

THE THETA RECORD

Official Newsletter of the Theta Chapter of Chi Phi Fraternity

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RPI RELATIONS

This semester has been full with instances of RPI decision-making that directly impeded our operations. This started with the beginning of the semester, when it was decided that “the Greek Commons fraternity and sorority houses [would] remain closed for the spring 2021 semester” and that off-campus, remote students living in the Troy area would not be able to receive the twice-weekly COVID testing, which had been provided to them throughout the entirety of the Fall semester.

The institute doubled the number of students living on-campus with the return of required sophomore housing while continuing to impose restrictions on student housing that far surpassed all state and CDC guidelines. Nonetheless, we continue to stay heavily involved within the RPI community despite the difficulties commensurate to remote extracurriculars with Brothers in student government, campus leadership positions, and school mentoring/tutoring positions.

This past Fall, the Interfraternity Council (IFC) voted, against our opinion, to amend the bylaws and restructure to a system with fewer specific titled positions, replacing all of the Vice President positions other than Executive VP with committee chairs and general Directors on the executive board. Despite these changes, we continue to have an exceedingly strong presence on IFC, with three Brothers currently holding positions on the executive board: Ethan Fovel serving as Treasurer, Roberto Lopez serving as a Director, and Christian Winicki serving as the IFC Greek Senator. Brother Christian Winicki was also just re-elected to be Greek Senator again for the 2021 - 2022 academic year. Additionally, Brother George Appessos was appointed to a seat on the Greek Judicial Board, where he will continue to serve until he graduates.

IFC has continued to advocate for the Greek Community but has been often unsuccessful with the administrators that will talk to Greek leaders since they are rarely the decision-makers. The Institute is unwilling to give us insight into the rationale behind their decisions nor give us a seat at the table where these decisions are being made.

To learn more about the current state of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Theta Chapter encourages you to read the articles from Renew Rensselaer, an organization formed of concerned alumni.

<https://renewrensselaer.org/>

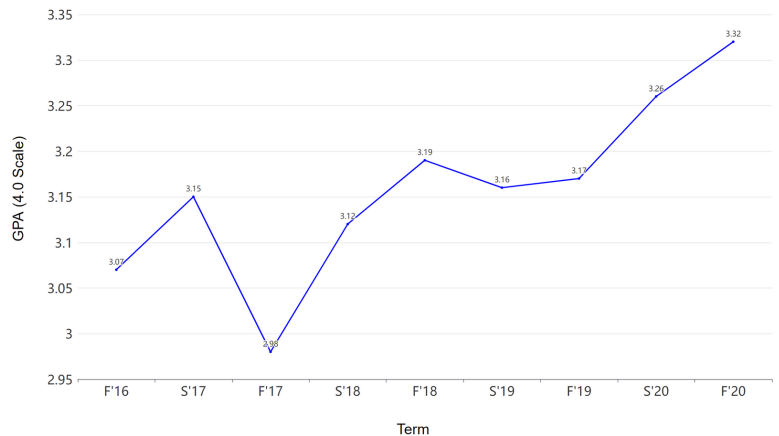


UPDATES FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

Academics

This semester average GPA for all fraternities was 3.21, for all of Greek life was 3.25, and for all men attending RPI was 3.21. The average GPA of the Brotherhood currently stands at 3.32, exceeding all of the aforementioned averages. We sought to maintain and improve this average GPA through biweekly study hours and one-on-one tutoring sessions with other Brothers. As we transition back to fully in-person classes, the perseverance through remote instruction demonstrated by the Brotherhood this past year is a strong indicator of the Chapter's culture of academic excellence. We expect to reach new heights this upcoming Fall semester.

Cumulative Brotherhood GPA



Philanthropy and Community Service

The Theta Chapter has continued our strong community service efforts. Every week, Brothers had opportunities to give back to their community and offer a helping hand by mitigating food waste at the Regional Food Bank, cleaning the His Table community kitchen at the Victorious Life Christian Church, or providing groceries to the less fortunate at the Provisions Food Pantry. We're proud to say we collectively volunteered for just about 140 hours community service.

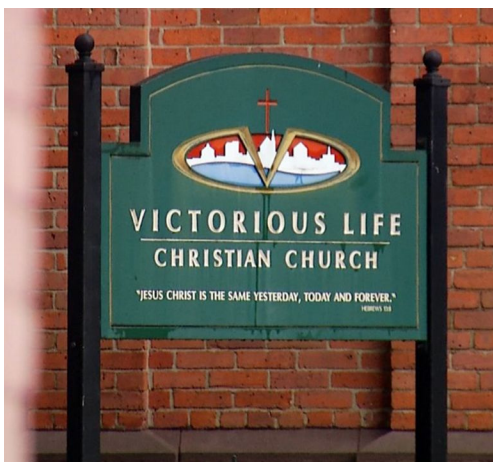


Regional Food Bank
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

This semester, we decided to support and raise money for the Unity House of Troy, which offers COVID relief to the community. We managed to raise \$1,000 for Troy. In the future, we anticipate returning to our tradition of raising money for St. Baldrick's.

Social Events

Unfortunately, due to restrictions enacted due to COVID-19, social activities were restricted this past year. We hope to return to providing life to the RPI community soon. Amongst the Brotherhood however, we had a handful of events, such as socially-distant movie nights, that allowed us to be safe and social.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



Brother McDonald will be continuing his job search and working on launching a startup company.

Br. Marc McDonald
BS Mechanical Engineering,
MS Business Administration



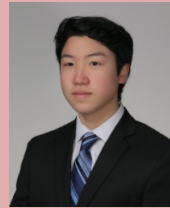
Brother Celic will be working at Pfizer in Andover, MA, as a senior associate scientist. He will be in charge of downstream/purification process development.

Br. Daniel Celic
BS Chemical Engineering, MS
Supply Chain Management



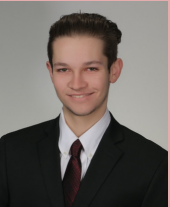
Brother Miller is working at Moog Space and Defense Group in Buffalo, NY. He will be working as a system design and controls engineer.

Br. Michael Miller
Mechanical Engineering



Brother Sasakura will be working as a full-time system engineer at General Dynamics Electric Boat.

Br. Shin Sasakura
Aeronautical and Mechanical
Engineering



Brother Underwood will be continuing his job search in the Aeronautical and Mechanical Engineering fields. His work organizing our St. Baldrick's fundraiser will continue to be appreciated.

Br. Justin Underwood
Aeronautical and Mechanical
Engineering



Brother Ward is returning to NetApp in Boulder, CO, after his internship. He will be working as a software engineer specializing in web development.

Br. Zachary Ward
Computer Science



Brother Hoffman will be continuing his search for employment as a Mechanical Engineer.

Br. Hunter Hoffman
Mechanical Engineering



Brother Fishbein will be working at RBC Bearings in Oxford, CT as a Manufacturing Engineer Trainee.

Br. Ryan Fishbein
Aeronautical Engineering



Brother Hagmann will be pursuing a Masters of Science in Aerospace Engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Br. Kai Hagmann
Aeronautical and Mechanical
Engineering



Brother Porrecca will be continuing his search for employment as a Software Engineer.

Br. Kevin Porrecca
Computer Science



Brother Weisser will be working at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals as an Associate Scientist.

Br. Eddie Weisser
Biomedical Engineering



Brother DeBassio will be attending Physician Assistant School, a three-year program in partnership with Harvard School of Medicine.

Br. Paul DeBassio
Biology and Pre-Medical Studies

CHAPTER OPERATIONS

Housing

A lot has been accomplished regarding house repairs and renovations in the face of all the challenges this semester has brought. The collective Brotherhood has managed to complete a total of 146 hours of work on renovations and repairs this semester. This effort from the Brotherhood has made it possible for many projects to be completed and for others to gain decent headway to being completed in the near future.

Finished Projects	Ongoing Projects	Upcoming Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of M23 • New boiler installed in Stroud Hall • Renovation of M35 • New bathroom stalls on M3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiler repair in the Chi • Repairing of the back stairwell of the Chi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of the attic floor in Stroud Hall • Repairing of the foundation of the Chi

M23 Renovations

New drywall installed, the walls and trim painted, and the floor refinished



1 - Before



2 - Drywall removed



3 - Floor refinished, drywall and trim installed and painted

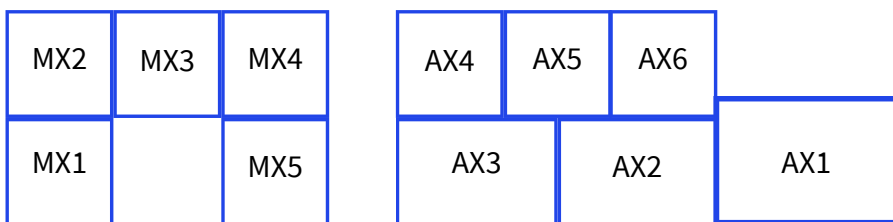
M35 Renovations

New drywall and insulation added to the inside walls, drop ceiling installed. New wiring and lighting was also properly installed.



After pictures of the renovations. We plan to repaint the outer walls and refinish the floor this coming Fall.

The Chi (left) and Stroud Hall (right) Floorplans



The "X" signifies the floor number. For the Chi, floors 2 and 3 have rooms, with MX3 being a single and all others a double. For Stroud Hall, floors 1 and 2 have rooms, with AX1 a double and all others being singles.

Risk Management

The active Brotherhood has kept cautious this semester through twice-weekly COVID testing provided by RPI. All active Brothers have been fully vaccinated, and Brothers returning to campus in the Fall from their away semesters are expected to be vaccinated. We are planning to operate as we are now in the Fall, given the uncertainty of RPI’s recognition of Greek Live-Ins. The environment, health, and safety inspections RPI typically requires have not been conducted in the last two semesters. We have continued to maintain the house’s safety independently, with Brother Avery Montembeault regularly conducting inspections of the houses and suggesting repairs and changes.

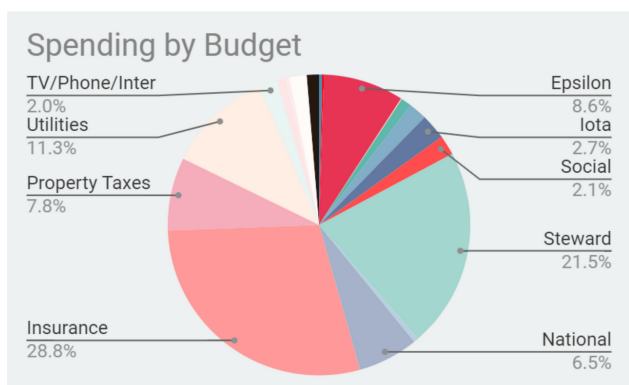
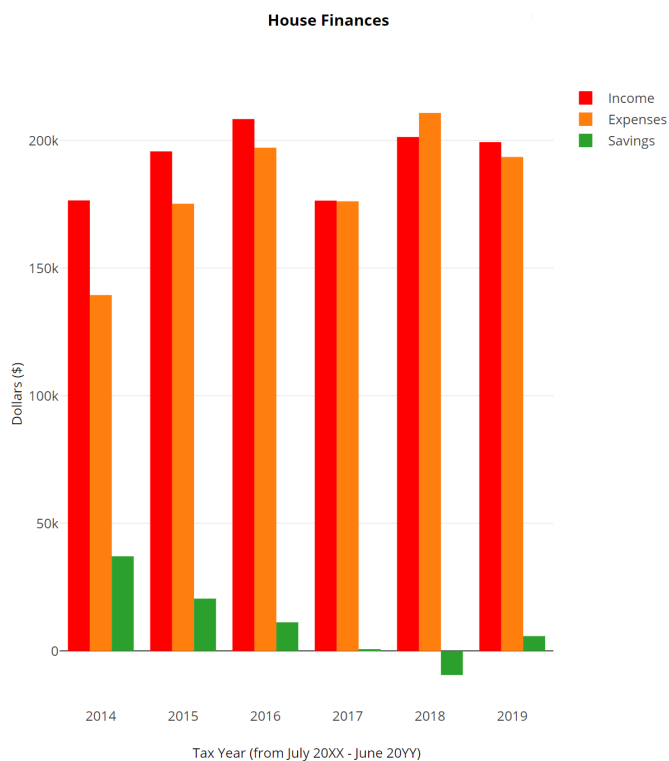
Finances

Despite the challenges COVID has brought, the House is in good financial standing. This semester's budget was \$85,000, and we anticipate hitting that exactly or going slightly negative. Increased expenses such as insurance costs, initiating two pledge classes this semester, and renovating two rooms made us unable to add to our savings regardless of the significant reduction of the social and rush budget expenses. We are exploring what can be done to preserve the house’s purchasing power. The Chapter has held off on starting a Brother-managed brokerage account because we have not received our tax-exempt status, though we intend to later this year owing to the diligent work of Brother Noah Prisament.

As per the suggestion of Brother Peter Gramenides, Member at Large, we will be looking into launching a Fidelity Charitable account, which allows Alumni to donate cash or stocks. If you would like to support the Theta Chapter, please see our PayPal under the email chiphithetachapter@gmail.com. Any donations would very much be appreciated and will go to upkeep/renovation of the houses. If you are not in our Google Groups email chain and would like regular budget updates, please email delta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com, and you will be added to the group.

Artifacts, Rituals, and History

The Brotherhood continued to conduct COVID-safe rituals this semester. Many composites from former years were being stored in the basement in poor conditions for unknown reasons. As a result, we are looking into composite restoration in hopes that many of these composites can be restored and hung up in the houses. In the attic, there are many old photos that we intend to scan and add to the house file server. If you have any old photos or artifacts you are willing to donate, please contact the Zeta (zeta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Ethan Fovel.



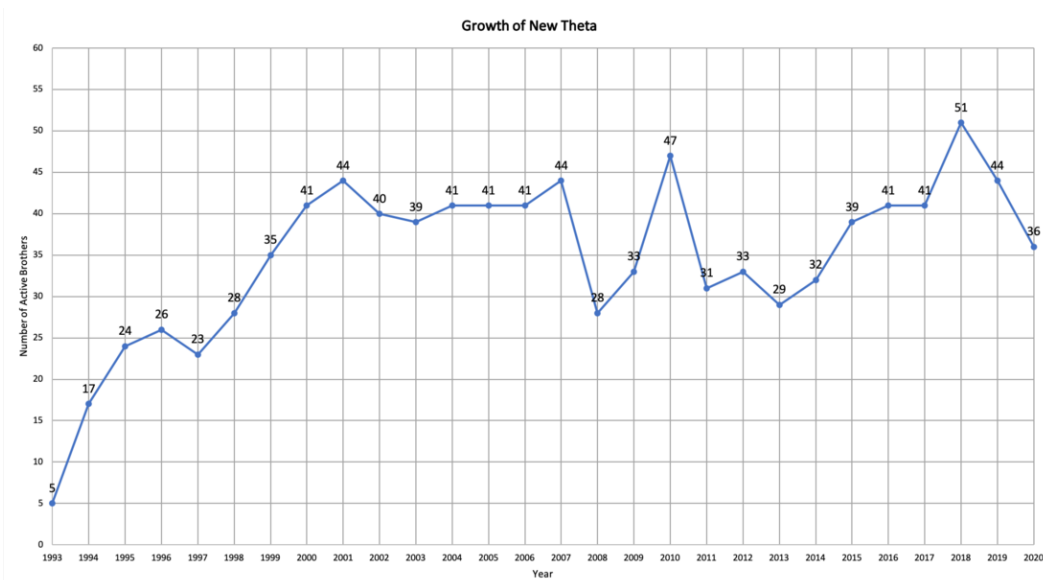
CHAPTER GROWTH

While difficult, recruitment this Spring was successful. In total, eight bids were handed out, four of which signed with us. Of the 22 active fraternities at RPI, many saw large decreases in signed bids. Chi Phi represented a sizable percentage of the fraternities who initiated new members. Moving forward, we will take the lessons learned from this difficult recruitment period for a more successful rush in the Fall 2021 semester.

We are pleased to introduce you all to the Iota Triton pledge class, all of whom are freshmen in the class of 2024. The COVID policies employed by RPI made it difficult to be consistent throughout the pledging process, namely the two-week quarantine period that was triggered after reaching a campus-wide COVID case count threshold. Nevertheless, we are happy to say that all aspects of the pledging process necessary to make these men our Brothers were accomplished. As long as we continue to recruit dedicated men like the Iota Tritons, our Chapter will continue to thrive.



John Cohen, Computer Science major from Marblehead, MA (front)
 Noe Horowitz, Computer Science major from Scarsdale, NY (right)
 Barry "Soul" Soulaymana, Computer Science and Math from Bronx, NY (back)
 Jared Zornitzer, Mechanical Engineering major from Roseland, NJ (left)



The above graph shows the growth of New Theta since our founding. Each data point shows the size of the house at the end of the Fall semester based on the composites of that academic year and the Record of Initiates. Following the graduation of Brothers in Spring 2021 and with the newly initiated Brothers, there will be 26 active Brothers in Fall 2021.

NATIONAL AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

National

We have continued to stay in great relations with National who, in the absence of in-person events such as RLA, has been working to provide digital educational events and webinars for the Brothers. This summer, two Brothers will be attending the first Congress in two years since last year's was canceled entirely.



On a national level, a new Three Star accreditation system has been implemented. In some respects, the new system expects more than the past system for national accreditation with each section requiring a number of requirements to receive credit for any of them. Nonetheless, our Chapter strived to meet all of these new guidelines and we have completed the accreditation under this new system for the first time. The Chapter was accredited last semester in the temporarily modified system due to COVID-19 that only required the submission of a number of documents without any further grading. We received a number of awards from National this past year (see the Fall Alumni Newsletter for details) and are applying for awards again this year.

Alumni Relations

As we battle through the pandemic, we continue to emphasize the health and safety of all of the Brothers of the Theta chapter. Similar to last semester, our semiannual Alumni Weekend was hosted virtually on platforms like Zoom and Discord. This ensured that we are constantly moving forward with making progress and keeping the Alumni informed of our operations as a house.

In conjunction with Alumni Weekend, a professional development event was held to connect the active brothers to the alumni further. The main goal of professional development was to create a job networking portfolio that will help job-seeking Brothers connect with our Alumni. With this network, job-seeking Brothers can upload their résumés and have access to contact information of Alumni who wish to be referenced. Vice-versa, Alumni can reach out to job-seeking brothers that fit their hiring criteria. This was a very enriching experience for both parties. As more brothers add their career information and résumés, the Chapter's professional network will continue expanding and becoming more resourceful.

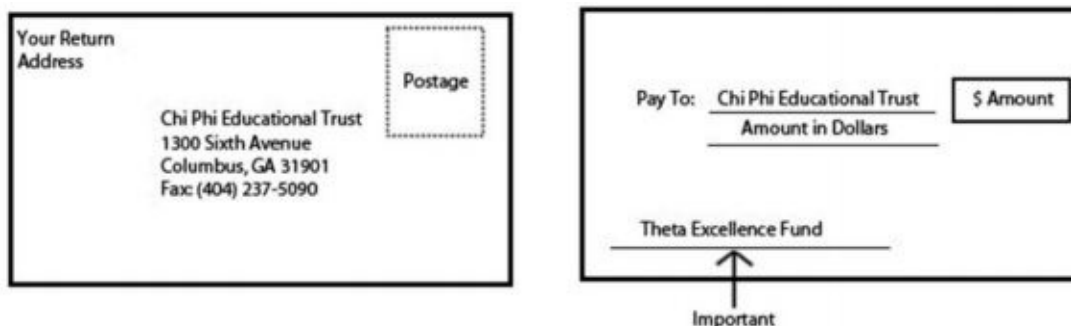
Overall, it was great to host another successful Alumni Weekend and see everybody, even if it was remote. We hope that everybody continues to stay healthy as we await your return in the future.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Statement from the TAA

THETA EXCELLENCE FUND

With the Theta Excellence Fund active, our first goal is 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 Alpha (alpha.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Noah Prisament, or the Delta (delta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Matthew Auffaurth, 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

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



CHAPTER WEBSITE

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