

March 29, 2011

Dear Hoff Awards Committee,

Given the current state of Greek life at Lafayette College, it is not often that fraternal organizations are recognized for their achievements, so I am elated to be afforded the opportunity to nominate the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity to receive the 2011 Aaron O. Hoff Award for Outstanding Living Group. Over the course of the 2010-2011 academic year, the brothers of Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) have worked hard to continue the trend of success that has been developing in our chapter for several years now. This nomination will show DKE's tremendous achievements in all areas characteristic of an outstanding living group, and it is my hope that, among the myriad other high-performing groups, the committee will see DKE fit to receive the Hoff Award.

Since I began this nomination with an unexplained statement, I feel compelled to clarify my stance. To those not affiliated with Greek life—faculty, administrators, and many students—it is often difficult understand what the purpose of fraternal organizations is. Ultimately, many overlook the educational and service endeavors and see fraternities only as social outlets. Even more discouragingly, the recent conduct violations by several other chapters have distorted this already skewed view. Behind the scenes, all chapters are working hard to give back to the community and foster growth within, and although that is not immediately recognized, and outlets for this recognition are few and far between, I feel that a Hoff Award would undoubtedly prove to the administration as well as the campus community that our hard work has paid off.

One of the major requirements of Greek organizations is to submit annually a report detailing how the chapter has performed in several different areas. COMPASS, as the program is termed, "exists to assist chapters develop themselves and their members in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Community Building, Management & Development, and Educational Programming" (Lafayette College). For the 2010 calendar year, Delta Kappa Epsilon received an "Excellent" ranking from the committee charged with reviewing the submitted binder, meaning that DKE successfully completed over 90% of the requirements set by the administration. Though a number is anything but descriptive, it is a testament to our successes in the eyes of the school. Certainly not reflected in this ranking, however, is the fact that we went above and beyond in some areas like service and philanthropy (but also underperformed as a whole in others like scholarship). Overall, however, the report details our dedication over the past calendar year, and although this current semester's bountiful activities are to be documented on the next report, it certainly serves to represent our dedication to achievement (and can be lent to the committee for review if desired).

First and foremost, our chapter prides itself on the outstanding job we have done at serving the community and donating to charity. Last semester, Delta Kappa Epsilon participated in Alpha Gamma Delta's "Light the Night" safe Halloween event for Easton children and donated to the Landis-sponsored Holiday Helpers benefit for Easton mothers. DKE and Alpha Phi also organized and held a "Pictures with Santa" fundraiser to raise money for the Alpha Phi Foundation. Additionally, DKE collected and donated a large box of school supplies to an impoverished school in South Africa that had contact with one of our brothers. This semester, DKE hosted a luau-themed dance party in benefit of Pi Beta Phi and the Spring Garden Foundation in Easton. The event was highly successful, giving Lafayette students an alternate, non-alcoholic way to spend their Friday night. Having

collected over \$400 in philanthropic donations in the one night, the two organizations are already in talks to host an encore event in the coming weeks.

On top of these events, many others have also been planned for the remainder of the semester. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Jeremy Saxe Memorial Basketball Tournament will take place on April 9, to support the efforts of the Jeremy Saxe Foundation in building a school in Nepal. The Foundation honors DKE's brother Jeremy who passed away during his senior year due to an undiagnosed heart condition; DKE anticipates raising close to \$1,000 from participants, current brothers, and alumni. Similarly, DKE will also cook and sell food at Marina Day, a celebration of the life of Kappa Kappa Gamma senior Marina Peterson who passed away the following summer. DKE will additionally send a delegation of volunteers to Landis's Lafapalooza on April 16<sup>th</sup> as well as to Youth Empowerment Day in May. Also in the planning phase is an Easter egg hunt with Delta Gamma for the children of the Boys & Girls Club, as well as a dodgeball tournament with Delta Delta Delta and Brothers of Lafayette. Important to note is the trend of working with other living groups and organizations to achieve maximum success by bringing an extra level of community support to the events.

While it is important that the entire fraternity unites from time to time, individual endeavors show that members are engaged at Lafayette in their own way. From a community service standpoint, Robert Montecallo participates in the "America Reads" program at the Salvation Army and Conrad Shrager does after-school tutoring in Easton, for example, while Gregory Baldwin works for Landis organizing 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Alliance programs like Kids in the Community. Elsewhere around campus members have active leadership positions. Matthew Alpert and Andrew Casey are respectively the captain and president of the club baseball team. Justin Lam, Casey Schmalacker, and I currently serve on the executive board of the Interfraternity Council; and I, along with Thomas Miglietta and William Stern are part of the Lafayette Activities Forum executive board. Additionally, Adam Block and Adam Szklanny both are officers on the Sports Business and Management Club. It would certainly be unnecessary to list everyone with an external position because there are many other members of DKE engaged in Lafayette organizations, but this list is a genuine representation of our vast involvement on campus.

Sports are also another pastime of Delta Kappa Epsilon. The position of Athletic Director, held currently by Andrew Casey, is an elected position in our house that serves to coordinate various intermural tournaments and philanthropic sporting events. DKE has sent delegations to, and has oftentimes been victorious at, intermural basketball (both 3-on-3 and 5-on-5), soccer, and flag-football. In addition to these casual sporting activities, DKE has many members on formal sports teams. Five brothers play on the club baseball team, while four are varsity runners on the Lafayette track and field team. David Eckelmann is a varsity fencer, while Daniel Ladd swims for Lafayette. Our dedication to sports is a demonstration of both our brotherhood and our ties to the Lafayette community.

Without dancing around academics, I will admit that Delta Kappa Epsilon, in comparison with other Greek organizations as well as the average college student, performs less than ideally, *as a whole*. The COMPASS report shows that we are not sufficient enough in the scholarship section to receive credit for an acceptable GPA. No matter how much it bothers me that my fraternity does not perform well enough to receive recognition from the Lafayette community, I have seen firsthand the full potential of our organization to improve ourselves. Though a clear divide is evident in that the

top 25% of brothers had an “A” average last semester, while the bottom 25% averaged a “C+”, it is this ever-increasing top 25% that issues a continuous push toward bettering the study habits of the low-performers. Grade point average aside, it is clear that our organization is academically astute. Brothers are found frequenting Skillman Library at all hours of the day, with students within the same major helping each other with problem sets or having lively philosophical debates on a daily basis; studying, eating, and living together are what foster such attitudes. DKE members attend academic lectures often; yes, sometimes they go for the pizza because that day’s fraternity-cooked meal is sub-par, but there is always a desire to learn in every member, and oftentimes I will find even the underperforming students conversing enthusiastically about current events or what they learned in class that day. Each semester DKE also puts on various scholarship events intended to improve members’ abilities to learn. Last semester for example DKE set up a presentation with the Skillman Library on how best to utilize the Special Collections Department’s resources (and featured a show-and-tell of old DKE artifacts). So in essence, while DKE has failed academically in the eyes of the school—and indeed in the eyes of the brotherhood itself to some degree—the chapter remains steadfast in its desires to learn and its hopes to improve the all-chapter GPA.

In a final word to sum up my nomination, it is my belief that Delta Kappa Epsilon embodies the Lafayette ideal. The brotherhood participates actively within the Lafayette and Easton communities, and the members each contribute to other facets of life on campus in their own unique ways. Our chapter has not had any conduct violations within the last three years, substantiation of our demeanor, character, and perhaps even our perception on campus. Though our chapter GPA may be anything but ideal, the drive to improve our chapter over time and the existence of numerous high-performing individuals, coupled with our superior performance outside of strict academics, shows our clear drive to be a successful living group. Yes, we might not be a “living group” in the sense of a special-interest floor—we have many more individuals and inhabit an entire house, for instance—but we’re the same in that we all have responsibilities to uphold. Groups that can mobilize their members in a well-organized manner, through elected or delegated positions, can be far superior, and Delta Kappa Epsilon feels that for these reasons has been a successful living group at Lafayette College this year. It is the hope of the chapter that the awards committee sees Delta Kappa Epsilon fit to receive the Hoff Award for Outstanding Living.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jared R. Piette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jared R. Piette  
Delta Kappa Epsilon  
Director of Service and Philanthropy