Fraternity and Sorority Overview

Fraternities

Sigma Theta Psi\(^1\) of Alpha Delta Phi\(^2\) (ΑΔΦ)

On April 29, 1961, Sigma Theta Psi was inducted into Alpha Delta Phi, founded on non-discriminatory principles. Overall, Alpha Delta Phi emphasized the importance of interpersonal unity, functioning under the doctrine, “Many Hands, One Heart.” By extension – in line with the national chapter’s beginnings as a literary society – the local chapter held annual fiction and poetry contests. As with other Colby fraternities, Alpha Delta Phi was abolished in 1984.

- Colors: Emerald and Pearl

Gamma Alpha of Alpha Tau Omega (ΑΤΩ)

Originating from the informal student group, “Beta Epsilon,” Gamma Alpha became a local chapter of Alpha Tau Omega on June 25, 1892. Alpha Tau Omega followed the creed, “Know Man as Man,” accentuating the society’s desire for mankind’s moral and mutual betterment. Additionally, the fraternal society’s symbol of a crescent, signifying the guidance of an active chapter, and three stars – character, scholarship, and fellowship – represented the local and national chapter’s weight on sustained brotherhood and intellect. However, the local chapter’s 1960s constitutional language implies that there may have been discriminatory policies dictated by the national chapter, as Gamma Alpha allowed “social membership.” A social member was an individual who partook in a majority of fraternal activities, but could not become a nationally-recognized “brother,” as he was considered “unacceptable” to the national chapter, based upon whatever criteria. Otherwise, Alpha Tau Omega’s philanthropic activities aided the Pine Tree Camp for Crippled Children and Adults, the Epilepsy Foundation of America, and the National Association for Retarded Citizens. Like many other fraternities, Alpha Tau Omega stressed the importance of extra-curricular, athletic, and academic excellence.\(^3\) Alpha Tau Omega’s local chapter was abolished in 1984, with the Board of Trustees’ decision to abolish fraternities.

Beta Phi (ΒΦ)

N/A

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\(^1\) Local Chapter
\(^2\) National Chapter. Most fraternities and sororities are commonly referred to by their national chapter name. The document will apply the national name to Colby’s chapter activities. However, the document will reference the local name if it’s to be distinguished in a certain way specifically from the national chapter.

\(^3\) The academic, athletic, and philanthropic excellence of a society varied from year to year. Along with many other factors, the demographic of the rushing class, and the guidance and direction of the society’s upperclassmen and alumni largely influenced the organization’s “success.” For instance, a local chapter may be more athletically inclined and academically poor one year, and academically superior and athletically inferior the next.
**Xi of Delta Kappa Epsilon (ΔKE)**

Having been in correspondence with Yale and Bowdoin DKE members, an informal group of Waterville College students approached the College administration about establishing a DKE chapter, in the early 1840s. After submitting a formal petition and with fraternal and administrative permission, Xi of Delta Kappa Epsilon monumentally became Waterville College’s (Colby’s) first Greek letter society in 1846. Stressing the importance of brotherhood, Delta Kappa Epsilon followed the motto “Friends from the Heart, Forever.” Symbolized by the diamond, Delta Kappa Epsilon was also characterized by the colors blue, gold, and red. Further, as stereotyped on campus, Delta Kappa Epsilon was purportedly associated with the hockey team. While suspended in 1983, due to academic and disciplinary violations, Delta Kappa Epsilon was later abolished in 1984, through the Board of Trustees’ decision.

**Colby Chapter of Delta Upsilon (ΔΥ)**

Colby’s chapter of Delta Upsilon was established in 1858. Overall, Delta Upsilon’s creed was progressively egalitarian and liberal. Founded as a non-secret fraternity, Delta Upsilon was open to students from all backgrounds, acting as a contending alternative to more exclusionary fraternities. Thus, reflecting the society’s egalitarian ideologies, the fraternal motto was “Justice, Our Foundation,” while their colors were “old gold” and “sapphire blue.” Also, academically focused, the fraternal society’s meetings were said to have been intellectually stimulating, oftentimes consisting of debates, declamations, and dissertations. Akin to Colby’s other fraternities, Delta Upsilon was abolished in 1984.

**Xi of Kappa Delta Rho (ΚΔΡ)**

Xi, of Kappa Delta Rho, initially associated with a different fraternal society; acting as the “Pi Delta Phi” local chapter of the young fraternity “Alpha,” Pi Delta Phi (later Xi) maintained ties until Alpha quickly dissolved. Without a national fraternity, Pi Delta Phi consequently petitioned to Kappa Delta Rho, in 1924, becoming the Xi local chapter. Kappa Delta Rho was distinguished by its society colors, “Princeton Orange” and “Middlebury (Yale) blue,” the red rose, and the song “Hymn to Kappa Delta Rho.” Further, Kappa Delta Rho adhered to the motto “Honor Super Omnia,” or “Above Honor.” In regards to membership, Kappa Delta Rho was racially and religiously exclusive. In 1924, Kappa Delta Rho’s national constitution required members to be white, Gentile men – excluding both individuals of color and of the Jewish faith. Similarly, the fraternity voted on proposed members through the “blackball” system, of which was heavily subject to individual prejudice. Aside from membership, Kappa Delta Rho often volunteered for blood drives, Thayer Hospital, the YMCA, the Maine Children’s Home for Little Wanderers, the Salvation Army, and the local Boy’s Club. Kappa Delta Rho was abolished in 1984.

**Alpha Rho of Lambda Chi Alpha (ΛΧΑ)**

Beginning as the informal society “Omicron Theta” (est. 1912), Alpha Rho of Lambda Chi Alpha was established in 1918. Lambda Chi Alpha followed the motto “Every Man a Man,” and was represented by the colors purple, gold, and green, and the symbol of a cross and crescent. Also, as insinuated in a 1958 *Nuncio* publication, Alpha Rho outlines Lambda Chi Alpha as following discriminatory membership policies, such as a policy that required each “rushee” to send a photograph for approval by the national chapter. To curtail these rulings, Alpha Rho allowed for “social
membership” – or the involvement of a student in fraternity affairs without national chapter acknowledgement. Yet, the national chapter’s prejudicial membership policies were revoked in the 1960s, and became anti-discriminatory in regards to race, religion, and ethnicity. Lambda Chi Alpha also partook in civil service, sponsoring an ice skating marathon for the Pine Tree Camp for Crippled Children. On the other hand, as stereotyped by the campus community, Lambda Chi Alpha was regarded as the football fraternity. This rumor perhaps rang true when, in an early 1990s incident, a majority of Colby football athletes were found to be associated with a Lambda Chi Alpha underground fraternity. After the incident, the fraternity was yet again abolished, as it was in 1984.

**Alpha of Phi Delta Theta (ΦΔΘ)**

Established in 1884, Alpha of Phi Delta Theta observed the motto “One Man is No Man,” emphasizing the necessity of group unity and cooperation. By extension, the societal colors were blue and white. Religiously, Phi Delta Theta was a Christian society, following the Bible’s teachings. Considering Phi Delta Theta’s stringent religious affiliation, President Strider confronted the national chapter for reportedly rejecting potential members of varying religious faiths. Vice-President Williams, of the national organization, claimed that individuals of the Christian-Jewish faith were allowed, yet Moslems, Hindus, atheists, and agnostics would be denied, as they “[could not], in good faith, accept Christianity.” However, in 1966, Phi Delta Theta removed its primary discrimination clause – whatever it may have been – and was allowed to maintain its Colby chapter. Otherwise, the Alpha chapter participated in extensive community service, contributing efforts towards the Maine Children’s Home for Little Wanderers, the local Big Brother program, and the YMCA. As with other fraternities, Phi Delta Theta was abolished in 1984.

**Beta Chi of Pi Lambda Phi (ΠΛΦ)**

One of the later fraternities to be established at Colby, Beta Chi of Pi Lambda Phi was founded in 1957 as a non-sectarian and non-discriminatory society. Further, to support these principles, in 1959, Pi Lambda Phi stated they selected members on a basis of individuality, rather than a specific racial, religious, or ethnic profile. Overall, the society was marked by the colors wine and gray, and followed the motto “Not Four Years, But a Lifetime,” highlighting supportive and influential brotherhood’s extension beyond the collegiate years. Further, encouraging a balanced academic and social life, Pi Lambda Phi aspired to contribute positively to the campus atmosphere. In regards to philanthropy, Pi Lambda Phi aided the New England Home for Little Wanderers, hosted a yearly blood drive, and organized a campus-wide bike race for a Multiple-Sclerosis organization.

**Tau Alpha of Tau Delta Phi (ΤΔΦ)**

As Colby’s only Jewish-affiliated fraternity, Tau Alpha of Tau Delta Phi was established in 1932, after a long struggle to obtain campus recognition. Historically, starting as an informal society – “Gamma Phi Epsilon” – in 1918, seven Jewish students drafted a constitution in hopes of establishing a fraternal society. However, to obtain legitimate campus recognition as a local chapter, the society needed to receive a three-fourths vote of approval from the “High Council.” Made of representatives from each fraternity, the “High Council” rejected the request multiple times. Yet, in 1932, the Council passed the motion. Subsequently, Gamma Phi Epsilon appealed to Tau Delta Phi, was accepted, and became the
Tau Alpha chapter of Tau Delta Phi in 1933. Represented by the colors purple and gold, Tau Delta Phi was further associated with the symbolic pyramid. In the 1950s, Tau Delta Phi became non-sectarian and non-discriminatory in its selection practices. Later, in 1961, Tau Alpha severed ties with the national chapter, Tau Delta Phi. Otherwise – regarding community outreach – Tau Alpha partook in the “Foster Parents’ Plan,” sponsoring a French youth, volunteered at the Lockwood ball field, and contributed to many other outreach programs. As considered by the student body, Tau Delta Phi was associated with the lacrosse and soccer athletic teams. Tau Delta Phi was abolished in 1984.

**Beta Upsilon of Theta Nu Epsilon (ΘΝΕ)**

N/A: May have been a local chapter of the famous “Skull and Bones” fraternal society.

**Upsilon Beta (ΥΒ)**

Upsilon Beta was represented by the colors of knotted blue and grey, and the symbol of a blue-eyed skull, with ΥΒ imprinted on the skull’s forehead. Also, throughout the society’s initiation ritual, bread, salt, and wine represented the society’s stress on friendship, loyalty, and good cheer, respectively.

**Chi of Zeta Psi (ΖΨ)**

In 1850, the once informal society Alpha Omega (est. 1849) petitioned to the national fraternal chapter Zeta Psi. Once accepted, Alpha Omega became the local chapter Chi, functioning underneath Zeta Psi. Indicated by a 1942-1943 “Facts about Colby’s Fraternities Pamphlet,” “unwritten law so [limited]” Zeta Psi. Consequently, Zeta Psi was a true “secret society” – its policies known only to its members. As recorded, Zeta Psi appears to have had issues with hazing – spanning from potential members left blindfolded in the middle of nowhere to students awoken by late night “social calls.” Overall, the Zeta Psi fraternity was considered to be affiliated with the basketball team and was abolished in 1984.

**Sororities**

**Alpha Delta of Alpha Delta Pi (ΑΔΠ)**

Beginning as a secret literary society – “Hypathia” – Alpha Phi Alpha petitioned to Alpha Delta Pi. Recognized in June 1915, Alpha Phi Alpha became Alpha Delta of Alpha Delta Pi. The society’s flower was the violet, the colors were blue and white, and the pin was a diamond. Alpha Delta functioned underneath the doctrine “We Live for Each Other,” demonstrating the society’s stress upon the importance of selfless unity. However, Alpha Delta Pi racially discriminated against prospective members, as purportedly they were not allowed to induct an African American. Also, President Strider considered the society’s strict adherence to the Bible for religious ritual and as a moral basis as potential religious discrimination, in that it required all members to adhere to its Christian doctrines, regardless of individual religious preference. Aside from membership, Alpha Delta held an annual Easter party for local children. Alpha Delta became inactive in 1975.
Beta of Chi Omega (ΧΩ)
Beta Phi, established at Colby in 1895, appealed for membership to Chi Omega in 1906, becoming the Beta local chapter. As indicated by countless sorority invitations, Chi Omega was represented by the owl, and the colors “cardinal” and “straw.” Further, the sorority’s flower was the white carnation. Chi Omega, in regards to membership, had a few discriminatory practices, such as “mutually acceptable” clauses – meaning a member must be considered “acceptable” to all other local chapters – and alumni recommendation requirements. Consequently, until the 1960s, Beta was unable to induct African American women, as they would be considered of “unacceptable” sorority sisters to other chapters, particularly southern chapters. By extension, recommendation sheets were extremely subjective, specifically in regards to individual prejudice regarding race, religion, and ethnicity. Overall, until changes were made, Chi Omega’s demographic was largely white and Christian. On the other hand, Chi Omega volunteered frequently for the YMCA, held Christmas parties for underprivileged children, and made puppets for orphans. Chi Omega was abolished with the Board of Trustees decision in 1984.

Alpha Upsilon of Delta Delta Delta (ΔΔΔ)
Alpha Upsilon began as an informal society (est. 1904) and later petitioned to Delta Delta Delta, becoming a local chapter in 1908. Delta Delta Delta was represented by the colors gold, blue, and silver, and the society’s flower, the pansy. Like many other fraternities and sororities, Delta Delta Delta employed discriminatory selection practices, particularly in regards to subjective recommendation requirements. Additionally, Delta Delta Delta withdrew its recognition of the Alpha Upsilon local chapter on August 31, 1964, due to President Strider’s proposed anti-discrimination policies. Delta Delta Delta, however, was the sorority with which Colby’s Ninetta M. Runnals had been a part of as a Colby student, Runnals famously known for becoming the first Dean of the Women’s Division.

Delta Pi (ΔΠ)
N/A

Delta Sigma Chi (ΔΣΧ)
N/A

Gamma Delta of Phi Mu (ΦΜ)
Gamma Delta was recognized by the national chapter, Phi Mu, in 1917.

Alpha of Sigma Kappa (ΣΚ)
Alpha of Sigma Kappa was perhaps Colby’s most well-known sorority. In 1873, Colby’s first female students petitioned to Colby’s administration for the formation of a Greek letter society, as a means to unify and combat against the influence of a primarily patriarchal institution. Obtaining approval in 1874, the female students subsequently formed Sigma Kappa in 1875, becoming the first local/national chapter of the self-formed sorority. Sigma Kappa’s colors were lavender and maroon, and the society’s flower was the violet. Like many other fraternities and sororities, Sigma Kappa utilized discriminatory policies, such as required recommendations. More specifically, Sigma Kappa was purportedly not allowed to induct or receive recommendations for African Americans, as the Alpha chapter may lose national chapter recognition. As for community outreach, Sigma Kappa assisted the
Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children – through a hosted Ski-A-Thon – the Sunset Home, the Waterville Committee on Aging, and the Maine Sea Coast Missionary. Sigma Kappa was abolished in 1984.

**Academic Fraternal Societies**

**Beta of Phi Beta Kappa (ΦΒΚ)**

Established at Colby in 1895, Beta of Phi Beta Kappa is an academic acknowledgement society. Phi Beta Kappa inducts students that have demonstrated academic excellence, as verified by professors. Students must be in from the upper 20% of any given class – the number not exceeding one fourth of the graduating class. The organization is represented by symbolic gold keys, inscribed with a hand pointing to three stars. As an academic fraternal society, Phi Beta Kappa did not fall under the Board of Trustees 1984 fraternity abolishment decision, and, hence, is contemporaneously active.

**Chi Epsilon Mu Student Chemistry Society (XEM)**

Chi Epsilon Mu, an academic fraternal society, was founded to motivate and strengthen student interest and academic aptitude in chemistry research. Students had to have passed first-year chemistry and been enrolled at Colby.

**Omicron of Phi Sigma Iota (ΦΣΙ)**

Founded in 1929, Omicron was a society focused on the study and research of romance language and arts. With national affairs in mind, Omicron aimed to better the United States’ relations abroad through language and culture.

**Sigma Pi Sigma (ΣΠΣ)**

Sigma Pi Sigma was an academic recognition society, focused particularly on acknowledging academic excellence in the area of physics.