

SPRING 2024

ALSO: Proud moment on  
Installation Day...see page 3



# THE GEAR

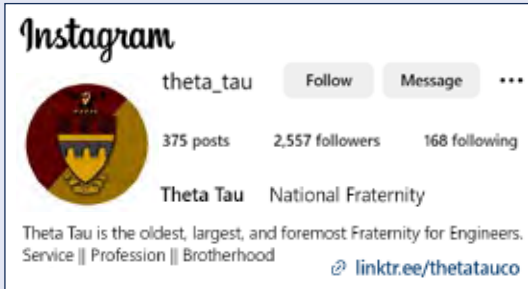


# LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

READ MORE ABOUT JONATHAN HASSLER (PHI, '07) ON PAGE 14

## Look Out!

Leadership Academy is here... see page 19 for details! Make sure to follow our Instagram and LinkedIn pages to stay up to date on our latest events!



Want to see your photo or article in *The Gear*?



Anyone can submit to be published.

- If you are a chapter, you can submit through the Chapter Management Tool.
- If you are an alumnus, send your content to [gear@thetatau.org](mailto:gear@thetatau.org)

## Alumni...

Alumni are encouraged to update their contact information with the Central Office. This will ensure that you receive your printed copy of *The Gear* as well as communications from your chapter. If you know a brother who has not received their *Gear*, direct them to [thetatau.org/update](http://thetatau.org/update).

## Volunteer!

Theta Tau is seeking volunteers for national committees and officer positions. Volunteering is an impactful way to build your network and develop your own strengths while helping the fraternity as a whole. We have greatly expanded volunteer opportunities recently for a wide range of possible time commitments and interests. **Join a committee, advise a team, plan our future!**

### OPEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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##### National Support

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## THE GEAR OF THETA TAU

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## Upsilon Chapter Hosts Engineering Banquet

By Blake Daniel Huston and Tyler Schroeder, University of Arkansas, (Upsilon, '26)

Upsilon Chapter hosted its first engineering banquet, held on April 25th, 2023, at the University of Arkansas, aimed to connect engineering students with companies from Northwest Arkansas, and beyond. The event was originally conceived by Aidan Ayers, the chapter's vice regent, who spear-headed the planning process, sending over four hundred emails to invite companies, collaborate with on-campus career services, secure sponsorships, and coordinate catering.

For a first attempt at hosting an event of this size, the banquet was an incredible success for Upsilon Chapter with 145 attendees in total. Outside of the estimated forty active members in attendance, there were also over a dozen alumni, seven company representatives, six professors from various departments, and nearly 80 other engineering students. Feedback from these attendees resounded with praise for the efforts involved in putting on such an event and appreciation for the opportunities it offered for students to interact with professors and employers.

The chapter successfully raised over \$5,400 through sponsorships, ticket sales, and T-shirt

sales. These funds were allocated for various event expenses, including a homestyle Southern meal courtesy of Ozark Catering and live music provided by local jazz performers, the Forte Jazz Quintet. The banquet boasted a lineup of notable speakers, including the College of Engineering's Dean Kim Needy, as well as representatives from ConocoPhillips, Lineus Medical, Garver, and Phillips Medisize.

It was only through the combined efforts of several committees that this event became such a success. Notably, Ella Roper single-handedly designed all of the graphics and promotional material; Kate Ryscavage managed the printing and distribution of invitations, flyers, banners, and more; and Nathan Reese arranged decorations and assisted with setting up the event space. Ella, Kate, and Nathan represent just a fraction of the dedicated members who invested their time and energy into making the banquet a success; it truly wouldn't have been possible without the combined efforts of the whole chapter. The substantial effort required to plan and host this event brought us closer together as brothers. We eagerly anticipate hosting it again in 2024.

### Conference Presenters:



# Becoming A Chapter

By Erin V. Early, James Madison University (Eta Zeta, '24)

In 2018, a passionate group of engineering students petitioned Theta Tau for a certificate for their newly formed interest group at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. For the next five years, these students - and those who followed them - worked to overcome many obstacles. Initially, they struggled to establish themselves within the JMU community and make a name for themselves within the College of Integrated Science and Engineering. Eventually, they would face their greatest challenge: the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these hurdles, the candidate chapter reached a total of 45 brothers and was installed on September 16th, 2023 as Eta Zeta Chapter of Theta Tau!

The day of installation was a proud moment for the brothers of Eta Zeta Chapter. In that weekend, all our hard work had paid off and seeing the results was incredibly rewarding. Several alumni returned to JMU and were the first brothers installed into the new chapter. Brothers from Xi Delta and Kappa Gamma Chapters were also present to witness this historic event. After the installation ceremony, we all enjoyed a banquet where Grand Regent Stuart Kardian, Executive Council Delegate Jean-Marc Cassier, and the President of JMU's College of Integrated Science and Engineering, Dr. Robert Kolvoord each offered their congratulatory remarks.

The members of Eta Zeta Chapter are thrilled to take the first steps as a chartered chapter of Theta Tau and are excited to see what the future holds!



Eta Zeta brothers holding the Installation Certificate

Many words of wisdom were shared that evening, including by Seth Hollatz, Eta Zeta's first-ever Regent:

*"The installation of the Eta Zeta chapter was a great opportunity for us all. We were able to make valuable connections with notable alumni, national officers, and other brothers from our region. The leadership and advice given from them all will stick with our chapter and allow us to continue to grow and live by the values of Theta Tau."*



Eta Zeta becomes a Chapter of Theta Tau at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia!



Brothers on a Tour of Binghamton University's Campus.  
Photo by JC Rienton.

# The 20th Anniversary of Nu Gamma Chapter

By Calvin Wetzel and Tyler Joseph Zierer, Binghamton University (Nu Gamma, '24)

This past May, Nu Gamma Chapter at Binghamton University celebrated our 20th anniversary as a chapter. Since being installed, we have graduated over 300 brothers representing all engineering majors at Binghamton and holding impactful careers across the country.

We had 124 of our alumni attend our anniversary festivities here at Binghamton, NY, which was 45% of our alumni. It was great having brothers from our first two classes come and share about how the chapter was founded and the work they did to secure its future 20 years ago. It was impressive to see so many of our brothers join us from across the country; we had brothers in attendance from California, Washington, and across the Northeast. We were inspired to celebrate with brothers from all eras of Nu Gamma Chapter, and it was rewarding to see brothers from our newest classes sharing laughs with alumni who graduated nearly two decades ago.

The weekend started off with an alumni panel with our engineering school's Career and Alumni Connections department. This allowed us to share our alumni's extensive knowledge base with not just current brothers but all those in the engineering school. The following morning included a reception at Binghamton University's Innovative Technologies Complex hosted by the Binghamton University Watson College of Engineering. There, active members and alumni heard talks from the Dean of Watson College, Krishnaswami "Hari" Srihari; Executive Director for Alumni Engagement, Matthew Winston; and Watson Career and Alumni Connections Office Assistant Director, Stacey Brown. Our Regent, Nicholas Arfanis, was also able to share about our chapter's achievements over the last couple of decades and how impactful the chapter is, not only to our members, but to the university and students

overall. Our alumni were glad to hear about how the engineering department at Binghamton is broadening the opportunities available to its student base, and learning how alumni can remain engaged with the university. Our brothers gathered that evening at the DoubleTree Hotel in Binghamton for our grand banquet. Alumni heard speeches from our corresponding secretary, regent, and alumni board. Active student members enjoyed speaking with alumni and sharing stories and experiences of their time at Theta Tau. We capped off the weekend with breakfast the next morning while we said our goodbyes.

Hosting a celebratory weekend as large as this one is rewarding, but takes a lot of planning and preparation. Planning for this event began almost two years in advance; before many of us were brothers yet! A key factor in the success of this event was the founding of our alumni advisory board. This board is composed of our executive board and three alumni, and meets biweekly to discuss the workings of our chapter and for the alumni to advise our board members. We thank our brothers George Lourentzatos, Jerid Rimbey, and Kyle Roach for all of the time they dedicated to helping us plan our anniversary. Planning so far ahead was what allowed us to leverage our connections with the university and gather such a substantial portion of our alumni base.

We hope to inspire other chapters to host celebrations similar to ours. Celebrating a large milestone in your chapter is a great way to stay connected with your alumni and get more support from your school as a way to keep alumni involved. Showing that our alumni continue to engage with students and the university reinforces the lifelong impact that Theta Tau has on its members and how we are committed to the success of our fraternity.



# Brothers For Life

Xi Gamma Brothers and Alumni unite on the playing field.

By Elena Hereford ('23) and Cameron Brooke Thomey ('24), Texas A&M, Xi Gamma Chapter

One fundamental element of Theta Tau is the bond of brotherhood, and at Xi Gamma Chapter, we perpetuate this by organizing an annual alumni tailgate during football season. This tailgate allows our alumni to reconnect with their fellow brothers, meet new members, and actively engage in our fraternity.

This year's alumni tailgate was for the football game against Alabama on October 7th. One of the ways we give back to our alumni brothers is by getting tickets for them so they can experience the game in the best way possible - in the student section. For our alumni tailgates, we pair active members with them to sit together for the game to promote fellowship and bridge the gap between active and alumni brothers. The Alabama vs. Texas A&M game was our biggest game in this 2023 season, and getting tickets was not going to be a walk in the park. To get student tickets for football games, it is an Aggie tradition to camp out the day before ticket pull, but since this was the biggest home game of the season, people began claiming their spot in line much earlier.

To guarantee our alumni brothers got tickets, our brothers began camping in front of Kyle Field five days in advance. Ticket pull, where A&M students get their football tickets, is on Monday for seniors, and we began camping out on the Wednesday before.

We established a system where brothers took shifts in line so that everyone would be able to continue going to class. We had brothers take the night shift and then switch out with the day shift brothers so they could go to class and vice versa. We set up a camp spot with hammocks, a tent, a TV, and a table. While camping out, our brothers did homework, played games, watched TV, and just enjoyed each others' company. This experience provided a unique

opportunity for our brothers to spend quality time with each other hanging out outside of Kyle Field. Their committed efforts for ticket pull paid off, and we were able to provide brothers and alumni with a great experience in the stadium's first deck on gameday.

Although alumni and brothers often find themselves at different stages in life, the ability to unite on game day and rally together in support of Aggie football, forging bonds as lifelong brothers of Theta Tau, remains a truly memorable experience. This collective effort not only reaffirms our shared commitment to the university but also preserves cherished memories, cementing the legacy of our brotherhood even beyond graduation. It's during these special moments we celebrate our lasting relationships and the unwavering spirit that unites us as proud Theta Tau brothers.



# Rock On!

By David Andrew Cox, University of Rhode Island  
(Sigma Gamma, '22)

Here in our sleepy corner of Rhode Island, Sigma Gamma Chapter has a favorite late night pastime: rock climbing. A local rock climbing gym just ten minutes from our campus is open late, and the brothers take full advantage of it. Initially, we would climb just a handful of times during the semester, but we now attend weekly. At Sigma Gamma Chapter, brotherhood is extremely important to us, and climbing has really helped us come together as a chapter. It provides a stress free environment to relax and connect with each other. Not only has rock climbing been a great way for brothers to spend time together, it's also been a great way to get to know our potential new members, who are also invited to attend rock climbing nights with us.

Rock climbing has also been a great way to relieve stress. It provides an outlet after long days of studying. Ironically, solving bouldering puzzles is the perfect way to unwind after sleepless nights solving engineering problems. Even though climbing is physically taxing, it's a very therapeutic way to end the day. Rock climbing has provided a sense of normalcy and routine in our busy schedules and brought us together as a brotherhood.





# Xi Delta's First Annual Brotherhood Retreat

By Jennifer Valerie Miller, George Mason University (Xi Delta '23)



This past September, Xi Delta Chapter hosted its first-ever weekend brotherhood retreat. We extended the invitation to the other chapters in our region and had several brothers from other chapters attend! Members of Kappa Gamma Chapter (Virginia Commonwealth University) and Upsilon Beta Chapter (Old Dominion University) joined us at the 4-H Center in Front Royal, Virginia.

We made sure to plan a fun-filled and engaging program for our members and our guests. We took an outdoor skills course and learned how to make a fire using flint and steel. The instructors paired us up and had a competition to see which group could make the most fires or make the largest fire! Our new skills proved handy when it came time to build our campfire later that day.

We also wanted to challenge the brothers a bit, so we scheduled a "high challenge" obstacle course with a zip line at the end. Brothers had to walk across a rope and then ride down a zip line. We also learned how to properly put on the harness and helmet and how to work as a team to make sure everyone was being safe - safety first!

We had some downtime on one of the days so we decided to make some tie-dye t-shirts. We also spent lots of time playing board games and streaming *Dear John* on the TV.

We're not chefs by any means, but we were proud of the meals we prepared. We had tacos, pasta with garlic bread, and a cookout with burgers and hot dogs. We also made a breakfast with pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, and sausage. We had to be creative with some of the meals as we only had a small set of pots and pans to feed our whole crew, but we made it work.

While we did run into some issues, like finding a snake in the lodge and forgetting the burgers in the freezer at home, we had lots of fun and look forward to our next retreat!



# STEM Outreach

By Dhillon Robert Wegner, Clemson University (Lambda Gamma, '24)

Many engineers can pinpoint the exact moment when their curiosity for science and technology first sparked. For some, it was reading the Big Book of Space in kindergarten, watching How It's Made after school, or joining their middle school robotics team. Lambda Gamma Chapter hoped to provide this moment for 41 young students at our STEM Outreach event at the end of the Spring 2023 semester. Event organizer Sumanth Pandiri (Lambda Gamma, '25) invited students and parents from five nearby school districts and homeschool programs, to join us for an evening in the Hendrix Student Center. With our brothers eager to guide, we aspired to instill a passion for STEM fields that often gets lost in the classroom.

This year's theme was based on physics concepts such as waves, electromagnetism, and rotational momentum. We set up activity booths to illustrate these concepts through simple experiments that the students could do themselves. Our booths aimed to engage each child so they would learn without even realizing. Some activities were more hands-on than others, like showing students how to make a harmonica from popsicle sticks, where they figured out changing the air gap would change its pitch.

On the other side of the room, they saw how strong electromagnetic fields could launch metal high into the air and also power a lightbulb wirelessly. They steered themselves on a swivel chair with the momentum of a spinning bike, then moved on to see how light can refract into a rainbow.



A student engaged with the static wand experiment. Photo by Megan Nash.



Tim Wilson holding a bike wheel for a student to spin. Photo by Malia Fairbanks.





Gavin Stafford laughing with a student using the Van de Graaff generator. Photo by Megan Nash.

A young student setting up mirrors in the laser maze. Photo by Malia Fairbanks.



We were even able to show off a Van de Graaff generator, invented by Alumni Hall of Fame Laureate Robert J. Van de Graaff (Mu, 1922). The generator had volunteers laughing as their hair stood up from the buildup of electric charge. With over 20 unique activities available, each child was thoroughly entertained and educated.

This event created a truly unique opportunity to strengthen our brotherhood by giving back to the community which surrounds us. Gavin Stafford (Lambda Gamma, '23) notes he was "surprised by even the most reserved brother willing to come out of their shell so that the kids would have a fun time learning about physics." Beyond this, brothers found joy in different aspects of the event. Kylie Robertson (Lambda Gamma, '25) recounts, "One moment that stuck with me was the excitement of the kids as they conducted the experiments on their own! Watching them have some hands-on experience with so much joy showed me exactly why we were there."

We want to thank members of the Clemson engineering and physics faculty for lending equipment for the event. As Sumanth said, "homeschooled children are often deprived of hands-on STEM activities, which is something I wanted to improve. While we had our own low-budget, easily replicable activities, the significant amount of physics lab equipment we borrowed made for an experience that usually isn't found elsewhere." We also want to thank every child and parent not just for their attendance, but for their lively participation, helping to create such an amazing atmosphere to learn in.



Two young students learning about visible light.

A brother handing over two balls to recreate Galileo's Pisa Experiment. Photos by Malia Fairbanks.



# Strengthening Ties:

## Alumni and the First Homecoming Reunion

By Michael Vinoya, University of the Pacific (Lambda Delta '25)

Lambda Delta Chapter at the University of the Pacific takes great pride in its dedication to professionalism, leadership, and the enduring bonds of brotherhood. A new component of our chapter's success is our Alumni Advisory Team, a group of esteemed alumni who guide, mentor, and support our executive members. This is different from a traditional Chapter Advisory Team in that they don't hold all the responsibilities that a CAT typically has.

Composed of experienced and accomplished alumni, our Alumni Advisory Team leverages its knowledge and expertise to help guide our current members. The chapter relies on them to ensure a seamless transition of leadership within the chapter, offer advice and insights from their respective industries, and address questions and concerns that we as students may not have considered. In return, our alumni feel more involved in chapter activities and more welcomed by the student members.

One of the key benefits of having the Alumni Advisory Team is they represent a resource that the student members can use to tap into the vast wealth of industry knowledge and professional expertise that our alumni bring to the table. Their guidance covers various aspects of career development, industry trends, and insights into the working world, ensuring that our members are well prepared for life beyond the university.

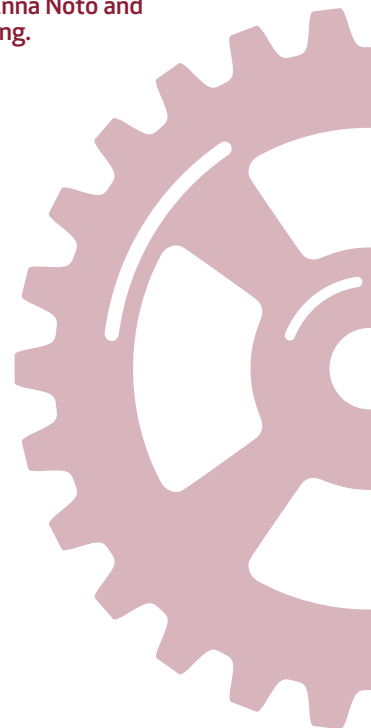
The Alumni Advisory Team provides ongoing mentorship and support to our student members, helping them navigate the challenges of leadership, personal development, and professional growth as they grow from students to professionals. This mentorship strengthens the bonds of brotherhood, provides a source of long-term continuity, and helps ensure that the values of Theta Tau endure.



Alumni who came to our BBQ event including our Founding Regent, Alan Joe, Krista Suizo of Gamma Class and Curtis Yamanaka of Delta Class who helped initiate the Alumni Advisory Team. Photo by Anna Noto and Angela Wong.



Brothers along with Alumni up front after our morning networking event. Photo by Anna Noto and Angela Wong.



# Alumni Weekend Comeback

By Elisa Fritzsche, University of Pittsburgh, (Nu Delta '23)

This fall, Nu Delta Chapter was excited to host an alumni weekend during the University of Pittsburgh's homecoming. We started out Friday night with a professional development event by networking with the alumni that were present. We had dinner and then did a speed-dating style of rotation where each of the brothers and potential new members (PNMs) were paired up with alumni. The pairs talked for four minutes, before our student members moved on to the next alumnus. This activity helped our chapter learn a lot about what the chapter used to look like, how career paths can develop, and how to network with people inside various industries. We were lucky enough to have been graced with the presence of three of our founding members at this particular event as well! On Saturday, we attended the Pittsburgh football game together, and were thrilled to take home a win against the odds! Though it was spitting rain the whole time, brothers, PNMs, and alumni alike donned their blue and gold to show up for our school and demonstrate school spirit.

On Sunday, we finished out the weekend with a trip to a local apple orchard to engage with our local community. We drank cider, picked apples, took fun photos, and



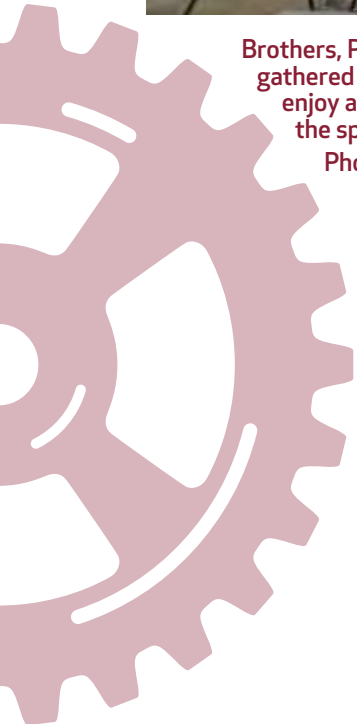
Brothers, PNM, and Alumni attended the Pitt football game together. Photo by Isa Heintz.

enjoyed barbecue together. Some of the alumni in attendance drove brothers to the orchard, which allowed for more time with those passengers and one-on-one conversations. Nu Delta is excited to bring back our semesterly newsletter after a long hiatus. We're looking forward to continuing to build our engagement with alumni through similar events while also maintaining and fostering those relationships for the years to come!



Brothers, PNM, and Alumni gathered to break bread and enjoy a meal before starting the speed-networking event. Photo by Elisa Fritzsche.

Brothers, PNM, and Alumni ventured to an apple orchard to drink cider, pick apples, and enjoy each other's company. Photo by Elisa Fritzsche.



# Rho Chapter Hosts Golf Scots

By Esha Ghosh, North Carolina State University, (Rho, '24)

One of our most popular events, Golf Scots, teaches brothers about business etiquette while having fun! Alex Boston planned and executed this event where brothers traveled to a nearby golf course and learned how to “talk business”, network, and converse in a professional manner outside the workplace. Brothers learned how to conduct themselves professionally in casual settings, while also having fun bonding with other brothers.

Historically, golf has been known as a “sport of business”, with important deals or decisions being discussed on the course before being made a reality in the boardroom. For the event, we had our brothers dress up in activity-appropriate attire, arrive on time to the golf course, and introduce how to casually and subtly shift the conversation to business topics. As the day progressed, everyone became more comfortable with their targeted conversation skills. One tip that a brother mentioned was that when golfing you should always let the guest or client bring up the business first, but more importantly, learn how to connect with them on a professional and even a personal level. By interacting with each other outside of the typical setting of a classroom or workplace, everyone present not only gained exposure to this type of situation, but also had a great time getting outside and active.



**Brother Bailey Walston riding in the golf cart heading to the next hole. Photo by Adam Davis.**

A big takeaway that we got from the event was getting to know more about each other and how to network at an informal event. Brothers got to hear more about etiquette such as buying rounds of play and topics of conversation. This was one of our most engaging, successful, and unique professional development events.

**Brother Trevor Larsen finishing up one of the holes. Photo taken by Adam Davis.**



# Elmira's Wildlife Sanctuary

By Nina Sophia Avren, University of South Florida  
(Upsilon Epsilon, '26)

Upsilon Gamma Chapter has recently been volunteering at Elmira's Wildlife Sanctuary, a non-profit corporation in Manatee County, Florida. Elmira's Wildlife Sanctuary provides care and enrichment for wild and exotic animals that need a "forever home," and we are excited to lend them a hand whenever we have the opportunity. They create a safe haven for their animal residents and educate the public on the wildlife in their care. Elmira's currently has tigers, bears, birds, wolves, and more that call the sanctuary their home. Active student members, alumni, and Potential New Members travel to the sanctuary each semester to assist the caretakers in various activities, including removing old bedding from the animal cages, scrubbing enclosures and pools, and clearing out old food scraps. During our visit last spring semester, we built an enclosure for Ranger, the large tortoise that is a resident of the sanctuary.

This semester, the chapter visited Elmira's on October 21st, when we unearthed bamboo from the property and replanted it inside of the tigers' enclosure. This is a great service event that our chapter has been fortunate to be a part of, not only because we get to volunteer, but also because we have the chance to learn about these beautiful animals up close and leave a lasting impact.



**Above: Carlos Handal next to Tiger Chandra.**  
**Below: Preston Howell and Carlos Handal making a difference at Elmira! Photos by Vaishnavi Kota.**



The trip to the Wildlife Sanctuary also gives us a chance to help our ecological community and spend some time up close with wild animals that we wouldn't have been able to see in this setting otherwise. We hope to extend this into a tradition for our chapter for years to come.





Roger Penske (Founder and Chairman, Penske Corporation) is to the left of Jonathan and Greg Penske



## JONATHAN HASSLER: LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

By Sarah Mente, University of North Carolina Charlotte (Pi Gamma, '20)

*It's a cloudy afternoon at the Charlotte Motor Speedway, as fans pile into stadium seats. The thrum of excitement fills the air as qualifying teams prepare to race. Months of preparation and decision-making behind the scenes have led these 37 drivers and their crews to the track. For one crew chief, Jonathan Hassler (Phi, '07), this race is a lifetime in the making.*

Jonathan's grandfather founded Hassler Trucking company, a family-owned business in Greencastle, Indiana, which he later passed on to his sons. Growing up around the family's trucking company, Jonathan had access to the tools he needed to get started working on cars and engines.



Above: Jonathan hangs out with his Dad.  
Left: Dad and Uncle on Hassler Truck.





Jonathan at the steering wheel in his early racing days.

Old school – trackside.



Jonathan developed an interest in working on go-karts, taking them apart and discovering how they worked. By the age of eight, he began racing in local competitions and continued to build, update, and race for many years. “The racing and trucking tools really helped make tinkering an accessible hobby for me,” Hassler stated. The company is still run today by his father and sister.

As he looked to the future, he found inspiration in driver Ryan Newman and how his path got started at Purdue University. He decided to follow that same path into automotive engineering. While at Purdue, Hassler heard about the Rube Goldberg competition put on by Phi Chapter. After the event, he joined with several friends and worked on building his network of resources.

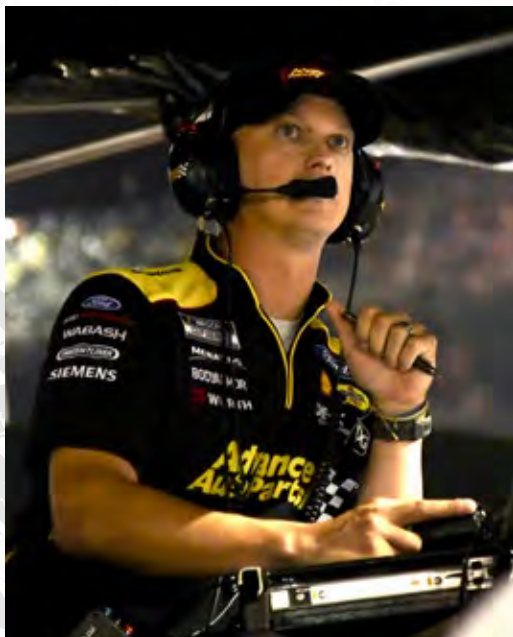
At the time, there were many family-owned racing teams in the area that needed support, but could not afford extra hands. Hassler saw the opportunity to gain hands-on experiences with race teams. He started Opportunity Motorsports with a small group of friends, and went around to the local crews to learn more about the process, and lend a hand when he could.



Jonathan Hassler’s organization, **Opportunity Motorsports**, allows students to apply their experience in a highly competitive and increasingly more engineering-driven industry.

Continued on page 16...





After graduation, Hassler received an offer to work for Team Penske as a race engineer. His job was to present the various options and decisions for the cars to the crew chief. He stated, "there's hundreds of little details we have to collect data and make decisions on. The crew chief gets final say on all of those decisions, as well as strategies on pit stops and adjustments. There's a lot of fine-tuning that being an engineer has made me especially equipped to handle." After building his expertise as a race engineer, Hassler was given a few opportunities to act as crew chief, and eventually landed the position as full time crew chief for NASCAR's #12 Team Penske, for driver Ryan Blaney.

He has this advice to share for aspiring drivers and engineers, "Just be willing to donate your time, do anything and everything to get your foot in the door. Start with sweeping floors. Show your interest. The people in this field will teach you one thing and when you continue to grow, you'll become invaluable." In 2018, Hassler worked with Team Penske to achieve victories in both the Southern 500 at Darlington and the Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis. In 2023, he prepared his team for the longest distance race in NASCAR – the Coca-Cola 600.

**Congratulations from your brothers in Theta Tau!**

*As rain threatens to open up on the track, drivers circle at upwards of 120 miles per hour. Every pit stop and fine-tune adjustment is completed at lightning speed. The race is grueling, with drivers completing 400 laps around the track. This is a feat of endurance that hinges on the communication between the driver and his team. Hassler is working with the pit crew on the ground and relays the details to his driver. With 26 laps to go, Blaney takes the lead in a blur of red and green. Partnered with Hassler, he completes lap after lap, leaving no room for passes. Rounding out that last turn, Blaney crosses the finish line less than a second ahead of car 24. Team Penske has won the 2023 Coca-Cola 600!*



# Engineering Hearts: A Love Legacy

By Emily Liss, Southern Methodist University (Tau Beta '24)

As Tau Beta's (TB) corresponding secretary, it is my duty to update our alumni's contact information. In doing so, I was overjoyed to discover that many alumni from our chapter had not only stayed together beyond graduation, but remained happily married! These couples, whose love stories began within the welcoming embrace of Theta Tau, found more than a supportive community – they found enduring love!

We were reminded of these stories when members of our chapter had the honor of attending the beautiful wedding of two of our alumni: Emma Hanson (TB '21) and Collin Higgins (TB '22). Their special day was a true celebration of love, filled with familiar faces from our chapter.

Tau Beta's legacy of love began with the journey of Holly McCuistion (TB '17) and Austin Deters (TB '17), two alumni who turned their college friendship into a lifelong partnership. McCuistion and Deters met in 2013. After crossing paths briefly, the two finally connected at a rush event for Theta Tau. "It was shortly after initiation ... that we began dating officially," McCuistion said. McCuistion and Deters married on Oct. 19, 2019, in Fort Worth, TX, and her two littles were the Best Man and Maid of Honor at their wedding.

From this heartwarming tale, we move on to the story of Joe Hutchinson (TB '16) and Alicia Smiley (TB '17), who found academic collaboration and love within Theta Tau. Hutchinson and Smiley met in fall 2014 when Smiley was rushing Theta Tau, but they later grew closer when they took Fluid Mechanics together. "We've been inseparable since," said Hutchinson. "[...We] were even the Theta Tau and Lyle School of Engineering homecoming candidates in Fall 2016."

Next, let's delve into Katie Rose Gartman (TB '13) and TJ Moats (TB '13), who first crossed paths in their dorm in 2010. Living across from each other, they developed a lasting friendship that was deepened through their shared experiences with Theta Tau. They now have two kids, Luke and Sophia, along with a corgi and two cats.

Finally, let's look at the journey of Gwen Carris (TB '15) and Phillip D'Amore (TB '15), two alumni who embarked on their Theta Tau adventure in the same pledge class. While doing other on campus activities and events together, Phillip stated that "the activity structure and friendship Theta Tau provided, and the chances to get out of one's comfort zone, were really helpful in bringing us together."

Theta Tau is, first and foremost, a professional engineering fraternity, focused on fostering academic and career success, but it is also a place where deep and lasting friendships are formed, where lifelong memories are created, and where, on occasion, love stories take root. These couples are living proof that the spirit of Theta Tau endures, creating bonds that last a lifetime, in friendship and in love.



# From Seekers to Providers

## Alumni Shine at SJSU STEM Career Fair

By Bradley Shota Okajima, San Jose State University (Omega Epsilon, '25)

Despite having a chapter charter less than a year, Omega Epsilon has demonstrated its readiness to play a significant role in Silicon Valley's tech ecosystem. Our alumni have ventured into the heart of the Valley, embracing the values and spirit of Theta Tau, and taken their places in companies small and large.

Prominent among these alumni are Sunny Chen and Nathan Lee, both thriving in the competitive technology industry. Their journey took them back home to SJSU's biannual Undergraduate STEM Career Fair, a highly anticipated event offering a wealth of professional opportunities and inspiration for STEM students. Sunny and Nathan transitioned from job seekers to talent seekers, representing their companies at the fair.

In the words of Sunny Chen, a recent SJSU graduate who now serves as a software engineer at Kohl's Technology Division, "Just a couple of months ago, I was still a student at San Jose State attending the career fair myself. Fast forward to today, and I find myself proudly representing Kohl's at my alma mater's career fair." She played a pivotal role in spearheading the efforts to draft our petition for chapter status within Theta Tau. We are so grateful to Sunny for always finding new ways to contribute to our chapter's growth and success as a whole.



Nathan Lee representing Amphenol. Photo by Bradley Okajima.

Nathan Lee is nearing the completion of his electrical engineering degree. Following a successful summer internship with Amphenol, he's set to transition into a full-time role with the company after graduation. Nathan actively supported Amphenol's recruitment, aiding in identifying top SJSU talent and guiding fellow students on job search and prep. Nathan's summer experience provided valuable industry insights, which he shared with his brothers, offering internship tips and extolling the benefits of Theta Tau membership.

Sunny and Nathan's appearance at the SJSU career fair not only celebrates their personal successes but also underscores the fraternity's commitment to fostering professional growth.

Sunny Chen representing Kohl's Technology. Photo by Sunny Chen.



Dear Brothers,

As you have probably noticed in your daily lives, everything is getting more expensive. Our Fraternity has, sadly, not been immune. The magazine you're reading right now (assuming you're reading the physical copy) cost more than twice what the Fall 2021 edition cost. To put things in perspective, this edition of The Gear will cost the Fraternity almost \$50,000. That represents what our budget was in 2019 for four editions of The Gear.

Our friends at Allegra Printing give us the best pricing available, but the reality is that raw materials and postage have gotten so expensive that we need to revisit our policy of mailing a physical copy to every member.

As such, we are giving members the option to opt-out of receiving the paper Gear. By opting out, you agree that you will receive a digital copy via email moving forward. Doing so will allow us to redirect the funds saved for other purposes to benefit the membership.

In the middle of this magazine is an envelope that you can remove and mail to the Central Office. The envelope will allow you to update your contact information and opt-out of receiving a paper copy of The Gear. If you're so-inclined, you can instead scan the QR code below (or go to [cmt.thetatau.org/update](http://cmt.thetatau.org/update)) to update your contact information and opt-out.

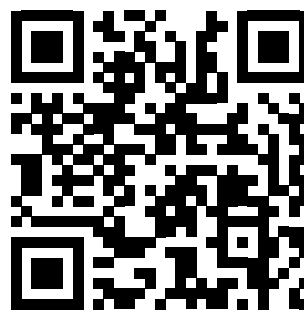
Either way, paper or online, you'll be asked for your five-digit ID number. That can be found just above your name in the address block on the back cover.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Central Office at 512-472-1904 or [central.office@thetatau.org](mailto:central.office@thetatau.org). If you would like to submit an article or contribute in some other way to The Gear, you can email [gear@thetatau.org](mailto:gear@thetatau.org).

Thank you for your loyal readership.

In H&T,

Sarah "Red" Mente and Dan "Danno" Jensen  
Editors-in-Chief



# A Weekend Full Of Fun And Professionalism!



Founder's Day dinner. Photo by Nihal Rahman.

By David Ayodeji Afolabi, New York University (Theta Epsilon, '24)

From October 12th to October 14th, seven brothers attended the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE) conference in Atlanta, Georgia. There they explored the plethora of professional opportunities that were presented to them and some of them received offers of employment. It was a great chance to not only advance their careers, but also simultaneously strengthen their fraternal bonds.

After heading home to New York, we topped off the weekend with a Founder's Day celebration on Sunday night. Our chapter made the decision to celebrate by hosting a dinner at Congee Village, a restaurant in New York City. There was a generous showing of alumni at the dinner and student members capitalized on the meet-up by asking for professional advice on how to proceed with their recent job offers.

That's not to say that all we talked about were our careers; we definitely spent our fair share of time just catching up with our brothers who had graduated. From professional interest to fraternal fellowship, this weekend was a strong endorsement of the values we work to uphold as members of Theta Tau.

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## Beta Chapter Holds Second Annual Pig Roast



By Aidan Flanery, Michigan Technological University (Beta, '25)

Beta Chapter held their annual Pig Roast once again this fall, supporting their staple donor recipient, the Adams Township Fire Department. Beta Chapter's 2023 Fall semester philanthropy chair, Pietrino Censoplano (Beta '26), spent the entire summer break and first few weeks at school leading up to the big event planning, designing, and preparing for the Pig Roast. This was the second year the Pig Roast was hosted since 2019 with the chapter having gone on hiatus during the pandemic. Now that we're back, we plan to keep hosting it every year from here on out.

The date chosen for the Pig Roast was September 30th, as it coincided with Michigan Tech's homecoming football game and would help bring in hungry patrons as they passed our driveway on the way to the field. Who could refuse a hot pulled pork sandwich on their way to a football game? To complement the main course, Beta offered up a generous selection of sides to choose from: baked beans, mac and cheese, sweet corn, fresh slices of watermelon, cookies, and some fantastic homemade coleslaw, as well as lemonade and soda, all of which were bottomless if a patron paid for the "combo" meal.

The most important food of the Pig Roast, of course, is the pork. Last year, Beta Chapter was lucky enough to have alumni come up to Houghton and provide a smoker and smoke the pork for the student members. However, this year there were no alumni available to provide this service. Thankfully though, brother Zak Zumerchik (Beta '26) stepped up to the plate, and over the course of 16 hours, fully seasoned, smoked, and prepared all 100 pounds of pork served at the Pig Roast. This was an incredible feat for a single brother to take on by himself, and the chapter could not have done it without him.

As the big day came, 27 brothers came together to cook, serve, advertise, and socialize for the 2023 Pig Roast, working 117½ hours cumulatively throughout the day. At the end of the day, the money raised for the Adams Township Fire Department amounted to a healthy \$1,102.58. In the end, Beta Chapter served 122 meals between noon and 5 pm. We plan on having a small ceremony where the brothers will hand the members of the department a large check with the amount raised. We are pleased with the consistent success of the Pig Roast and look forward to continuing this tradition for generations to come.

# Let's Talk About Internships

By Emma Allyssa Bull ('26) and Sergio Guerra Garcia ('24), California State University, Long Beach, Xi Epsilon

In the competitive world of engineering, internships are the start of our professional careers. People always talk about how to apply or how to choose, but how do you get your foot in the door in the first place? Xi Epsilon Chapter's professional development committee helps brothers get the tools they need to land an internship. We offer resume reviews, mock interviews, and encourage our active brothers to build a presence on LinkedIn. Twelve of our active brothers are currently in co-ops, while several other members secured summer internships.

One of our former regents, Adam Bhuiyan ('23), worked on exciting projects at Divergent 3D, a cutting edge vehicle manufacturer. According to Brother Bhuiyan, "the professional development committee within our chapter helped me gain internship opportunities this past year through industry events, resume workshops, and practicing interview techniques."

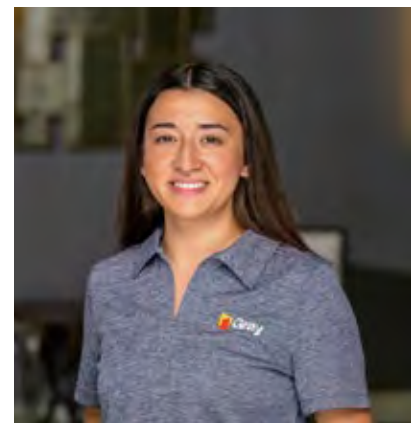
Carine Gordillo ('23) put her software skills to great use at her internship and stated, "joining Theta Tau improved essential professional skills and provided mentorship that really helped me obtain my internship at Microsoft. From day one we worked on polishing my resume, enhancing my networking skills, and providing access to experienced upperclassmen who shared invaluable advice on achieving success."

Mia Castro ('23) was encouraged to apply for internships by her fellow brothers and received an internship with Gray Construction, a family-owned company rooted in engineering, design, construction, smart manufacturing, and equipment manufacturing solutions.

We are immensely proud of our brothers and their accomplishments. We can not wait to see what the future holds for them.



Adam Bhuiyan (Right) with his little Brandon Ybarra (Left) who is currently interning with Divergent 3D.



Mia Castro interned at Gray Construction. Picture was taken by the company.



Microsoft Internship in Atlanta Carine Gordillo. Picture was taken by a fellow intern.

# Friends, Brothers, Allies

By Raven Smith, Virginia Commonwealth University (Kappa Gamma, '18)



"Yeah but...  
you're not  
really black."

The all-too-familiar words rang in my ears as I chuckled awkwardly, not quite knowing what to say next.

I'd grown up attending majority

white schools, mostly listening to white musical artists, and had even been told that I "talked white". Still, my skin told a different story. My sisters, fair as they were, could pass as white if they really wanted to, but I'd inherited every drop of melanin my mother could spare; there was no denying my roots. Regardless, here I sat in a room of predominantly white members of the predominantly white fraternity I had just joined, once again hearing that my non-white identity didn't seem to matter to the people I cared about - and who I thought cared about me.

Unfortunately, this type of experience is common for people of any marginalized demographic - whether it's having your identity questioned, hearing hurtful jokes told about your identity, or any other number of ways that a person can be made to feel diminished. Like me, many of the people who experience this don't know how to advocate for themselves. When an attribute that feels intrinsic to who you are - that has characterized many of your lived experiences - is so flippantly rejected, disparaged, or laughed at, it becomes an attack on your very personhood.

In that moment, I wish I had spoken up for myself.

Often, the lingering sense of unease isn't worth the relief of avoiding conflict. What is a "real" black person in their eyes? If I were "really" black, would they still accept me? Was my subversion of their expectations the only reason I was here? If it were to happen today, perhaps I would rebuke them with a snarky retort. But returning the aggression can be a dangerous gamble. After all, they didn't intend to be harmful, so any harm I perceive can only have been imagined, right? If I were really brave, maybe I'd just cut straight to the root of the issue and ask, "why do you say that?"

Being placed in a position where you are forced to defend your identity, your presence in a space, or even your very existence is a reminder that you are welcome there *in spite of it* - not alongside it. The alternative is to simply accept that you are, indeed, Less Than - that people who have never lived that identity have the right to dictate

what it stands for, what value it could bring to that space, or whether it has any value at all.

"Dude!" My brother's exclamation cut through the tension. "You know you can't say that, it's messed up." It wasn't a perfect response, but it was an effective one. The other member looked momentarily taken aback, but after a brief back-and-forth he offered a hesitant apology. I accepted, and the conversation quickly resumed. Not all of these situations resolve so amicably, but I was grateful this one had. Moreover, I was grateful to my brother for stepping in to advocate for me when I wasn't able to do so for myself.

That's what allyship really is - not just the willingness, but the conviction and initiative to stand up for others. Like most things, it's easier said than done; but if you do it, the impact of your actions could be felt for years to come.

## Here are four methods for intervening in a situation:



**Create a distraction - humor is an effective means of intervention.** A witty quip can go a long way toward relieving tension.



**Be direct - confront the person.** You can directly point out that their behavior is inappropriate. "What do you mean by that?" Even playing dumb may present a less confrontational avenue to address the topic. "I don't understand what you're getting at."



**Rally others - ask someone around for help intervening.** This could mean approaching a close friend of the person being targeted, asking others to join you in confronting the instigator, or even asking someone to intervene in your stead.



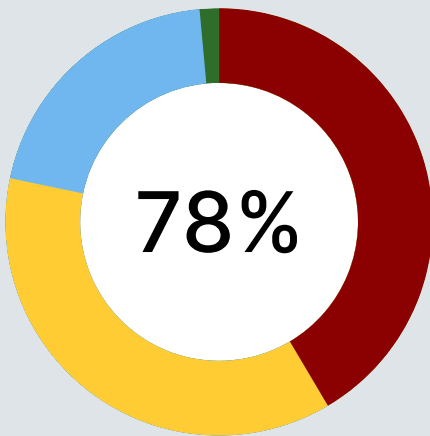
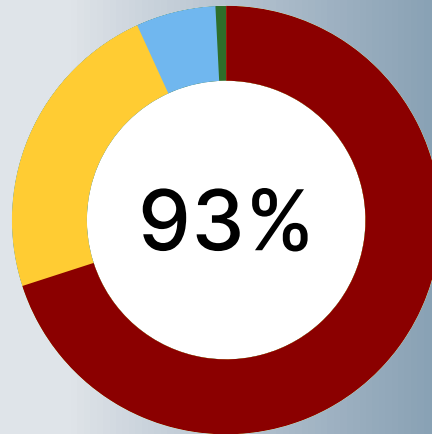
**Offer support - ask the person targeted how they're feeling.** Validate their feelings and ask if they need support and what you can do. If they say they don't want support, respect that. Some may not want to dwell in a moment where they are painted as the victim.



# What do our brothers think of Theta Tau?

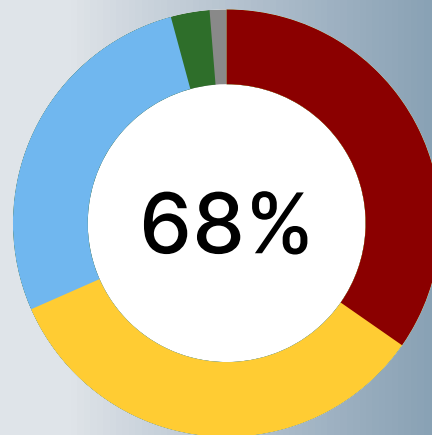
When asked if...






Theta Tau represents a good value, 93% totally or somewhat agreed



They felt better prepared for life after college because they were a member, 78% totally or somewhat agreed

They felt more likely to find employment after college because they were a member, 68% totally or somewhat agreed



-  Totally Agree
-  Somewhat Agree
-  Neither Agree nor Disagree
-  Somewhat Disagree
-  Totally Disagree

In 2023, Theta Tau sent out a *Member Experience Survey* to the student members of the fraternity. The graphs above represent the responses received.



## TIPS FROM THE THETA TAU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

### MAXIMIZING YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMPACT: HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

In today's digital age, LinkedIn stands as the leading tool for professional networking and career advancement. A well-crafted LinkedIn profile can open doors to new opportunities and connections. Here are key tips to ensure your profile stands out:

- 1 Craft a Compelling Headline:** Your headline is more than just a job title. It's a 220-character opportunity to make a powerful first impression. Think of it as a value-driven statement that encapsulates your professional identity. Instead of just "Engineer at XYZ Company," consider a headline like "Experienced Civil Engineer | Driving Innovative Urban Infrastructure Projects | Mentor & Industry Speaker." This approach highlights your role, expertise, and additional contributions to the field.
- 2 Revitalize Your "About" Section:** This section is your story and a place for you to add a lot of information. Recruiters can search this section, so make it count. Begin with a strong hook, perhaps an insightful professional mantra or a milestone achievement. Most people only read the first 2-3 sentences. Then, delve into your experience and skills, but don't just replicate your resume. Highlight key projects and how they've shaped your career trajectory. Lastly, mention your aspirations. This gives potential connections a sense of your future direction and opens up conversations about mutual goals.
- 3 Showcase Achievements Visually:** LinkedIn allows you to enhance your Experience and Education sections with multimedia elements. Seize this chance to visually demonstrate your accomplishments. Upload images of award ceremonies, links to published work, or presentations from significant projects. This not only validates your achievements but also gives a dynamic edge to your profile, making it more engaging for viewers.

A robust LinkedIn profile is an invaluable asset in your professional toolkit. It's more than a digital resume; it's a platform to narrate your professional journey, showcase your achievements, and connect with like-minded professionals.

#### **Did you know?**

The Theta Tau Educational Foundation hosted a LinkedIn Training Seminar in February. If you are interested in receiving communications and updates from the Educational Foundation, be sure to join our mailing list by scanning QR code or going to the web site: [Thetataufoundation.org/get-foundation-updates](https://thetataufoundation.org/get-foundation-updates)







# In Memoriam

The following list represents brothers whose passing has been reported to the Central Office since the last edition of this publication. If you are aware of a brother who has recently passed, please reach out so that we may represent them and report it in the next issue.

		Graduation Year
<b>Alpha</b>		
	Ronald Strandlund	Badge #832 1971
<b>Beta</b>		
	Dean Kelly	Badge # 650 1950
<b>Gamma</b>		
	William Robert Mills	Badge # 892 1959
<b>Delta</b>		
	John Webb	Badge # 734 1950
<b>Theta</b>		
	James Ambrose McGrory	Badge # 517 1952
<b>Iota</b>		
	Harold Sam Thompson	Badge # 742 1955
<b>Mu</b>		
	Erskine Donald III	Badge # 768 1962
<b>Omicron</b>		
	Michael Gilbert	Badge # 701 1966
	Jennifer Joyce Kearney	Badge # 1163 1996
<b>Pi</b>		
	Ralph Harrison Jr.	Badge # 486 1955
	Charles Saunders Jr.	Badge # 382 1949
<b>Rho</b>		
	Albert Franklin Batts	Badge # 792 1974
<b>Sigma</b>		
	Robert Dickson	Badge # 575 1972
	Dietrich Lannert	Badge # 597 1968
	George McConeghy Jr.	Badge # 307 1948





# In Memoriam

Graduation  
Year

## Upsilon

Jimmy Reed  
Larry Stephens

Badge # 512  
Badge # 479

1960  
1958

## Phi

Thomas Clement  
Wayne Lee Reisinger

Badge # 301  
Badge # 291

1958  
1954

## Chi

Richard Guthrie  
George Walker

Badge # 475  
Badge # 713

1955  
1968

## Omega

Richard Elwin Cole  
Robert Miesen  
Dennis Lee Olmstead  
Randall Withee

Badge # 144  
Badge # 501  
Badge # 653  
Badge # 808

1947  
1961  
1969  
1978

## Epsilon Beta

James Kosakowski

Badge # 248

1972

## Theta Beta

Frederick Arthur Emerson

Badge # 34

1968

## Kappa Beta

John Cavin

Badge # 88

1970

## Nu Beta

Brian Fredrick Nerheim  
Daron F. Patriquen

Badge # 109  
Badge # 11

1983  
1975

## Tau Beta

E. Douglas Harris

Badge # 38

1968

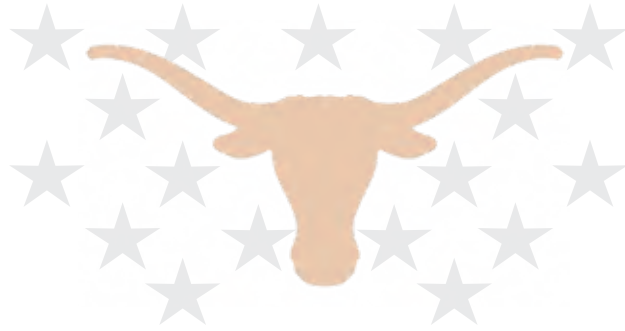
## Omega Delta

Michael Sean June

Badge # 133

2010





## Robert Kelley

The University of Texas at Austin (Psi Beta, '03)  
National Operations Manager

**Q: What is your chapter, degree, and day job?**

**A:** I hail from Psi Beta chapter at The University of Texas at Austin. I was a Chemical Engineering student but ended up as a Math major when I finally graduated. I've worked in a variety of roles, most recently developing trainer simulation software for US Army drone payloads. This role primarily entailed evaluation of payload performance characteristics, such as time to rotate or zoom, and modeling those characteristics in Simulink and C++. The goal is to realistically duplicate hardware performance in a virtual environment.

**Q: How would you describe your role in Theta Tau?**

**A:** In short, being a National Operations Manager is herding cats at all levels. I oversee the National Support space which includes committee chairs for Volunteering, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Data & Evaluation, Professional Development, Alumni Programs, Service, Brotherhood, Habitat for Humanity, and *The Gear*. My objective is for each director to have access to what they need in order to accomplish their tasks. That means I'm either checking in with directors on the status of their initiatives or engaging the EC to get them what they need.

**Q: What is your favorite part about being a national volunteer?**

**A:** I love working with the other volunteers. I had stepped away from Theta Tau for most of 20 years. I maintained solid relationships with a few brothers, but really lost touch with Theta Tau in about 2005. I started volunteering when I noticed vacancies during the pandemic, intending to just be a warm body that could help out here and there. However, starting with the first convention I attended as a national officer, I reexperienced that brotherly love that I felt as an active.

**Q: What led you to pursue engineering as a field?**

**A:** I initially started my studies in Chemical Engineering, and quickly realized I did not actually like chemistry beyond the basics. When deciding on my path forward, I decided to pursue teaching, particularly Mathematics. A couple of things derailed my teaching career; first, I took an applied mathematics course that I found quite exciting and second was being selected to be a co-op for a local NASA contractor. The work I started as a co-op evolved into a nearly 10-year career supporting NASA focusing on reentry survivability. My experiences on certain projects during that time has opened doors to a number of roles supporting the Missile Defense Agency and U.S. Army.



**Q: Where can you be found on an average Friday night?**

**A:** Friday nights are usually spent with my wife and kids, unless I'm traveling somewhere. My wife, also a brother from Psi Beta chapter, and I have been married for 22 years. We have a 12 year old daughter and 10 year old son.

**Level up your professional skills at**

# LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

**University of Pittsburgh**

**July 12 - 14, 2024**

Leadership Academy is a 2.5 day immersive training and development program tailor-made for Theta Tau members. The curriculum is perfect for any age as it focuses on leadership skill-building and skill-enhancement. Attendees will identify their personal leadership strengths and areas for improvement and develop/hone those skills. Attendees can apply the skills they learn within the chapter/workplace to better work with difficult people and resolve conflict. Finally, attendees will learn highly in-demand “soft-skills” like public speaking, EQ and facilitation. The cost of registrations will include: campus housing, the curriculum, and dining together with facilitators and event staff on-campus.

For our Student Members, the Executive Council has appropriated funds to offer grants (scholarships) for 50 student members to attend Academy at nominal cost. Grant recipients will only be responsible for \$40 of their registration fee, in addition to their own travel costs to get to Pittsburgh. Grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis with no chapter receiving more than 1 grant. If unused grants are still available in April, all chapters will be welcome to apply for a second grant.

Registration for alumni and students without a grant will cost \$330, and all registrations include lodging, event fees, meals and parking on campus. We highly encourage early registration to save on costs.



**ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED**

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Central Office.



**THETATAU.ORG/ACADEMY**

**REGISTER**



## **Theta Tau Central Office**

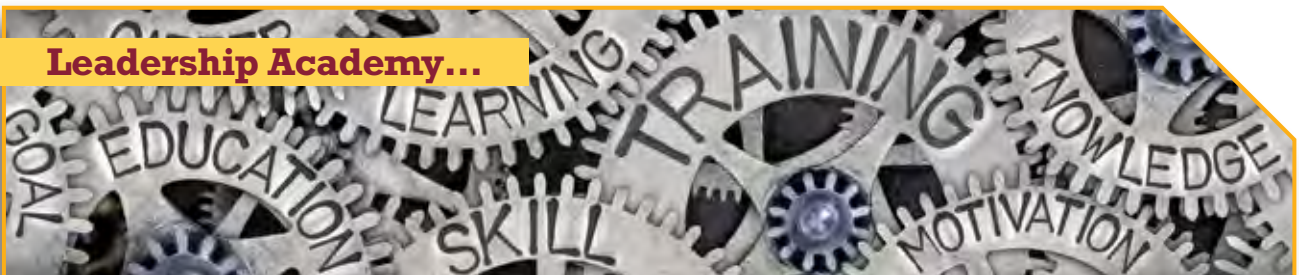
**Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity**

2131 W. Republic Road, #528

Springfield, MO 65807

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### **Leadership Academy...**



Act fast... register now... July is just around the corner!

**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH. READ MORE ON INSIDE BACK COVER.**

### **Looking Ahead...**



**2025  
Milwaukee, WI  
National Convention**