

Alpha **SPE**aks



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Alpha **SPE**aks

New Jersey Alpha RLC Chapter Newsletter: Fall/Spring 2015 Issue - Volume IX, Number 2

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Brothers of New Jersey Alpha,

As the 2014-15 academic school year comes to an end, we were able to recognize many of the amazing accomplishments made by both our chapter as a whole and by our individual members. In doing that, the Brothers of NJA are more motivated than ever to continue to reach new heights in the upcoming year. This year, NJA welcomed 25 new brothers to our ranks (8 in the Fall, 17 in the Spring). SigEp's newest members are an extraordinary group of men and have exemplified excellence in their immediate urgency to get involved.

In preparing for Conclave this summer, members of the EC had a chance to take an in-depth look at all of NJA's operations for the two years while filling out the Buc-Cup Application. One of our proudest accomplishments was our GPA for the final semester of evaluation for this upcoming Buc-Cup. For the Fall 2014 semester, NJA achieved an average GPA far above any organization in recent records, coming in at a 3.54. Just as we thought this GPA was too hard to beat, we just received news that for the Spring 2015 semester, we beat our record again with a 3.58 average. To continue strong campus presence, SigEp won it's 5th consecutive intramural Soccer Championship. We conquered our 4th consecutive Lipsync championship, and led by senior Christian Geary, we brought home our 4th consecutive Castle Point King crown. SigEp

was recognized by Stevens for winning the Greek awards for Excellence in Academics and Excellence in Risk Management. The Northeast Greek Leadership Association awarded NJA with the Josette Kaufman Health and Wellness Award for our LIFT program.

This past semester, NJA had the distinct privilege of performing the Epsilon rite of passage at Carlson Leadership Academy for the second year in a row. This time, however, NJA was honored to welcome a Renaissance Brother to the Chapter, Brother Ron Ferguson. Ron Ferguson lives our cardinal principles and has been a committed contributor to SigEp for many years, and it is our pleasure to welcome him to our Brotherhood.

Finally, to end the year, the Brothers of NJA gathered in the courtyard for the annual Hoop of Steel Ceremony. I have been fortunate enough to attend three NJA Hoop of Steel Ceremonies thus far, but this year's was one I don't think I'll ever forget. Whereas normal ceremonies have lasted a couple hours, this year the men linked arms for over 10 hours, showing emotion, gratefulness, and appreciation for each other and our outstanding fraternity. This single event has not only been the highlight of my presidential term to date, but also of my college career. Now let's go win our 4th consecutive Buc-Cup in Nashville!

Fraternally yours,
Michael McCarthy
Chapter President

Have a story you want to share?

Do you have any stories or life updates that you want your brothers to know about? Put them in the next Alpha Speaks!

Email alphaspeaks@sigepnj.com

Volleyball Champions

NJA Brothers Help Stevens Claim First NCAA Championship Title

It's been an amazing year for the Stevens men's volleyball team. For the first time in the school's 145-year history, a Stevens team has come together to win a national championship. Three brothers from Sigma Phi Epsilon New Jersey Alpha were on this National Championship Team; juniors Derrick Sokol and Thomas Wright and senior Kevin Aeckerle.

Kevin has been a starter for the Varsity Volleyball team for the past four years and has captained the team for the most recent two. Winning a National Championship this year has meant everything to Kevin. He began playing volleyball in middle school and has been working diligently throughout the past eight years towards this one goal. In the four years that Kevin has been on the squad, the team has made it in the NCAA Tournament three times, falling in the quarterfinals each year but this last.

To win a National Championship in his senior season and on Stevens' home court was the ultimate dream come true. While playing, Kevin has made a multitude of friendships that will stay strong even after his college career. With the support of his SigEp brothers, Kevin has thoroughly enjoyed his four years at Stevens and on the volleyball team. He could not have done it without them. Kevin has been a brother for three years now, joining in the fall of his sophomore year.

Since joining SigEp, Kevin has applied the three cardinal principles of this great brotherhood to his life, schooling and to volleyball. By being virtuous and fair, Kevin was chosen to be the captain of the volleyball team by his teammates and coaches. Through diligence, he was able to dedicate countless hours in the weight room and on the court to improve his game. Kevin also showed diligence in the classroom while working tirelessly to obtain his Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. These two facets of Kevin's life embody the notion of SigEp's two core values; Sound Mind and Sound Body. But most importantly, Kevin and his teammates could not have had the successful season that they did without the support of their brothers. Greek letters could be seen throughout the crowd, packing the stands at every home match.

Brotherly Love is not an issue for SigEp here at Stevens. The friendships made through SigEp are those that will last a lifetime, no matter the distance travelled after graduation. Congrats again to Kevin, Derrick, Thomas and the entire 2015 Stevens Men's Volleyball National Championship Team!

By Kevin Aeckerle (Class of 2016)



Brother Kevin Aeckerle's after Stevens Men's Volleyball Team claims first NCAA championship title for the school



Brothers of NJA Celebrate NCAA National Championship Victory
NJA Brothers, from left to right; Kevin Aeckerle, Derrick Sokol, Thomas Wright, Ayal Ciobotaru

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Visit facebook.com/sigepnja

Lara's Sweetheart Experience



*Lara Paul,
SigEp Sweetheart
Class of 2015*

When I came to college at Stevens, I always knew that I was not interested in joining a sorority. I figured this meant that I would not be involved in Greek life on campus. Who would've guessed I would join a fraternity?

Since freshman year I was friends with guys that joined Sigep and I ended up hanging out at the house, whether it be doing homework or just goofing around. I eventually got to know most of the brothers and felt as though I had made many friends. I saw how close all the boys were and how much love they had for each other, so I always wondered if I had missed out on that type of experience. Then one day I was asked if I was interested in becoming the Sigep Sweetheart. My first reaction was "What does that mean?"

It turns out that I would become a female representative of the fraternity

and would be fully included in everything involving Sigep. I attended events and meetings and got the door code; which was great because I hated waiting outside for someone to let me in. Of course I baked for them occasionally (who doesn't love baked goods?) but I felt like a sister to all the brothers in this fraternity. If I ever needed anything, they were always there for me with open arms.

To say that my experience during the 5 years at school would be different without SigEp is an understatement. I will always love these boys and they mean the world to me. I would not have done it any other way. The group of men in Sigma Phi Epsilon are some of the greatest and most caring I have ever met. I thank them all for taking me in and helping me grow. PROUD TO BE. Forever and always <3

NJA receives NGLA (Northeast Greek Leadership Association)'s inaugural Josette Kaufman Health and Wellness Award!



Welcome our Newest SigEp NJA Brothers



MEET OUR BROTHERS

- ANTHONY COSTAGLIOLA, '18
- EDWARD CURTIN, '19
- BLAKE LUXORO, '19
- MARC GREENFIELD, '19
- MICHAEL LANGFORD, '18
- JAMES FLAHERTY, '18
- PRESTON HORAN, '19
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- JOSEPH CUOMO, '19
- CHRISTIAN COLLADO, '19
- HAROLD ROGERS, '18

SIGEP NJA RLC

Christian Geary

Our Castle Point King

Hi! My name is Christian Geary! I joined SigEp in the fall of 2011, and just graduated from Stevens this May. Needless to say, I've done a lot of 'Sigma' interviews during my time as a brother of NJA. I've been asked many times, "Christian, what is your proudest SigEp moment?" How can I choose!?! Between intramural championships, having the highest GPA on campus and late night procrastination with the guys in the house, I had countless options to choose from. But NOTHING compares to the moment before walking on stage as NJA's Castle Point Knight – Secret Agent, 00G! I've witnessed SigEp accomplish the impossible time and time again since joining as a sophomore. It's amazing to be surrounded by a

a group of men that will put their heart and soul into something as inconsequential as Castle Point King. And yet, as silly as this may be, that moment before taking the stage is my greatest SigEp moment. It didn't matter anymore if we won or lost the competition. I had put COUNTLESS hours and long nights into preparing our performance. But what struck me the most, was how much time my brothers were willing to sacrifice on my behalf. 30+ brothers put term papers, final projects and exam studying ON HOLD... For me.

I always tell my friends and family from home that I have the greatest friends in the world. And CPK was an excellent reminder of that for me. I was VERY reluctant to take on the role of NJA's knight, but I was



reassured by three brothers in particular – Michael McCarthy, Frankie Garruzzo and John Atkinson – that they would have my back every step of the way. *Shedding a tear writing this* My three brothers did not miss a single video shooting or performance practice throughout the months leading up to CPK. The moment before I went on stage is my proudest SigEp moment, because I knew that I was part of the greatest group of men in the world.. I was no longer scared of the outcome of the performance, because I knew that once it was over, I still had THE BEST friends in the whole world.

By Christian Geary (Class of 2015)



Brother Profile

Brother Christian Geary was recently featured in the SigEp-Brother Profile video series. This video series, developed by the SigEp National Headquarters, is aimed at showing what it truly means to be a SigEp man. In his profile video, Christian reflects on his SigEp experience as he finishes his undergraduate career.

To watch the clip, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO1tRB6p ges>

Kevin

Wheatley

Vice President of
Communications



Patrick

MacLane

Alpha Speaks Chair



Brother Abroad

It was there, eight years ago, in my sister's room that I had realized it. And it was there, presumably, in the airport that I had come to realize something else.

For me, living in another country for five months was not just a semester off, as some unsound minded people perceive study abroad, but rather it was to be the most challenging yet. In my case, I was not taking engineering classes. I was not taking math classes. I wasn't even taking classes in English. This aspect of my journey forced me to dust off some brain muscle that I hadn't stretched in quite some time. Thinking, speaking, and learning in Spanish. Living in a place where walking in a store and saying 'hey man where's the peanut butter?' isn't as easy as you have grown to know. These small, often taken for granted, comforts and luxuries that we have learned to take as guarantees, were to be left behind in the states, along with a different me.

But the challenge was bigger than this. The real challenge was to take a step (albeit a 'leap' may be the more appropriate word) out of my comfort zone to see and understand different people, cultures, ideologies, religions, and ways of life, all being different from my own. The challenge for me, along with elevating my Spanish speaking abilities as much as possible, was not just to see the world, but rather experience it. Learn from it. Europe was the biggest class room I ever sat in.

But how? How can someone open themselves up to so much change so quickly?

In this world of Engineering that we become a part of in college, it's easy to find comfort in being one dimensional and potentially close minded towards

aspects of life other than math and science. It has been about two years since I started actively trying to look internally and find the importance in having a broader outlook in all facets of life. I didn't wake up one day and decide this on my own; it struck me on a walk home from a bagel shop with a friend of mine. He introduced me to the idea of a sound mind.

'What's that? Like getting good grades?' I asked.

'Partially, but it's much more than that. It will change your outlook on everything,' my friend said to me.

And it is a whole lot more than just that. It challenged me to have an open mind to try new things. See new cultures. Understand them, and not just shrug them off as being ridiculous simply because they were different. Language, art, culture, and travel all built my character and sound mind.

Two years ago, that conversation led me to learning about SigEp and its ideals of sound mind and sound body. Without the help of an open mind and better yet a sounder mind, my abroad experience would have been vastly different and I'm unsure of whether or not it would have had such a lasting effect on me. While living in Spain, I traveled to eight other countries, yet I only scratched a fraction of the surface.

It was there, eight years ago, when my sister showed me pictures of her study abroad adventures that I realized I wanted to do the same. And it was there, presumably, in the Newark airport waiting for my flight to Spain that I had come to realize that my life was going to change forever... I was right. It has.

Troy Kanaszka (Class of 2017)

A Letter from the Editor

Attention Alumni of NJA,

In my 3+ years as being editor-in-chief of Alpha Speaks, we have seen this newsletter grow from an inconsistent 2-sided pamphlet to an informative publication covering all aspects of our thriving chapter. Thanks to the generous support of our alumni, we were able to issue another printed edition of Alpha Speaks. However, in an effort to lower costs, we're looking to phase out our physical printing.

If you would like to assist us in lowering our printing costs, please consider signing up for our digital circulation.. To get on our mailing list, simply send an e-mail to

vpcommunication@sigepnja.com.

Please also consider donating to us at alumni.sigepnja.com, in the "Con-tributbe to NJ Alpha" section.

Thank you for your consideration,

Patrick MacLane
Alpha Speaks Chair

Save the Date: Founder's Day!

Saturday,
November 7st

Contact info:
sigep@stevens.edu

My SigEp Story

Vinny's Story

Everything I have today as a student in college I owe to my fraternity, SigEp. When I first joined SigEp I didn't really know what to expect and was very hesitant on even having been associated with Greek life. I didn't think I fit the typical Greek profile. However, since the fall of 2013 I have never looked back.

During my time as a Sigma I have learned so much about the history of SigEp nationally and our chapter locally and have met some of the most worldly, talented, and fantastic group of people I know today. I knew I had a place called home after bid night filled with energetic and like-minded men who wanted nothing more than to see me

grow, succeed, and achieve everything that I wanted in life, and they stopped at nothing, working tirelessly, to make that happen.

My time as Phi has taught me to start pushing myself to realize my fullest potential and take every day as a gift and every problem as a challenge with a valuable lesson in the end. I was inspired to become a senator for the student government and even started traveling around the world to visit places like Mexico where I explored ancient Mayan temples

Currently, as an Epsilon, I decided to develop myself in the community of the school as an RA as well as serve as vice president of the student government. I volunteer every year for FIRST robotics teams to serve as a mentor for high

school students who are interested in STEM fields and give them a chance to see the true beauty behind engineering.

I didn't think I fit the typical Greek profile when I first joined and I still don't, but that's because SigEp is no typical fraternity. It is a rollercoaster ride full of adventure, excitement, obstacles, challenges, competition, a bit of arguing in between, but most of all love; Love of the brotherhood that exists around us and love for the friendships that formed between us men of SigEp. I would not wish it any other way.

Vincent Raimondi (*Class of 2016*)

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Kevin's Story

SigEp has changed my life at Stevens. My freshman year consisted mostly of studying, going to the gym, and hanging out with my group of friends. Rinse and repeat for the next several months.

After my freshman year was over, and I had finally adapted to college, I realized that I wanted more out of my experience at Stevens. Because of this, I gravitated toward a group of guys who were very clearly taking advantage of every opportunity that came their way at Stevens. These guys turned out to be the brothers of Sigma Phi Epsilon, and in seeing my desire to better myself, they extended me a bid.

At the time, committing to decision that big scared me, but something inside me encouraged me to

that leap of faith. Now, I can confidently say that SigEp is providing me with the

college experience I always wanted.

We encourage all of our brothers to get involved both within SigEp and on-campus. I currently hold a Student Government Association Senate seat that I believe I would have been too scared to run for, had I not had my brothers to encourage me.

Instead of only having a handful of friends, I now have something much more special; dozens of people who I can call my brothers. SigEp even inspired me to pursue my dream of studying abroad, which I did last semester. Having recently gone through our Epsilon ritual, I know that I will reach new levels of personal growth. I truly hope that I will contribute to future brothers' experiences as much as my brothers have done for mine.

Kevin Wheatley (*Class of 2017*)

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