**  
President, Kappa Kappa of  
Sigma Chi House Corporation

### Have Alumni News?

*We want to hear from you!* Send your personal updates, accomplishments, adventures, and photos to our account manager, **Zackery Cockerham** at [zcockerham@elevateims.com](mailto:zcockerham@elevateims.com), or simply fill out the back of the enclosed gift form and return it in the mail. We want to share it in the next issue of *The Illinois Sig!*

### CONNECT WITH US

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"Sigma Chi Kappa Kappa Network"  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/12032790](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/12032790)



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# Alumni Share Their News & Notes

**John Rooney Jr. '61:** Opened American Dunes Golf Club in Grand Haven, Michigan, on May 2, 2021. My son, Lt. Col. Dan Rooney, a Significant Sig at University of Kansas, and I put it all together. Please come and play next summer.

## Alumni Spotlight

*(continued from page 1)*

**What's the biggest challenge you had to overcome as a small business owner?**

The biggest challenge as a small business owner has been learning the laws, regulations, and language of a new country. It has been frustrating at times but rewarding.

**What is your proudest accomplishment?**

My proudest accomplishment is realizing that I've been able to follow my passions, food and journalism, and make a living while doing so.

**What do you like better? Journalism or operating restaurants?**

They are both obviously very different, but both journalism and restaurants revolve around people and relationships. They are also both very human. I think I would have to say journalism because of the places it has taken me, the people I've met, and the stories I've been able to share. There is power in story.

**Why Mexico City? Are you going to stay there for a while?**

I came to Mexico City for the first time in 2016 and was intoxicated by the vibrancy, food, and deeply permeating culture everywhere. I came back for love. Considering the unexpected turns my life has taken up to this point, it wouldn't be fair to make a guess on how long I'll stay, but yes, I don't see myself leaving anytime soon.



**What do you like to do for fun?**

For fun, I like to run, go to museums, try new restaurants, and explore the city.

**What's the most interesting thing you've learned about Mexico City?**

Learning about the history of the founding of the city and how it was built on a lake is fascinating to me.

**What did you enjoy during your time as an active member?**

I loved living in the chapter house, especially the fact that there was always something to do no matter what day or time of day. I really enjoyed the nightly dinners and my time as steward. Maybe that was the start of my entry into the restaurant world. I also really liked hanging out on Jones porch after dinner and yapping it up.

**What impact has Sigma Chi had on your life to this point?**

The biggest impact has been meeting great people who I remain friends with to this day. It truly is a unique feeling knowing that even 15 years removed, I know I could count on any of them to answer a phone call and help with anything.

**What advice would you give to Kappa Kappa brothers about entrepreneurship?**

My biggest advice would be to follow your passions in whatever you pursue. It is a lot easier to put in the work you need to be successful when you are driven by true drive and passion rather than money.



## Chapter Eternal

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following Kappa Kappa brothers:

**Charles Boeschstein '20**  
November 30, 2020

**Brian Millsap '80**  
January 30, 2022

**William Heiss Jr. '47**  
January 24, 2021

**Charles Coventry '70**  
May 20, 2021

**H. HuddleR Moore Jr. '46**  
July 11, 2021

**Harvard Schmidt '58**  
January 24, 2021

**James McKinzie '52**  
June 20, 2021

**Max Hooper '54**  
February 18, 2021

**Richard Mottweiler '74**  
August 12, 2021

**Thomas Cox '57**  
June 20, 2021



## Leave a Legacy!

Consider a lasting gift that will support the brothers of Kappa Kappa Chapter long after you are gone. By including Kappa Kappa in your estate plans, you ensure the long-term health and success of our fraternity. Here's what you and/or your adviser might need to know.

The most common ways to include Kappa Kappa Chapter are through your will or by naming Kappa Kappa of Sigma Chi Foundation as a beneficiary under a life insurance policy.

**Sample language for your will or estate plan:**

"I leave the sum of (\$XXXXXX.xx or XX% of my estate) to Kappa Kappa of Sigma Chi Foundation, tax ID# 20-3901938 for their general purposes."

*\*\*This information is not presented as legal or tax advice. Always consult with you advisers for questions or clarifications.\*\**

**Your brothers and those following in their footsteps thank you!**