

Delta Kappa Epsilon Theta Zeta Chapter Submission for Lion's Trophy

Introduction

With over 130 years of history, DKE Theta Zeta has spent the last year facing much adversity and has found itself in a situation completely foreign to one of the University of California Berkeley's oldest fraternities. Despite these obstacles, the chapter has thrived. In the face of criticism and unsupported allegations, the Dekes of Theta Zeta have spent the last year seeking to show the rest of the campus that Dekes truly engender the traits of gentlemen, scholars, and jolly good fellows, among a slew of other positive and desirable traits. To this effect, the chapter has renewed a dedication to chapter improvement, alumni relations, scholastic achievement, and community service. This renewed dedication has in turn allowed the chapter to excel both on and off campus: boasting above average recruitment numbers, creating a more positive culture within the chapter, and strengthening ties with many of the fraternity's stakeholders.

Chapter Improvement

To the current alumni and members of DKE Theta Zeta, the chapter resembles much more than a group of gentlemen seeking a place to commune. To us, the chapter includes the history, the tangible features, and the people who compose the house. Therefore, in seeking ways to improve our chapter, the members of Theta Zeta have spent the last year seeking and implementing ways to appreciate our history, improve upon our most tangible asset, the house, and ensure

that the next generation of DKE Theta Zeta enters a situation that sets them up to succeed and unite as those before them have.

One way we believe we can improve our chapter is to understand why those before us joined and cherished DKE. If we can understand what they felt about DKE, and combine that with our passion for the chapter, we feel we will have an advantage recruiting and an even greater appreciation for the chapter. As a step in this direction, we have compiled numerous pictures and newspaper clippings that illustrate the chapter's great history, had them digitally recreated, and placed on a prominent wall in the house. This seemingly small upgrade has already shown its effects as members now understand where the house was, how it got to where it is, and how it can stand out into the future. The effect of these heirlooms has certainly led to an increased positive perception towards the chapter.

This small upgrade has also started a trend in the house's culture to put as much effort as possible into maintaining and upgrading the chapter's house. To these ends, the members of DKE voted to pass a house development fund so that any person who seeks to upgrade the house can do so with financial support from the chapter. The fund, which was passed without a single dissenting vote in the house's general meeting, raises dues for each member of the house by \$50 and has already taken its effects as members have used their leisure time to complete necessary upgrades such as sanding and repainting our two story deck. Moreover, the enthusiasm and push for this fund exemplifies the improvement in the chapter's culture and attitude.

In addition to these upgrades, the chapter also improved the house after years of fundraising by the alumni in order to make necessary upgrades. Over the last year, the alumni of DKE Theta Zeta were able to fundraise over \$88,000 in order to install heating in every common and personal room of the house. This additional upgrade has certainly improved the house as well as the lives of those who live within it.

With the improvements to the house and a new appreciation for our history, we have also sought ways to ensure our changes last. Certainly one of the major problems in the university setting is that turnover occurs every four years, and many times new members are left to reinvent ideas that had already been made. To remedy this, the members of DKE Theta Zeta have spent the last year working to create a so-called “Delta Kappa Epsilon Theta Zeta Constitution.” The purpose of this document is to lay instructions on how to handle the many situations that can come up in such a complex organization. Moreover, the constitution seeks to chronicle the ways that we have been successful in recruitment, philanthropy, and alumni relations so that the next generation has a clear idea on how to complete the tasks that many now consider the cornerstones of our chapter and culture. This document has taken the attention of many of the chapter’s current and past leaders in order to fully achieve its objectives and allow the house to continue to improve into the future.

While ensuring success through documentation of the many important processes Theta Zeta has established, the chapter has also spent the last years seeking better and more ways to unite the brotherhood. To accomplish this, Theta

Zeta, with the help of Internationals and Chapter Consultant Will Hossain, revised our entire pledge semester. The effects of this improvement include stronger camaraderie and a better way to demonstrate and teach the qualities of DKE. In addition, Theta Zeta has created new events that accomplish the goal of improving unity and thus improving the chapter. Two such events were our first chapter goal to climb Half Dome, a major California landmark in Yosemite, and our first house Parent's Night. The former event brought both brothers and alumni together through a two-day adventure to hike the landmark, which lies at the top of one of our country's most famous valleys. The latter brought the brotherhood closer by giving each member the chance to meet the families of each other member and collectively thank those who had allowed us the opportunities necessary to get where we now are.

In terms of chapter improvement, the members and alumni of DKE Theta Zeta have worked diligently in order to make a stronger chapter that embraces its' history, passes on a clear path for success, and creates unity. The tremendous gains in this area have made the chapter, its members, and its stakeholders excited for the future and confident in the strides the chapter will continue to take in the upcoming years. Additionally, we believe these improvements created greater camaraderie, organization, and appeal for DKE Theta Zeta, all characteristics that projected a positive attitude to the outside community and allowed us to attract nine new recruits, seven of which were freshmen. This truly marked a great success for us as that was the most freshmen members we had acquired since 2003 and well beyond the norm for fraternities at our University.

Alumni Relations

Growing and thriving on a campus with over 35 other fraternities and a wide variety of other extracurricular activities takes a coordinated and symbiotic effort between the current members of the house and the alumni. To accomplish this synergistic relationship, current members of the chapter reinforced the traditional events, created new events, added new levels of communication, and found new ways to support the alumni. By the end of this year, the relationship between the two groups has never been stronger and this rapport has allowed for the creation of many tangible benefits.

As a chapter, our alumni have always been an important group of stakeholders to the organization. Due to this, we have always sought to have at least one event per semester in which the alumni get a chance to meet our newest members. This event has always aided in fostering strong relationships as it is constantly recurring and allows both groups to have direct contact in a positive and energy filled night. Moreover, it provides a means for the alumni to share in a lighthearted event with the current members and detach themselves from some of the less attractive activities normally associated with the works of alumni, such as regulating the maintenance of the house.

Yet members of the current house have felt this event to only be a springboard to other events and interactions between the two groups. Thus, in the past year members of the house have set up new events and communication efforts. One such event was made when members of the house and some of the more recent alumni put together a night in which members of the house went to San Francisco

and spent time in the homes of these alumni. There, members were able to meet alumni they had not met before, gain career insights from those who had just been through the same process we now wander down, and, most importantly, spend time connecting and establishing long-term relationships.

With relationships being cultivated, members of the chapter also felt it necessary to create a more coordinated way to reach a number of alumni in timely manner. A long time issue for the chapter had been contacting those not specifically on the alumni board or living in the general bay area. To solve this, a yearlong project was made to locate and contact past alumni in order to create one large Internet group. This new group has accomplished its goals as members now contact alumni with great ease and further cultivate relationships initiated at prior alumni events.

This new, strengthened bond has led to many positive outcomes for both sides. It seems that the members and alumni of DKE have grown closer as they have been able to spend more time communicating and interacting. To these ends, after the wife of an active alumni board member passed away, nearly 50% of the current members went to a memorial service event during their final's week in order to offer their support and condolences to a man many had come to know, admire, and respect. Additionally, current members have benefitted as the alumni have increased their fundraising efforts as they now feel more connected with the house. This has led to the upgrades mentioned earlier and has created the possibility that even more can happen in the near future.

Scholarship

One goal of the Theta Zeta chapter is to make its' members better scholastic achievers by being part of the chapter. We recognize ourselves as students first, and seek ways to positively affect each other. Additionally, we seek ways to help communicate this scholar first attitude and aid others in obtaining the results they want out of the University and beyond. We also pride ourselves on setting ourselves a standard above the rest of the university on a scholastic level. This last goal can be especially difficult while attending a University consistently ranked in the top 25 nationally by U.S. News and World Report and top three by the Academic Ranking of World Universities. Yet, to achieve these goals, members of Theta Zeta have spent the last year working together to create a support system that allows each member of the group to succeed, sponsored scholarships aimed at aiding others, and putting on events with the sole purpose of providing the specialized assistance some may need.

At DKE Theta Zeta, a culture of mentorship and support has now been firmly made and seen to be effective. Upperclassmen members engender a mentorship attitude that allows lowerclassmen to get the information they need and clarify issues they do not understand in their classes. The effect of this new culture can be seen by increased average Grade Point Average standards and increased acceptance to the Haas School of Business, one of the few undergraduate programs throughout the entire country that requires application after acceptance to a more general undergraduate program. To these ends, over 20% of the members of Theta Zeta have been recognized to the Dean's list in the last year, whereas this distinction is

only extended to 4% of the entire University. Additionally, over 75% of members who applied to the Haas School were accepted, while fewer than 50% of those who applied achieved this achievement.

Yet the benefits of the new culture do not end at the lowerclassmen. Recent alumni have also been absorbed with this culture and have created time to speak with current members in order to provide insight into how to achieve scholastic and in the beginnings of our careers. For those entering the study of law, it was beneficial to be given time to speak with a current alumni who scored a 178 on the LSAT and went to Harvard law. His insights helped those learn how best to study for the exam and how to best approach the choice in law school. Those entering business also benefitted from this new culture, as they were able to talk to an alumnus who had recently begun work at Deloitte Consulting. He was able to offer guidance into classes for those in their final year and how to cope best with the demands of proceeding through school and recruitment simultaneously.

Beyond this culture of mentorship, support for members has been made in a more concrete way by creating an electronic test bank. This test bank has been a project over the last year that involved gaining access to thousands of old exams, scanning them, and placing them on a website that only members of DKE can access. However, in order to create an even more useful tool, DKE Theta Zeta has also coordinated with the UC Berkeley Delta Gamma Chapter to acquire the sororities exams in exchange for access to the website. This tool, now entering its final stages toward completion, will certainly be a great support tool to promote scholastic achievement among the members of both DKE and DG.

In addition to the promotion of scholastic achievement inside the chapter, Theta Zeta created a scholarship given to one student outside the chapter each year in order to help that student fulfill his or her scholastic goals. Yet, rather than offering the scholarship to a fairly anonymous person, the scholarship also included a BBQ where scholarship finalists met members of the house so we could make a more informed decision as to who would use the money for its intended purpose. The eventual winner, Trey Williamson, has kept in touch with Theta Zeta and has spoken to how much the scholarship aided him in fulfilling his goals.

While providing monetary assistance, we have also provided educational information for those who needed particular answers. DKE Theta Zeta partnered with the Berkeley Kaplan Test Center to put on an event aimed at teaching students how to write personal statements for graduate school. This event, attended by more than 50 people outside of Theta Zeta, provided much needed information that all in attendance will certainly use into the future.

Thus, both inside and outside Theta Zeta, the chapter has been very active by creating and strengthening a culture of support and mentorship while providing both financial and educational assistance to others. We hope that these cultural changes, that have created positive effects for many people, continue to grow into the future so that even more numerical successes can be illustrated. Moreover, we are currently seeking more concrete tools to help others and ourselves so that we can achieve our hefty scholastic goals.

Community Service

After the loss of recognition by our University, the DKEs of Theta Zeta felt the best way to show the rest of the CalGreeks community that we had been unfairly portrayed was to continue our community service efforts with a revitalized passion. We had a goal to show others that we were not as portrayed, we were leaders in efforts to create a better community, and we sought to prevent the dangerous situations some had labeled us as creating. By the end of this spring, in many respects we can claim that we have achieved our goal by hosting and participating in numerous philanthropic events, spearheading safety movements and organized community service efforts, and doing research on how to help others. Indeed, in many respects the Theta Zeta chapter exemplified the qualities of a gentlemen, scholar, and jolly good fellow while also demonstrating that we were one of the most community involved organizations, including much more than just fraternities, on campus.

Throughout the last year, the members of DKE have fulfilled our many goals as a fraternity in part through the participation in and creation of community service events. In terms of participation, DKE Theta Zeta was in attendance at many philanthropic events hosted by any other Greek houses this year. This included synchronized dancing on stage at Pi Beta Phi's Arrowbands fundraiser, competing at Delta Delta Delta's Field Day, and singing at Kappa Kappa Gamma's Karoke event, just to name a few such philanthropic events that we have participated in. We felt that by attending and aiding in the success of each of these events, we were helping each philanthropic event to achieve its goal and thus helping the community. This

was most apparent at Kappa Kappa Gamma's Karoke event, where DKE Theta Zeta had the most people in attendance of any organization and contributed over \$350 of individual members money. In addition to participating in many events, we also created events that aided the community in various ways. At one such event, we coordinated with the East Oakland Boxing Association to help build a recreational facility for inner-city youth. At this event we had over 80% attendance and created a lasting effect on the community by creating something that those in need could use for years to come.

Beside these efforts, DKE Theta Zeta has made a substantial impact by leading multiple community service efforts aimed at increasing safety and bettering the community around us. During this last semester, the area surrounding the Greek community was repeatedly attacked by a rapist who made it uncomfortable and unsafe for Greeks to be out at night. In response, members of DKE established and ran Greek Walk; a program that had members of different Greek chapters walking around the Greek community every weekend night on the lookout for potential problems. This allowed people to feel safer and seems to have had an effect on the rapist as no instances of rape were reported after the establishment of the program. Moreover, many Greek women stated that they felt safer knowing that there was a coordinated groups of guys out each night with the sole purpose of looking after them.

Another community service effort run by DKE Theta Zeta has created a better learning environment for children in the local area. Organized by members of DKE acting as facilitators, for over four years DKE Theta Zeta has worked with Sports for

Kids in order to get members of DKE to go to local elementary schools and act as teacher's aids in the understaffed schools. Members have done everything from facilitating reading time to playing board games to teaching sports in this role and have made a clear impact as the partnership is now viewed as indispensable by members of DKE, Sports for Kids, and the local elementary schools. This major effort has required a weekly commitment or greater from over 50% of the house for many years and has also required members of DKE to publicize the program to other students and get them involved as well. Truly, the programs led and organized by members of DKE Theta Zeta have thus had an impact on the community by increasing safety and creating a better learning environment.

Yet, due to our recent circumstances, members of DKE felt these community service projects were still not enough. We also sought a way to give back to the community by acquiring and distributing knowledge that would let each Greek organization understand their strengths and weaknesses, allow the Greek community to recruit more effectively, and portray what causes each chapter's own unique characteristics. To achieve this, four members of our chapter, working alongside the guidance of a PHD candidate and MBA professor in the Haas School of Business, created a study based on a survey that would allow the members to collect and distribute this useful data. The prospects of this study were also considered groundbreaking as no study of the sort had ever been done before, especially one that focused on the positive aspects of the Greek community. As of the completion of the semester, over 1400 surveys had been collected and analyzed with the results now beginning to be given to each respective house. The preliminary feedback

already shows the worth such an experiment has created as organizations have already expressed how the information has allowed them to achieve the goals we had hoped.

Through all these efforts, participating, hosting, facilitating, organizing, and running community service events, we believe we have also achieved our goals in this realm. As a chapter we have been recognized by our university newspaper on more than one occasion for our efforts, thus demonstrating who we actually are. We have also demonstrated that the accusations made could not have been farther from the truth as we have facilitated safety, promoted education, and provided useful tools for every in the CalGreeks community. Going into the future, we are proud to be affiliated with our chapter regardless of what they university attempts to portray because we know that our efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Conclusion:

The Theta Zeta chapter of DKE has been through an uphill battle with the University of California Berkeley over the last year for many things we believe we are wrongly accused of. Despite the obstacles created by this battle, we have prospered: we have gained many new members, created a newfound positive culture that causes chapter improvement and scholastic achievement, strengthened bonds with our alumni, and done more community service than ever before. Members are confident in their choice to join DKE and we are proud to embrace all the qualities of a DKE. We believe we are each gentlemen, scholars, and jolly good fellows.

While many chapters are surely deserving of the Lion's Trophy, we feel we are strong candidates due to the work and effort demonstrated throughout the last year. We also feel that such an honor could be of great value to us, as it would create on more way to reaffirm that we are a chapter that promotes all the positive qualities stressed by Internationals. Further, it would create just one more way to show those who accused us of wrongdoing, that to the contrary, we are upstanding individuals who comprise a great chapter that does much to make a better community and university.