

Our Focus and Framework

By Jereme W. Grinslade, Director of Alumni Resources and Housing (Delta Kappa/Ball State '99)



It was the first day of spring and I found myself traveling to Farmville, Virginia to help with the initiation and installation of our new Iota Lambda chapter at Longwood University. The National President, the Directors of Chapter Development, Leadership and Education Consultants: Theta Chi alumnus fathers from other chapters, representatives from regional Theta Chi chapters; all of us were excited to be starting a new chapter in Theta Chi. This historic time was concluded with a joyous celebration by all of these brothers, young and old. As I was leaving Farmville, I reflected on my own undergraduate experience and the last eight years that I have spent working as an alumnus volunteer. The experience has had its high points and its low points, but I have been able to develop a lot of wonderful memories that I would not trade for anything.

I bring this short story up because I do not understand why more alumni are not involved in our grand Fraternity. How many of us were active in our undergraduate chapter and said we would remain active and support Theta Chi after we graduated? Do you remember joking with your chapter brothers saying, "Where have all of our alumni gone?" You, then, stated to your brothers that you would not be like that. "You'll see me around," or "I'll help with the building of a new house," or "I'll be involved after I graduate," you said as you carried your last box of Fraternity treasurers out of your room at the chapter house. Well, where did all those good intentions of alumni support go?

Once you entered into the real world, you moved out of state, you found a job where you work fifty hours a week, maybe you found a wife, started a family and became involved in other community endeavors. Somehow, "good old" Theta Chi slowly got pushed farther and farther down on the priority list. Perhaps you have been thinking about your Fraternity days and how you would like to get involved again. But all of your Fraternity brothers have graduated. They have moved away, the chapter has changed, your old house mother is gone, you may not have heard from the chapter in a while, and there is really no one there you feel comfortable contacting to find out what is happening.

Wait a minute! This is your Fraternity and the unique aspect of fraternity is that it is a "membership for life."

You had a wonderful undergraduate experience, so there is no reason why you can not enjoy your alumni experience, also. The new guys on campus are your brothers. Remember how much your alumni helped out when you were an undergraduate or how much they **could** have helped if there had been an active alumni group? Alumni support supplies a foundation for undergraduate development. It can take the form of becoming a chapter advisor, serving on the housing corporation board, putting together an alumni newsletter or something simple as attending Homecoming or Founders' Day.

If your chapter memories seem like something from the distant past, maybe it is time for a new beginning. Maybe it is time for you to make a difference by returning to the Fraternity something of what you learned there and have gained through your experience since leaving the chapter. Think about how much more you could have gained with interested alumni around the chapter house providing advisory support, good two way communication and participating in various social events. You are a valuable resource to the chapter and provide the chapter with continuity.

Remember that strong alumnus volunteers are the foundation for tomorrow's leaders. Chapters with "consistent" alumni support are the "excellent" chapters in Theta Chi Fraternity. It is time for all alumnus brothers to make a new beginning, a new commitment to reach out to Theta Chi Fraternity and ask "How can I help?"