



ALPHA NU'S LETTER

ALPHA NU CHAPTER OF BETA THETA PI AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS • SPRING 2021

A YEAR OF SUCCEEDING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Alpha Nu Excels Despite COVID-19 Challenges

When I recall conversations I've had with people about their experience living through this pandemic, there are several themes that consistently surface. "This is getting old," "Who would have thought it would go on this long?" "I can't wait to get back to normal," and, thankfully, "Some really good things have come from this." I have heard all these said many times at the Beta house this year.

As we are approaching the end of the school year and hopefully the end of the pandemic, I want to share some good things that happened at Alpha Nu.

Leadership

There are few times in the past where the guys that are elected to lead the house faced the kind of headwinds that the pandemic brought. If I am being honest, I wasn't sure how this year would go with all the rules and restrictions that were in place. No events. No Turkey Pull. No visitors. Limited access to in-person classes. In the fall, we even had to limit the number of guys that could be around the basketball court to 15.

It was going to take some great leadership to have a great year. Former Chapter President **Nick Kneibert '21**, his successor, **Garrison Niemann '22**, and their executive teams led the way by adapting to an ever-changing set of rules and guidelines related to the pandemic. They made difficult and sometimes unpopular (but good) decisions. They proactively engaged in more-than-the-usual number of calls with alumni advisors to strategize and collaborate on the unique challenges and opportunities that came with this unusual year.

But, most importantly, they successfully led 100-plus guys through a year for which there is no playbook to rely upon. It is a testament to the respect they have among the men of Alpha Nu. Alongside the recognition of the executive leadership, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize and thank every member of the chapter for the roles they individually played in making this year as good as it has been. Alpha Nu leadership and brotherhood were a joy to watch and be part of during these unprecedented times.

Academics

Less time for social events means more time to focus on studies, right? Apparently. Alpha Nu has always had high academic standards and an inherent pride in academic excellence. This past year was no exception. In fact, we hit some great milestones and set a new record.

The freshman class set an Alpha Nu record for first semester GPA with an average of 3.89. The overall chapter also saw success, earning the top spot among fraternities with a 3.59 GPA (compare that to KU's overall 3.28 GPA for all undergraduates and 3.18 for all undergraduate men). That is amazing given the challenging learning environment this year.

Other Notables

There isn't enough space in this newsletter to highlight everything that is worth sharing, but here are a few things I thought were particularly noteworthy.

Rock Chalk Revue

Once again, the men of Alpha Nu earned
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Mark Denison '77 Highlights His Coronavirus Research in Webinar with Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier

When it comes to being a Man of Principle during the pandemic, no one has fit the bill quite like **Mark Denison '77**. As the director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Mark is one of the world's leading coronavirus researchers. Mark joined Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier for a webinar in December to share some of his knowledge from his 36 years of researching coronaviruses and some of the latest breakthroughs in the COVID-19 pandemic.

You may have heard of Mark's lab, Denison Lab, late last year in the national news. It was the lab that received a \$1 million donation from country music legend Dolly Parton to advance COVID-19 research. The Denison Lab led the development of Remdesivir, which had been the lone treatment of COVID-19 for several months. His team was also the first to demonstrate human antibody response to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

"I'm so passionate and excited about the science, but it's also a very daunting time," Mark said during his introduction.
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their way into this event with creativity, talent, and dedication. This year, they partnered with Pi Beta Phi. **Levi Johnson '22** was the executive director of the entire event and was joined by several members of Alpha Nu on the Rock Chalk Revue leadership team. This year's theme was "The Show Must Go On."

Since inception, Rock Chalk Revue has raised more than \$2.5 million for local charities and led to more than 2,500 community service hours. Proceeds come from ticket sales, sponsorships, and donations.

The challenge Levi and the rest of the team faced when they were informed late in the process by KU and the Lied Center that they can't have live shows with audiences this year might have seemed unsolvable to many. Levi and team responded immediately and in bold and creative ways. The shows were recorded and streamed into homes, and they organized an outdoor event for an audience to view the recorded stream at the Twisted Vines Vineyard outside of Lawrence on May 1.

Inaugural Senior Summit

Over the past four years, how has your Alpha Nu experience helped you prepare for the next chapter of life? How can you hit the ground running with whatever comes next? What is the biggest impact you can have in your remaining months living at the chapter house?

Those topics and more were part of a great round table discussion held at RockHill Grille in Kansas City. It was a great way to celebrate and encourage Alpha Nu's seniors as they prepare to move on from their days as undergraduates. We were fortunate to have four alumni offer their insight and wisdom during the discussion. A big thank-you is owed to **Tom McCormack '18**, **Tyler Enders '11**, **Zach Marten '01**, and **Dan Bolan '81** for sharing in the event.

Alpha Nu Fantasy Trading

Inspired by KU's applied portfolio management class, which was developed and initiated years back by **Kent McCarthy '80**, Alpha Nu launched an all-chapter competitive equities trading competition. It is like fantasy football, but with the stock market. The goal was to give the collegians good stock research and trading experience now to help prepare them for their years ahead.

Our undergraduate brothers were all provided \$100,000 in virtual funds and set up in a private group on a trading platform. Each month, a nominal cash award was paid out to five brothers who had the best percentage returns over the past 30 days. At the end of May, the top five cumulative finishers for the year will get bragging rights and a final award. Kudos to **Joe Edmunds '21**, who at the time of this writing had turned his \$100,000 into more than \$2.2 million. Cash out or let it ride through May? I'm excited to share the results in the next newsletter.

Yours in _kai_

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"No matter how much we had been anticipating or predicting a coronavirus pandemic or epidemic, particularly in the last 20 years, we could have never imagined the implications. I think it's the only event in human history that I'm aware of that's impacted everybody on the planet at exactly the same time with sort of profound implications of not just our health, but our economy, society, and how we interact with each other, how we behave, and how we can potentially work together while we try to develop these things."

Along with the countless hours Mark has spent studying coronaviruses, his passion of his research has been fueled because of how his loved ones and colleagues have been impacted, especially during the pandemic. During the webinar, Mark walked through how coronaviruses emerge and how vaccines work to combat them. Mark has been very encouraged by the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines.

"I get angry when I see people denying it because I know these viruses. I know them inside and out," Mark said. "But, at the same time, we have effective antivirals and treatments within six months, and we have vaccines within nine months. This is unbelievable, and yes, we should take them if we can."

To see the webinar in its entirety, please visit tinyurl.com/9fuan2bx.

Remembering John Cleland '58

John D. Cleland '58 entered Chapter Eternal on November 7, 2020, after a brief illness. While at KU, John was a three-year letterman on Jayhawk basketball teams led by Wilt Chamberlain in 1956, 1957, and 1958. In addition to Beta Theta Pi, John was a member of professional business fraternities Alpha Kappa Psi and Beta Gamma Sigma. He graduated from KU in 1958 with a degree in business and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Lee, Va.



In 1959, John started at the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania and received his MBA in finance and banking in 1961. Upon graduation, he returned to Topeka and entered the investment business. John was with Security Benefit Group for 40 years, building what is today Security Family of Mutual Funds. He retired as senior vice president, chief investment strategist, and chairman of the board of Security Funds Family in 2006.

He was a feature investment and securities speaker and appeared nationwide on multiple news media outlets, including CNN, CNBC, and Bloomberg Forum. John had a colorful and successful career in finance, and he was appointed by Governor William Graves and served 12 years as chairman of the Kansas Pooled Money Investment Board. He is survived by many family members and friends who miss him dearly.

FROM BROTHER TO BUSINESSMAN

Tyler Enders '11 Thankful for Beta Experience

Entrepreneurship has felt like a natural progression for **Tyler Enders '11**, stemming from his extracurricular experiences at KU and Beta Theta Pi, from organizing fundraisers to launching new organizations. And from introducing concepts to building teams, his Beta Theta Pi membership coupled with his KU activities provided him the opportunity to practice and prepare for running a small business.

Today, Tyler is the co-founder/co-owner of Made in KC, which works with more than 300 local brands and businesses.

“We’ve seen hobbies become part-time jobs, part-time jobs become careers, and companies grow from one to 10 people,” he shared. “It’s fun to play a role in that process.”

Fortunately, he has two terrific business partners who share the load and have an incredible level of trust in each other, knowing how to provide each other with checks and balances. He could not imagine navigating the pandemic as a solo owner.

“We were able to motivate each other during the tough times, take turns putting in the work, having the hard conversations, and developing creative solutions,” he said. “I’m continually amazed at how many people go it alone in small business—it’s something I would never do.”

Looking back at his college years, Tyler never thought he would join a fraternity. “I was relatively confident I wouldn’t participate in Greek life; the general connotation around it didn’t appeal to me. But it only took one dinner to completely change my mind,” he admitted.

After meeting at Free State Brewery with **Jack Hannah '08**, **Bailor Hardman '08**, and **Alan Schurle '10**, where they had a fantastic conversation that was equally enjoyable and inspiring, it was clear to Tyler that Beta was the best place to meet like-minded individuals who were driven and passionate.

“First and foremost, Alpha Nu surrounded me with driven, intelligent, thoughtful friends, and people who have materially influenced me for the better,” he said. “I’m a big believer in the concept that everyone is an aggregate or average of those they spend their time with.”

His time at Beta was full of moments where he and his brothers understood the momentousness of the occasion. Whether it was from alumni or actives, they were continually reminded how instrumental their four years in the house would be; that really allowed him to bask in it.

“How memorable and poignant they were,” he remarked. “I savored those snow days,



weekend excursions, parties, and nights of uncontrolled laughter. I remember trying to make mental notes of those moments, and fortunately there were many of them. What amazes me is how fun they still are to relive again and again.”

Tyler’s pledge class is at that fun stage in life where they’re brought together regularly by engagements, weddings, and babies. He knows his pledge brothers’ spouses and families well, and while it never seems frequent enough, many of them still engage regularly, whether the catalyst is politics, sports, family, or business. You can connect with Tyler at tyler@madeinkc.co and visit madeinkc.co for your Kansas City gift needs. From apparel to apothecary, there’s something for everyone at Made in KC.



The 2021 senior class has a brotherhood dinner in Kansas City.



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A Welcomed Small Sense of Normalcy Returns for Beta's Collegians

Fall New Members Make Immediate Impact at Alpha Nu

The magnificent magnolia tree in front of the Usher Mansion is in full bloom and so is the spring semester for the men of Alpha Nu. Chirping birds and the beaming sun have brought with them a much-needed breath of fresh air from the challenges the pandemic has presented us. It has felt like a marathon of a school year, so I wanted to share how Alpha Nu has fared as we approach the finish line.

It all began in the mountains of Colorado, where brothers gathered to shred the slopes at the end of January before returning to The Hutt. Upon our return, classes resumed in a hybrid format, allowing some to return to The Hill and enjoy strolls along Wescoe Beach. Many brothers also took the opportunity to return to Allen Fieldhouse to cheer on the Jayhawks.

Recently, the university council approved social gatherings at third-party venues like Dempsey's and The Oread, which has allowed us to resume date parties and the planning of philanthropy events for the end of the semester. Although it hasn't been

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a normal spring at the chapter house, the combined efforts of all members to promote brotherhood in the form of poker and basketball games and a plethora of other activities have kept spirits high in this time of uncertainty.

We are excited to welcome the 23 brothers of the fall 2020 new member class to The Hutt. This group of men combined for the highest new member class GPA in Alpha Nu's history. We are eager to see them build upon their 3.89 GPA and strive more for scholastic success. I'm hopeful that their academic excellence will translate to chapter leadership. We also accepted 14 spring new members and are on track to have a group of high-achieving high school graduates for fall 2021.

This year has affirmed that Betas are ready for any challenge the world decides to throw our way. I look forward to the end of these uncertain times and the prolonged success of our storied chapter.

Yours in _kai_,
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Our new members with pledge trainer Turner Snapp '22 on initiation weekend.



William Muehlebach '23, Jake Hiss '23, Ben Hane '23, Henry Mahaffey '23, Zach Merkley '23, and Cole Schreiber '23 enjoy a spring afternoon at Clinton Lake.