

Alpha *SPEaks*



President's Update

Brothers of New Jersey Alpha,

The end of the year is normally accompanied by many other endings. As 2019 wraps up, it is accompanied by the end of the semester, the end of the decade, and the end of this Executive Committee's term in office. Endings can often be bittersweet, but they also invite an excellent opportunity to reflect on the experience. Overall, the chapter has grown immensely in the past year, and I believe the Fall 2019 semester displayed this growth exceptionally well. We remained excellent in our areas of strength, we saw significant improvements in areas we previously struggled in, and we started new initiatives to fill gaps in our overall chapter experience.

We started off the semester strong, with a ton of momentum carrying over from the Spring and Summer. In the Spring, we achieved a chapter GPA of 3.682 with a chapter of 90 Brothers! That is nearly 0.1 points higher than our previous best. We also received our second consecutive Gold Buchanan Cup (sixth consecutive overall) at Conclave this summer. With this great momentum, we were able to stay strong in many of our best areas of operation for the semester.

Continued on Page 2

In this edition:

PAGE 1:
PRESIDENTS
UPDATE

PAGE 4:
PHILANTHROPY
SPOTLIGHT

PAGE 5:
TRAGOS QUEST
TO GREECE

PAGE 8:
SENIOR
REFLECTION

President's Update



Pujan Shah

Vice President of Programming



Douglas Wrede

Vice President of Member Development



Kirk Vasilas

Vice President of Finance



Dominic Malfetano

Vice President of Recruitment



Samuel Young

Chaplain



Ethan Guerra

Vice President of Communications



Jacob Schozer

Chapter President

When it comes to class reviews, we hosted reviews for over 30 exams, and have helped over 2,200 students in those reviews. To help our Sound Body, we ran another successful LIFT event while utilizing campus professionals and resources to strengthen our relationship with Stevens. Through the dedication of our Brothers working on these tasks, Alex Murtagh for the reviews and Jake Meiskin for LIFT, we were able to maintain success in these areas of operation.

While maintaining strengths is always great, it is also very important to improve on weaknesses. In previous semesters, our philanthropic efforts had begun to fall short of our expectations. At the beginning of the semester, our Vice President of Programming, Pujan Shah, along with his two Philanthropy Chairs, Luke Langner and Joe Letizia, put together a plan to breathe new life into our Philanthropy events. They decided that each month would have a specific theme. In September, we raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma society, as well as registered bone marrow donors for Be The Match. In October, we united around a cause to raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness. Then in November, many of our Brothers sported a hairy upper lip as we participated in the Movember campaign to raise money and awareness for issues pertaining to Men's Health. Through these three campaigns, we were able to raise over \$5,760. But more importantly, the Brothers were given the chance to unite around causes that have personal connections to undergraduate Brothers in the chapter.

The next area in which we looked to improve our operations was Alumni Outreach. Whether it was inviting alumni back to Chapter Meetings to discuss their careers, bringing in alumni guest speakers to lead discussions at Epsilon challenge meetings, or phone calls with alumni to learn what we can do as the undergraduates to better connect with all of our alumni, we made a very conscious effort to remember that the undergraduates only make up a small portion of the NJ Alpha chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon. To all of our alumni who are reading this, if you feel there is anything you want to be involved with, be it professional mentorship or even opportunities for community service, or if you just want an update on how the chapter is doing, please do not hesitate to contact us at vpcommunication@sigejnja.com. We would love to hear from you and want to maintain more consistent communication with you, for each of us is a Sigma Phi Epsilon for life.

Finally, the chapter saw a couple gaps in the chapter experience that we wanted to make strides to fulfill this semester. First, sparked by an idea that he received at Conclave, Luke Langner organized our first ever SigEp Leadership Academy to provide a leadership development program within our chapter. SLA is a four-week course hosted by Brothers and open to all of campus. This semester, over 35 different students attended, including 15 Brothers.

Brotherhood Events

The last new initiative that we began in Fall 2019 was inspired by the statistic that 64% of college students reported that they have felt very lonely within the last 12 months. The idea is that it only takes one person to make a change in that student's life to make them not feel lonely; it only takes one person who cares. Thus, SigEp Cares was born. SigEp Cares is a new committee that was started by our Chaplain, Sam Young, to make sure that every Brother in our chapter knows that we care for them. The SigEp Cares committee organized several discussions where Brothers could be vulnerable and share their thoughts and, thanks to an idea from Senior Nick Weisz, they organized Brotherhood Reconnect, which pairs Brothers up randomly each week. Those two brothers then spend time together to catch up on life and reconnect.

As President, I tended to look past our achievements and focus mainly on what there was still left to accomplish. But as I said, endings are a great opportunity to reflect and appreciate the great things that have taken place. In the past year, I have seen incredible progress in the chapter, and in the undergraduate Brothers themselves. All of the credit for that change goes to the other members of the Executive Committee and the Brothers in the chapter who worked to implement these improvements. I am extremely grateful to everyone who helped make this past year an incredible experience for me. I am excited to see what Dan Raleigh and the rest of the 2020 Executive Committee have in store to continue to push NJ Alpha to improve, and remain one of the best chapters in the country. As always, Proud to Be!

Fraternally,
Jacob Schozer
1139
Chapter President



Brothers attending a de-stressing event hosted by SigEp Cares committee with yoga led by sweetheart Rachel Gart



Brothers spent a weekend camping in Jenny Jump State Park learning new skills and bonding over their time outdoors



After hiking through New York City Parks, brothers arrived at the Met Cloisters



Brothers went on a sound mind trip to see the musical *Beetlejuice* on Broadway

Breast Cancer Awareness Brunch

By Joseph Letizia, '22

It started with what was supposed to be a small brunch for our brothers and their mothers, but it became something I would have never imagined in the weeks prior. New Jersey Alpha's new family chairs, Parker Petroff-Rims and Roger II Grande, approached my co-philanthropy chair, Luke Langner, and myself around a month before the event was set to happen. They wanted an aspect of philanthropy to be associated with the event and immediately our idea was to do a raffle. At this point it wasn't clear what exactly the specifics were, but honestly, at first it didn't feel like it was going to become anything special for this chapter. However, it grew into something so incredible. Everything about it was single handedly the best thing to come out of this chapter since I became a brother at SigEp NJA. This was all because of the cause chosen, which became something near and dear to every brother involved.

One of NJA's very own has a family member battling Stage 4 Terminal Breast Cancer. When we found this out Luke and I, along with our Vice President of Programming: Pujan Shah, knew this was the perfect cause for the entire brotherhood to rally around. The next few weeks were just finalizing logistics for the raffle along with creating other platforms to allow for more streams of fundraising. We were lucky enough to get help from the Hoboken community with many local businesses donating baskets and prizes to be able to raffle off. But, all of this was just us doing our jobs as philanthropy chairs. At this point I wasn't really comprehending the scale of what we were doing. It wasn't until the day of the brunch that I really grasped what the brotherhood as a whole was actually doing.



Brotherly love. It's a value we hold very near and dear here at New Jersey Alpha and it was most apparent at the brunch on that rainy Sunday. The feeling when you walked into the room was electrifying. It was incomparable to anything else I've had the privilege of participating in before. I was posted to the side in our extension, selling raffle tickets to brothers and their families and I did not have a second to myself the entire brunch! So many came up to play a part in for this cause and the conversations I had with a lot of the families was just truly amazing. The raffle and the event itself was such a huge success that day as well! So many family members and brothers showed up and the feeling in the room was nothing short of astonishing.

Though with all of this, one facet of philanthropy hasn't been brought up yet and to me it is one of the most important parts of the job: the outcome. However, I am happy to say that the entire campaign was a huge success on all levels, including outcome. We as a brotherhood were able to raise just under \$3,900 for this very close cause to us all! And all I want to say to end this is thank you. Thank you to everyone that helped with the event in any aspect, no matter how big or small. Thank you to every brother and their families that showed up to the brunch. And thank you to everyone that donated. We as a brotherhood are so grateful for what was able to be accomplished and I think I speak for all involved when I say this was truly a privilege to be apart of this all.

Tragos Quest to Greece

By Jacob Schozer '20

Throughout my time as an undergraduate, I have been lucky enough to go to many SigEp Leadership Continuums. I have been to Carlson Leadership Academy, Grand Chapter Conclave, Life After College, and Ruck Leadership Institute. I have even been to non-SigEp Leadership Institutes such as IMPACT and UIFI, both run by the NIC. At each of these events, you show up on the first day and you do the same thing first at each one. You register at the main desk, and you get your name tag. At different Continuums, each name tag is a little different. At Carlson, the track you are attending is printed on the front. At Ruck, you get a nicer lanyard that corresponds to your team's color (shoutout to the Purple Team). And of course at Conclave, the name tag comes equipped with a sometimes endless stream of ribbons hanging from the bottom. The name tags help others get to know you and where you are from. But nevertheless, at every continuum, you get a name tag. Every continuum, except for one.

When I arrived in Chicago, where all of the Tragos Scholars and mentors met before we flew together to Greece, there was no registration table. There were no SigEp pop-ups directing me to the correct rooms throughout the hotel. And most notably, there were no name tags. I landed at Chicago O'Hare airport, made my way to the Hilton Hotel attached to the airport, and checked myself in at the front desk. After putting my things down in my room, I headed back down to the lobby where all of the scholars who had already arrived were hanging out. I introduced myself to all of my fellow scholars who were getting to know each other.

While introducing myself, of course, nobody was wearing a name tag. However, it didn't feel as if anyone needed one. I had only met one of my fellow scholars prior to that day, but it didn't feel as if I was introducing myself to strangers. Now we had phone discussions in the weeks leading up to this initial meeting, and we each recorded a short video to introduce ourselves electronically, but I didn't get the feeling that either of those were the source of this familiarity that I



felt while introducing myself to these “strangers”. I still don't know the exact source of that familiarity. Maybe it was because I knew that each of them shared the same passions and love for SigEp that I had, which led us all to be selected as Tragos Scholars. Maybe it was the mutual excitement for what lay before us in the next 10 days that made me feel more comfortable. Or maybe something inside me knew that, in that moment, I was meeting some of the most extraordinary men that I will ever have the privilege of knowing in my life. Whatever the source, it didn't feel like I was meeting these men for the first time; it was more like catching up with old friends after being apart for years.

Within ten hours, we got to know each other on a level that no name tag could ever hope to communicate, no matter how many ribbons are hanging from the bottom. And within ten days, we got to know each other on a level that no combination of words could ever hope to communicate, no matter how eloquent you are. The first significant step that helped us establish that bond took place on our second night in Greece, in a small lounge in a hotel in Nauplion.

The topic of the conversation was “The Purpose of Secrecy.” After a long discussion touching on topics such as the ritual and why we keep secrets both as an organization and as individuals, the conversation began to shift. Brothers began sharing some of the secrets that they hold close to them. Before we knew it, it was 1:00 am, it was extremely warm in the room

Continued on Page 6

Tragos Quest to Greece

(we think they shut off the AC at midnight to try to force us to leave), and Brothers were crying while sharing secrets that only one or two people outside of that room knew. We had met each other in person for the first time 72 hours prior, and we were sharing some of the greatest burdens that we carry with us in our lives. But it did not feel out of place at all to be sharing those secrets. Everyone in that room already felt connected to every other person because of that innate familiarity that we all had, so it seemed appropriate to confide in our Brothers. We walked into that room at 8pm feeling familiar with each other, as if we had known one another for years. When we walked out of that room at 2 am, I felt something different. It was no longer a feeling of having known one another for years. The feeling was now an assurance that we would continue to know one another for the rest of our lives.

The next day that had the most significant impact on me happened in Delphi. Delphi was my favorite stop of the trip. The entire town of Delphi consists of three one-way roads, carved into the side of a mountain. Seemingly all of the buildings are hotels, restaurants, or gift shops, all aimed to service the many visitors of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Visiting the Temple of Apollo was an amazing experience for me because I have always been fascinated by Apollo and the Oracle, but that was not the highlight of the stay. The highlight of the stay in Delphi also was not the hotel itself, even though every single room had a view looking off the mountain at the small port towns and coastline below, and the beds were some of the softest that I have ever slept in in my life. Instead, the highlight of the time in Delphi for me was our conversation on fear.

Prior to this conversation, I was having some internal struggles, and I was hesitant to open up fully, but I could not articulate why. Following the discussion on fear and what our biggest fears in life were, many things became clear to me. One quote that took on new meaning was something that 2015 NJ Alpha Tragos Scholar Kris Alvarez said to me the night before I left for Chicago: "The Tragos Quest to Greece will be a life changing experience, if you let it be one." Prior to that night in Delphi, this quote meant that I needed to have an open mind to allow new ideas to enter that would change the way I think about life. After that night, I realized that letting the Quest change my life is not a passive act. I had to let the Quest change my life by altering my actions to adhere to that new mindset. The Quest has the ability to change the lives of everyone who experiences it, but only if they actively work to make those changes in their lives. That is something I realized that night in Delphi, it is something I have been working to do since, and it is something I will continue to work to do for the rest of my life.



Tragos Quest to Greece

Following the night in Nauplion discussing secrets, I felt closer to the other 21 men of the Greece Tau chapter than I had felt to any group in my life. Following the night in Delphi discussing fear, I felt closer to myself than I had ever felt before. As the week progressed, it was clear to all of us that we were no longer 16 undergraduates, 4 mentors, 1 Quest educator, and 1 Headquarters representative handling logistics. Instead, we were the 22 men of the Greece Tau chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon. Whether it was having a conversation in the middle of the night about life and love while sitting on the streets of a small port town with four Brothers, or our final night when we all ate dinner and drank wine in the restaurant that sat atop the highest point in Athens reflecting on everything we had been through, those ten days were filled with experiences that I will never forget as long as I live.

Our final moments in Greece finally came, and with that, the long flight back to the US. We landed in Chicago and we said our good-byes as we all went our separate ways. We went back to our lives at school and at work, back in the “real world,” each carrying with us lessons and relationships that will last a lifetime.

Fast forward five weeks, and many of us had the fantastic opportunity to reunite at Conclave in Houston. As is standard with leadership continuums, when each of us arrived and checked into the hotel, we all knew where to head next. Each of us went to the registration table to retrieve our name tags and our ribbons. This time, we each had a new ribbon to hang off the bottom. A beautiful baby blue ribbon with silver writing reading ‘TRAGOS QUEST TO GREECE.’ Other Conclave attendees were able to look at our name tags and know that we had attended the Quest, but none of them actually understood what that ribbon represented. It represented the bonds that we all formed during those ten days in Greece, where we got to know each other better than we thought would ever be possible. It represented the leadership continuum that changed all of our lives forever. It represented the one without a name tag.



Senior Reflection



Ethan Guerra, '20

I didn't believe it when people told me that college would be over before I knew it, but as I sit here and do my best to reflect on the past few years of my life I am beginning to see just how fast those years have gone. It seems not so long ago that I first made the decision to attend Stevens, the first day moving in, the first day having met some of my closest friends, and the day I decided I would join SigEp. It's all gone by too quickly, and, if I'm being entirely honest, I just want it to slow down a bit in my final semester as a college student.

Between classes, friends, and SigEp, I didn't have that much time to sit down and reflect on my past experiences in college. While that is one thing I regret not doing, I think I have been able to say that my college experience has otherwise been almost entirely devoid of regrets. I have given my best effort to try new things, experience something different, and meet new people. Nothing has given me the ability to have such an

incredible time as SigEp. SigEp has provided me with far more opportunities than I could have ever imagined when I first ran up the stairs on Bid Night. I have been able to travel to different places, experience new food, and be a part of something that has been able to make me the person I am today. I think the main reason for that are the brothers who make up our chapter at NJA, from alumni to the new Sigmas we will be getting next semester. I have been able to meet so many new people, with different backgrounds and points of view and different skills and personalities, that I have been able to grow both from them and with them. Some of my closest friends are SigEps, and I know that I will be able to call upon my brothers for years down the road and still be able to connect with them from our time in college.

And what a time it has been. In years, I know that my stories of college will center around some of the things I've done with SigEp. The brotherhood game nights, the late night talks, Formals, and the dance competitions. But I think more than all those things I will be telling stories about the people in SigEp, my brothers. The stories of things that we used to do together, the trips we took together, the house meals we were forced to eat together, and the decisions we made for our chapter together. The ability to grow so close with so many different people in just a few years or even months is something I don't think I will ever be able to experience again. I don't think I will be able to have a group of seventy people standing behind me and urging me forward, or reaching out a helping hand when I needed it the most. Where else but a fraternity will you find people who are so different yet still have the same core values that make a house a home.

And that is exactly what SigEp has been for me these last few years: a home. I don't know what's going to happen once I graduate, but I think college has prepared me for at least some things. What I don't think I'm prepared for is leaving SigEp and being able to be around the house all day and night. It's crazy to see how attached I've become to this place I call home and I'm gonna be sad to see such a big part of my life go away as I graduate. But as I leave I know there will be someone new coming in to take my place. I can only hope that their experiences are as incredible as mine in terms of SigEp. And when I come back in a few years, I'm excited to see the impact my friends and I have left on chapter and see how SigEp has evolved as old guys leave and new guys join, like one giant revolving door. I guess it's my time to leave now, without regrets and with a whole heart full of memories for the brothers in Purple and Red.

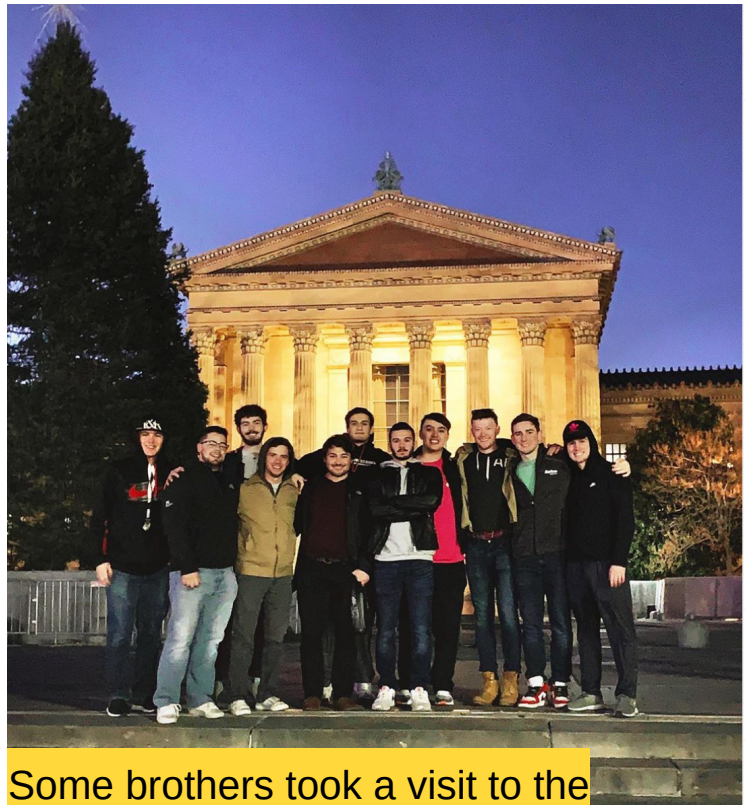
Events from the Fall Semester



In the Fall of 2019, we welcomed 11 new brothers to our fraternity



While collecting swabs for potential bone marrow donors, brothers hosted a bake sale for charity.



Some brothers took a visit to the Penn Beta Beta Chapter at Drexel University



Brothers organized a September 11th Remembrance Run



Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

During my time as Public Relations Chair, I have been able to further my exposure to all of the incredible events and achievements of both individuals apart of this fraternity, and of this fraternity as a whole. Through this experience, I have felt the importance of being involved in the chapter. Because of this, I successfully ran for my first EC position as the Vice President of Communications. I am excited to see where this experience takes me.

While I have enjoyed my time in this position, the satisfaction comes from hearing others speak about their achievements. While in this edition they were all undergraduate students, it would be beneficial to all members to hear from alumni. If you would like to write an article for the next edition of Alpha Speaks, please email:

vpcommunication@sigepnja.com.



Andrew Phillips
Public Relations Chair

Congrats to the New EC!

With the beginning of a new year, we have a new Executive Committee at the helm of New Jersey Alpha. As an EC, our goal is to strive towards improving the member experience as undergraduates and to inspire a love for SigEp to live past their graduation date. We look forward to welcoming feedback and adjusting our plans as we see fit. With the success of the previous EC in areas of philanthropy and brother development, we are excited to continue their legacy of successes and implement our own ideas as well.



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