

Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi

2024–2025 Annual Report to the Membership

President: Jarett Wait '80

As I look back on this past year, I'm struck by how much we have accomplished together as a brotherhood. It has truly been a year of transformation, resilience, and forward momentum for the Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi.

First and foremost, after many months of careful planning, coordination, construction, and hard work, **the Sigma Pi House Recovery Fund project is finally complete.** What was once a vision is now a reality, a revitalized home that will serve as the heart of our brotherhood for years to come. This achievement was only possible through the dedication of our alumni, the trust of our undergraduates, and the generous contributions of so many who believe in the future of our chapter.

Even while the house was under renovation and unavailable for use during the fall semester, the undergraduates proved their strength and commitment to Sigma Pi. They successfully **recruited 18 new members**: a testament to their ability to share the value of our brotherhood beyond the walls of the house itself. Their efforts demonstrate that Mu Chapter's true foundation lies not in bricks and mortar, but in the bonds between its members.

Our **capital campaign is also nearing its final milestone**, as we continue to make significant progress towards our **\$1.3 million goal**. This campaign has not only made the house renovation possible, but it has also reinforced the power of our alumni network. Your continued support, whether through financial contributions, volunteer time, or mentorship, has been inspiring and humbling. **Kent Sheng '78** has graciously donated \$300,000 with the naming of the beach that was dedicated at the 2025 Reunion. Abby and **Rob Ruhlman '78** have generously donated \$200,000 with the naming of the front porch, and that dedication will take place at the 2026 Reunion.

As part of our capital campaign, we have created **multiple naming opportunities** within the newly renovated chapter house. Many of these spaces have already been named by generous alumni who wanted to leave a lasting legacy, and additional opportunities remain available for those who wish to contribute. This is a wonderful way to both support the chapter and permanently enshrine your family's name in the history of Mu Chapter. Additional naming opportunities are available for alumni interested in helping us **reach our final fundraising goals**.

We've also navigated an important **transition in alumni leadership**. I am proud to share that **Ford Fay '82** has agreed to run for alumni board president, and **Tom Owens '83** has agreed to run for the role of treasurer at the annual meeting. They bring a wealth of experience, passion, and fresh perspective to guide us into this next chapter. We have been **conducting training sessions with the new alumni board**, ensuring they are well-prepared for the responsibilities ahead.

We have discussed separating the house corporation, alumni association, Educational Foundation, and undergraduate chapter, to limit liability by keeping the building ownership separate from mentorship to the chapter. To give our new leaders time to settle into their roles, we will **pause full operational implementation of the newly structured entities for at least six months**. This deliberate transition will allow Ford, Tom, and the rest of the board to gain comfort and clarity in their positions before we fully roll out the updated governance and operational plans.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to recognize someone who has given extraordinary service to the Mu Chapter for decades. My own big brother in the fraternity, **John Haggerty '78**, has faithfully served as treasurer of the alumni board for the past **twenty years**. John's dedication, steady hand, and tireless efforts in managing the chapter's finances have been a cornerstone of our alumni operations. Through times of growth, challenge, and now renewal, he has always acted with integrity and an unwavering commitment to the success of our brotherhood. On behalf of the entire Mu Chapter Alumni Association, thank you John for your leadership, mentorship, and decades of service. We are deeply grateful for all you have done to ensure the long-term stability of our chapter.

Please Join

Annual Meeting Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi

September 25, 2025
7:00 pm Eastern Time

JOIN THE ZOOM MEETING:
us02web.zoom.us/j/5643453335

DIAL-IN: 305-224-1968 US

DIAL-IN: 309-205-3325 US

MEETING ID: 564 345 3335

As we look toward the future, we also want to ensure that the transition of alumni leadership is as smooth and successful as possible. To that end, I will move into the role of **chairman emeritus**. Similarly, John Haggerty '78 will transition into the role of **chapter faculty advisor emeritus** and will continue to serve the chapter in that capacity.

In these new advisory capacities, we will continue to work closely with Ford Fay '82 and the rest of the new alumni board during this transition period. We will help provide valuable guidance, share institutional knowledge, and ensure the new leadership team has the **relationships at Cornell** and the **resources they need** to continue our momentum. This continuity of leadership, bridging experience with fresh energy, will be critical in sustaining the progress we've made and positioning the Mu Chapter for long-term success.

This year has also shown the importance of the **long-term relationships we have cultivated** with key partners. Our continued collaboration with **Sigma Pi Fraternity, International, the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, and the Office of Student and Campus Life** at Cornell proved invaluable during our time of need.

- **Sigma Pi Fraternity, International** stepped up with an **unsecured loan of \$200,000** when we needed it most.
- Cornell's administrative offices worked tirelessly to **coordinate housing for our brothers, secure meal plans, and provide ongoing support**, ensuring the chapter remained strong even without access to our house.
- This commitment extended all the way to **President Michael Kotlikoff**, who personally visited the house along with the **Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life** staff, and spent time with our brothers, showing how deeply Cornell values our presence on campus.

These relationships have strengthened our chapter in profound ways, and we are grateful for their continued partnership.

Reunion this year at Cornell was a major success with an unprecedented attendance of 113 Sigma Pi alumni and their guests. The highlight of the weekend was two performances at the Pi House by the Band of Brothers. I would highly encourage your attendance at the next Reunion in June 2026. As a reminder, Sigma Pi Reunion is every year!

We are also very excited about the growth and revitalization happening in our own backyard. Just steps away from us, the new **Grinspoon Hillel Center** at **722 University Avenue** is breaking ground. This beautiful new facility will feature a kosher café, lounge, classrooms, study rooms, administrative offices, ritual spaces, and a multipurpose event space with a porch terrace. Hillel has already raised **more than \$34 million**, covering the cost of the building, and they plan to raise an additional **\$20 million** to support programming and building care. This incredible project will not only benefit our **Jewish brothers**, but it will also make **West Campus a true destination**, bringing more events, more community, and more vibrancy to our area. Importantly, this will also **increase the long-term value of our house at 730 University Avenue**, adding even more to the strength of our investment.

We're already planning exciting events over the next year to bring our alumni and undergraduate brothers together.

- **Dinner with Cornell Hockey Coach Mike Schafer** will be held this fall. Details to come. Coach Schafer is a Cornell legend, and we're looking forward to an unforgettable evening.
- The **NYC Career Event**, a tradition for over 20 years that I've had the privilege of organizing in the past, will now be hosted by the **Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation**. This event will continue to connect our undergraduates and young alumni with successful professionals in our network. I encourage all alumni in the New York City area and our undergraduate brothers to register for this event. Please mark your calendars, as this will take place November 6–7, 2025.

Finally, for the first time since the devastating fire, the front and sides of our house have been fully painted. This symbolic final touch represents not just the recovery of the structure, but the renewal of the pride and spirit the house embodies for all Mu Chapter brothers.

Our chapter's success has always depended on the selfless service of alumni volunteers. We want to express heartfelt thanks to those **stepping down** from the alumni board after their dedicated service:

Slater Goodman '18, Yordanos Goshu '18, William Murphy '18, Matt Pens '00, and Jonathan Fordin '80. Special thanks to Matt Pens for over 20 years of service on the board, and Slater Goodman as a former RA and board member for 9 years.

At the same time, we are thrilled to welcome a **group of new leaders stepping up** to join Ford Fay '82 and Tom Owens '83:

Henry Schechter '25, Larry Keane '99, and Eric Hamburg '85

The members of the board who will continue their service to the fraternity include:

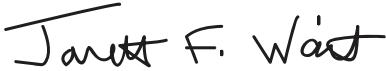
Ricky Melasecca '23, Michael Vernick '83, Alexa Bosshardt '82, Steve Pirozzi '80, David D'Orlando '79, John Morrison '75, and Peter Muth '74

In all, 20 **Sigma Pi alumni heroes** played a critical role in successfully completing our Sigma Pi House Recovery Project, alongside nine other organizations that contributed to our success. We are deeply grateful for their work, generosity, and belief in our mission.

While this past year has been filled with change, it has also reaffirmed the enduring strength of our brotherhood. Together, we have honored our history, invested in our future, and upheld the values that make the Mu Chapter a lifelong commitment.

On behalf of the entire alumni association, thank you for your trust, your support, and your belief in what we are building, both literally and figuratively. The best is yet to come.

Fraternally,



Jarrett Wait, '80

Mu Chapter Alumni Board President

Educational Foundation: Zachary Gilbert '16

On June 30, 2025, the Foundation concluded our fiscal year with one of the best fundraising years to date. This was driven by fundraising efforts surrounding the overall House Recovery Fund and the corresponding generosity of alumni who stepped up to support the campaign. We received more than \$360,000 in gifts, of which we have donated \$350,000 to the alumni corporation, attributable to the educational components of the house. We would like to thank each and every Pi man who generously supported the Foundation.

With another successful year under the leadership of **Wayne Forman '80**, the board decided to unanimously re-elect Wayne as president of the Foundation. In addition to Wayne, the following officers were also unanimously re-elected at the annual meeting: **Tom Silver '81** as vice president and **Zach Gilbert '16** as secretary. **Brody Ehrlich '10** was also elected as treasurer following the successful tenure of **Chris Olie '78**. We want to thank Chris for his service as well as his assistance to Brody to ensure a smooth transition, and we look forward to him continuing to serve as a member of the board. Additionally, **Matthew Blakley '18** will be taking over as investment chair following the steady stewardship under **Michael Reiner '78**. We'd also like to thank Michael for his service and look forward to him continuing to serve as a member of the board as he helps Matthew in the new role.

All other directors were also unanimously re-elected. We are thrilled to continue to see interest and participation in the Foundation from young alumni. This will help us stay connected with the young men in the house as well as ensure the longevity of our initiatives. To this end, the foundation continues to seek participation from young alumni and is actively encouraging younger alumni to apply to join the Foundation board.

Following a successful launch two years ago, the Educational Foundation continued to administer and support the Greek Affordability Fund (GAF). Through this program, undergraduates can apply for financial assistance to help pay their dues and fees while living at the Pi house. This initiative was started with the goal of promoting a diverse brotherhood by helping to reduce the financial barriers to joining Sigma Pi. It also promotes leadership, as reflected by the fact that most of the current Chapter Executive Committee are past GAF recipients. We are proud of the initiative's success thus far, with approximately \$90,000 in total awards to date enabling many young men to join Sigma Pi and live at the Pi house. The Foundation will continue to support the Greek Affordability Fund in 2025–2026 after selecting several impressive candidates to receive scholarships for this upcoming school year.

Additionally, one of our signature programs is the David Harrop Memorial Scholarship, which we have awarded to two undergraduate brothers. This program continues to be popular with the undergraduates, and the Foundation saw a field of strong, high-achieving candidates. As a reminder, here is the description of the scholarship:

A scholarship for educational purposes will be awarded by Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation annually to the brother who best demonstrates academic excellence and service to Sigma Pi and the greater Cornell and Ithaca communities.

The board has established the following weighting criteria:

- Academic excellence, driven by GPA: 40%
- Service to the community:
 - Sigma Pi participation: 35%
 - Community participation: 25%

Our year-end assets are approximately \$72,000 and reflect the generous donations from our fellow Pi men. We strive for the Educational Foundation to continue to be a worthy recipient of gifts. These donations have helped us support the Memorial Library and Learning Commons, fund internships and educational opportunities, such as study abroad, provide conference stipends, and award scholarships. The only way for us to continue to support these programs is through the generosity of our brothers, so please continue to make your gifts to the Foundation.

Alumni Treasurer: John J. Haggerty '78

What a (fiscal) year!

With the discovery of mold in the fall of 2024, followed by a series of further discoveries of significant structural deterioration and poorly constructed plumbing, we went from an initial estimate of approximately \$350,000 to an all-in expense of nearly \$1.3 million in 10 months. The modest contingency fund we had was quickly exhausted, and we needed help. That help came in two forms. The first was the incredible support and unbelievable generosity of you, our alumni brothers. The contributions came swiftly, and for the most part allowed us to stay current on the reconstruction and re-housing and meal costs, as well as the costs of operating an empty fraternity. Toward the end of the challenge, while continuing to raise alumni donations, we needed more help. We reached out to Sigma Pi International to ask if they knew of any credit facility that we could access quickly. They responded in 24 hours with what amounted to a \$200,000 signature loan. You read that right. They wired our bank \$200,000 in 72 hours on one signature. While we still have a gap to fill (and it is being worked hard), and we need to repay the \$200,000 loan to Sigma Pi International, there is now light at the end of this tunnel. We are eternally grateful to all our alumni for your contributions and other support, and we have never been prouder to be part of the larger Sigma Pi fraternal structure.

This will be my final report to the membership as treasurer. Tom Owens, my brother and friend, has stepped up to take this role come the fall. It has been my pleasure to serve our members, active and alumni, for nearly 20 years. And working with and for my little brother, Jarett Wait, has been a benefit of brotherhood that I could never have imagined in the mid to late 1970's when I was young and stupid. I have retired from my faculty post at Cornell ILR (though they have asked me to teach again in the fall) and I plan to spend as much time as I can fishing in my happy place, the Florida Keys. That said, I will remain the chapter faculty advisor until another brother steps up to take that role. The role of faculty advisor often took a back seat to the role of late payment collector, and I hope to rebalance that equation over these next years of my involvement with the house.

Thank you for your trust, your support, and your friendship over the last 20 years. Thank you to Jarett for his boundless energy and willingness to serve. Without his work we probably would have joined the long list of dormant or defunct Cornell Greek chapters. Instead, despite the many challenges of every dimension, we are among the premier houses, and as Jarett has said many times, we remain a critical component of the complex Cornell University student housing infrastructure.

Jevo.

Haggs '78

Alumni Relations Committee – Reunion Recap: Steve Pirozzi '80

The 2025 reunion was remarkable for the *unprecedented attendance* of 113 alumni and their guests: a new record for Mu Chapter. Leading the way was the class of 2020, celebrating their five-year reunion. **Alex Ewald '20** played a key role in rallying his classmates, along with alumni from adjacent classes, and arranged for 29 of them to stay in the Pi house during the weekend.

The class of 1980 also had a strong turnout, with 23 brothers returning to celebrate their 45th reunion. They were led by Alumni Association President **Jarett Wait '80** and Band of Brothers leader **Jay Sacco '80**. Their Friday event, a wine tasting at several local wineries, was a particular highlight. Needless to say, the weekend was a roaring success for the classes of 2020 and 1980, their spouses, and guests.

This year's "State of the Fraternity" presentation took place during Saturday morning's brunch and was led by Alumni Association President Jarett Wait '80 and Educational Foundation President **Wayne Forman '80**. The presentation carried special significance due to the displacement of undergraduates from the Pi house during the year and the extensive repairs that followed. The gravity of these events contributed to a strong turnout; 101 attendees signed up for the brunch.

A major highlight was the announcement of two generous donations to Mu Chapter from Abby and **Rob Ruhlman '78** and **Kent Sheng '78**. Kent joined via Zoom and concluded his remarks by reading an original poem titled "*Back to the House*" (see below). His heartfelt message, along with the announcement of these impactful gifts, served as a powerful reminder of the lifelong bond shared by Mu Chapter brothers.

On Friday evening, the group gathered on the front porch, led by **John Morrison '75**, to honor Mu Chapter brothers who had passed away in the previous year.

The weekend featured two standout performances by the Band of Brothers at the Pi house. On Friday evening, they played an acoustic set on the front porch, which drew an enthusiastic crowd, especially from the class of 2020, who sang along with the band. Saturday afternoon's performance, dubbed *Rock 'n' Roll Tea Redux*, lasted over three hours and was enjoyed by brothers, guests, and even passersby. The concert ended only when the permit expired at 6:00 pm. Special thanks go to John Haggerty '78 and Jay Sacco '80 for securing the necessary permits.

The Band of Brothers also performed Saturday night in one of the tents on the Arts Quad, alongside other bands. By all accounts, they "tore it up," with many Cornell alumni dancing and singing along late into the evening.

Throughout the weekend, a variety of beverages were available at the Pi house, funded by alumni who paid the reunion weekend fee. Those who registered and paid in advance also enjoyed a Friday and Saturday evening dinner. A complimentary Saturday morning brunch, sponsored by the Educational Foundation and the alumni association, was open to all attendees.

Once again, bedrooms in the Pi house were available for rent to alumni who reserved them in advance.

In short, the 2025 Mu Chapter Reunion was a tremendous success, enjoyed by over 110 attendees. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year at the 2026 Reunion, June 4–7!

Facilities Committee: Steve Pirozzi '80

This past August, during move-in for the 2024–2025 academic year, our undergraduate members discovered extensive water damage throughout the Sigma Pi house at Cornell. Several resident bedrooms and other key areas of the home were affected due to undetected slow leaks within concealed plumbing lines. What followed was a significant chapter in our house's history, a months-long effort to restore, repair, and upgrade our beloved home.

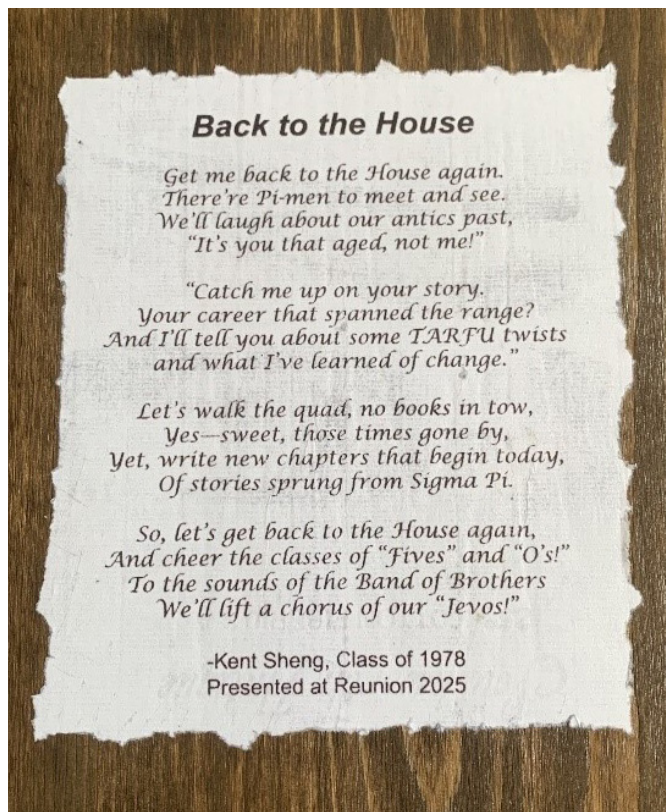
The Sigma Pi alumni board, in collaboration with many trusted vendor partners, took swift action to identify the source of the water intrusion. Immediate remediation and demolition of the impacted areas were conducted to prevent further damage. Despite best efforts to keep the house operational during this process, the City of Ithaca ultimately required the house to be closed until repairs could be completed safely and to code.

The result was a six-month construction and renovation project that touched nearly every part of the house: most notably five bedrooms, four bathrooms, and several shared spaces. The scope and scale of this effort were significant, and the following provides an overview of the major work completed:

Key Repairs and Renovations

General Improvements:

- **Ventilation:** All bathroom fans were replaced or repaired. New ductwork and improved airflow systems were installed, particularly in the basement. The board continues to explore long-term HVAC upgrades.
- **Plumbing:** A major discovery was the poor condition of the main plumbing stack, which required full replacement, adding both time and cost.
- **Bedrooms:** Water-damaged ceilings, walls, and floors were repaired, with new paint and flooring installed as needed.



- **Structural Work:** Reinforcements started in summer 2024 were completed, including repairs to interior doors, fire safety systems, and structural framing.
- **Exterior:** Roof and front porch repairs were made to prevent future water intrusion.

Basement Highlights:

- **Bedrooms 19 & 20:** Floors replaced, walls repainted, drywall removed and reinstalled with water-resistant materials, and closets repaired.
- **Basement Bathroom:** Fully gutted and rebuilt with new waterproofing, ventilation, tile, fixtures, and privacy partitions.
- **Laundry Room:** Repaired and painted; dryer vents were brought up to code.
- **Grotto/Pit & Dining Room:** Addressed all water-damaged areas and repainted.

First Floor Upgrades:

- **Group Bathroom:** Complete overhaul of showers with waterproofing, new tile, fixtures, ventilation, paint, and privacy upgrades.
- **Bedrooms & Library:** All affected areas repaired and repainted; structural work completed in hallway corridors.

Second Floor Updates:

- **Group Bathroom:** Same as first floor, completely gutted and rebuilt with new tile flooring throughout.
- **Bedroom 209:** Added structural supports, repaired drywall, and repainted.

Third Floor Refurbishments:

- **Group Bathroom:** Full rebuild of shower areas with waterproofing, new tile, and fixtures.
- **Bedroom 309:** Water-damaged walls and floors repaired, with new paint and flooring installed.

While the summary above captures the bulk of the work completed, it does not encompass every detail. The board directed the contractors to ensure all repairs met the highest standards of quality and durability. Unfortunately, many hidden issues, ranging from prior faulty repairs to the natural wear of an aging structure, added considerable time and cost to the project.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, several additional facilities-related repairs were completed at Mu Chapter in addition to and in conjunction with the major repairs.

Spot repairs were made to the waterproofing membrane beneath the pavers on the front porch to address a leak affecting the Learning Commons. Although the full replacement of the front porch waterproofing system was originally planned for last fall, resources were redirected to address the mold issues. This larger upgrade will be scheduled once sufficient funds become available.

The roof hatches were replaced with new units, and additional repairs were made to damaged shingles and areas surrounding the roof vents.

While repairs were underway in the bathrooms and adjacent rooms, several interior doors and locks were also repaired. Maintenance was performed on the Front and West Lounge doors, including latch repairs and the replacement of the front door panic bar and lock. Many of the door repairs were completed by Tom Wright, class of '79.

One of the building's water heaters was replaced with a new unit, and work was performed on the heating system to ensure it was functioning efficiently.

As part of our regular schedule, all routine maintenance of kitchen equipment and other areas throughout Mu Chapter was also completed.

We are incredibly grateful to the board members and alumni who brought their construction expertise to this massive undertaking. Many volunteered countless hours (some on-site) to oversee progress, coordinate solutions, and advocate for the best outcomes on behalf of our brotherhood.

Kitchen and Dining Committee: Alexa Bosshardt '82, MPS '83, K&D Chair

In 2016, Sigma Pi alumni envisioned a modernized kitchen and dining space, combined with a state-of-the-art Learning Commons, to provide the current and future brotherhood with a highly desirable home at 730 University Ave. The alumni committee tasked with overseeing the project through fruition nine years ago responded to research that identified specific elements attractive to today's students, to be most competitive with other housing options on and off campus. Those

needs included flexible dining hours and a wide range of meal and in-between meal options, in addition to comfortable communal spaces providing functionality for collaborative studying and socializing. Today, the Kitchen and Dining (K&D) Committee remains active as an important standing committee of the alumni board to monitor the space that includes the main kitchen, dining, and grab-and-go areas. Our primary mission is to adapt accordingly to meet and exceed the dining and nutritional desires and expectations of the undergraduate brothers of Sigma Pi. The Learning Commons, equipped with multiple televisions and web cameras, offers convenience for group conferencing and hosts the Mu Chapter speaker series, where alumni and industry figures talk to current undergrads about their career paths. The Commons continues to be a great spot for congregating and socializing or for studying when brothers need more space or media. Its location adjacent to the formal dining space provides a place where brothers can just hang out with one another and share a snack or meal while they work.

Meal service for the 2025-2026 academic year will kick off with dinner on Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

A new contract has been signed with Gill Grilling for the 2025–2026 academic year. “Finger snaps” to Steward Tobias (Toby) Young, who worked diligently with fellow e-board members and alumni to negotiate and execute the contract in a timely manner. In response to requests for food availability off-hours and over the weekend (Friday–Sunday) when there is no formal meal service, the grab-and-go area will be enhanced weekly with more snack options, as well as with premade sandwiches. The brothers also requested increased cleaning services from the meal plan provider, Gill Grilling. These additional fees are reflected in the increased costs of the full and partial meal plans for the upcoming year.

For several reasons, including the safety of the brotherhood, risk management, and insurance policy directives, all cooking and food preparation equipment in the main kitchen is strictly off limits for use by the brothers at any time. Any brother who uses any of the main kitchen cooking or food preparation equipment will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Only the steward, the sage, and the house manager, under exceptional circumstances, are exempt from this rule.

The grab-and-go facility was created for, and is available to, any brother 24/7 for the preparation and consumption of the food items available therein.

Brothers are individually responsible for cleaning up after themselves when using the grab-and-go or when eating a prepared meal. After the corporate meal provider’s employees have completed their workday, it is the responsibility of each brother utilizing the grab-and-go to maintain the cleanliness of the grab-and-go, dining space, and all other areas where they consume food.

We are excited to continue our partnership with Gill Grilling, a company that provides food service excellence to dozens of fraternities and sororities across numerous campuses, to offer high-quality, consistent meals throughout the year for Sigma Pi. The brothers have the flexibility to choose from a variety of meal options and to update their choices with Gill Grilling as their preferences may change. The company will tailor recipe options according to trending faves. Meal service will launch on August 19 with menus featuring steak fajitas, grilled salmon, lemon chicken, shrimp or chicken stir-fry, and marinara or pesto ravioli. For those of us who lovingly remember Sloppy Bobs and veal or chicken “barm” as house mainstays, mealtime at Sigma Pi will always signify a time to congregate, commiserate, and collaborate.

Meal service will begin with dinner on Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

Please note the updated pricing for the upcoming year:

- **Full Meal Plan (Annual):** \$3,914
- **Partial Meal Plan (Annual):** \$1,466

Gill Grilling assigned Chef Jeremy to Sigma Pi for 2024–2025. His presence and culinary skills were well-received, and the brothers look forward to having him return with his team to the house. Gill Grilling understands the need to maintain high standards for food safety and sanitary facilities. In addition, the brothers will be required to abide by all contractual terms outlined in their housing agreement relating to individual responsibility for maintaining high cleanliness standards in the dining and grab-and-go areas, as well as respecting all updated guidelines relating to kitchen access or any usage of the space thereof.

Fun Facts: during the academic year, Mu Chapter:

- Serves meals on approximately 150 days, including lunch and dinner Monday through Thursday, and brunch and dinner on Sundays
- Hosts approximately 4–6 large parties and formals in the dining area
- Organizes approximately 35 mixers
- Utilizes the dining and grab-and-go areas nightly for study and study breaks
- Features meal plan and grab-and-go designs that set Sigma Pi apart from other houses

Insurance Committee: David C. D'Orlando '79

Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi insurance remains in force through Tompkins Insurance Agencies Inc. for the housing corporation, Educational Foundation, and alumni corporation.

The building is insured for \$4,118,000; contents are insured for \$565,000, and loss of rents are insured for \$400,000. General liability coverage is \$2,000,000 per occurrence and \$4,000,000 aggregate. This package of property and liability insurance is underwritten by United Frontier Mutual Insurance Company at an annual premium of \$44,731.

We have director- and officer-liability coverage of \$2,000,000, which is provided by Great American Insurance Company at an annual premium of \$3,105.

Our worker's compensation insurance is provided through the New York State insurance fund.

The undergraduate chapter is insured through Sigma Pi International for liability coverage of \$250,000.

Our renewal this year was relatively uneventful. Our claim filed for the damage to the fraternity due to mold resulting from water damage was denied twice by the insurance carrier. We are still in the process of pursuing some coverage for this claim.

This year, we have implemented new procedures for identifying and preventing damage to the property and we have brought on a new property maintenance organization for frequent inspections.

We have also established an information review with the undergraduate brothers at the beginning of the semester to discuss respect for the property, loss control, and incident prevention.

Legal Committee: Peter A. Muth '74

In some ways, the past year has been relatively routine for this committee. There has been an occasional contract to review (e.g., the yearly contract with the food service provider which the undergraduate brothers have to sign) as well as an occasional agreement to draft (e.g., a "lease agreement" for temporary summer occupants. After all, the house can be a great place to house guests in Ithaca for a summer wedding or family reunion!)

In my summary last year, I briefly mentioned that we were finally facing a need to "modernize" some aspects of Mu Chapter and consider several important legal changes. We have been fortunate to have retained local Ithaca counsel, who has aided other Cornell fraternities adopting similar changes, to steer us through these changes.

Many alumni will probably be without an immediate answer to the question "Who really owns 730 University Avenue?" The answer lies buried in articles of Incorporation and bylaws initially drafted well over a hundred years ago. Those documents essentially make both the undergraduate brothers and the alumni collective owners of the house. That arrangement has sufficed for decades. In years past, the danger of that arrangement would never have occurred to us. For instance, if a brother became intoxicated at a party in the 1970s and had a driving accident, I suspect that any legal action would have focused on the brother himself, his insurance coverage, and potentially such dram shop type of insurance as the house would have carried at the time. At the time we had very limited involvement in house affairs from alumni (in fact, I can't remember any) and claiming that the alumni shared liability for the incident would have been virtually unheard of.

Welcome to modern lawsuits and actions by which plaintiffs aggressively seek to recover "the money they deserve". In cases in which undergraduate brothers have suffered injury or death due to hazing incidents or have been involved in tragic vehicle accidents due to underage drinking or drug intake at a fraternity event, what I (not with disrespect, of course) call "billboard attorneys" will include every possible party as a defendant. They will certainly realize that many a fraternity's insurance coverage pales in comparison to the value of the fraternity house itself. (Ours could easily be worth \$5 million). It is not farfetched for jury to be convinced that alumni have been actively involved with the undergraduate brothers and that the alumni might have known of and tolerated "unacceptable behavior", contributing to behavior resulting in a serious injury. The fraternity as a whole would be named as a defendant, with the risk that a judgment against the fraternity would entail a money judgment against the fraternity's real property and personal property. Step 2: sheriff's sale.

As I noted last year, this is a period of transition as we consider taking steps, which apparently have been taken by most other fraternities and which are increasingly mandated by insurance companies, steps of separating the all-encompassing scope of the alumni board, which currently handles all responsibilities and oversight associated with the running of Mu Chapter and which also undertakes the duties of owning and maintaining 730 University Avenue itself. Currently, with all Mu Chapter members, both undergraduate and alumni, technically being the owners of the Pi house, the potential for a serious lawsuit to result in a judgment lien on the house is an uncomfortable fact. Local counsel is helping us separate the ownership of the house into a "housing corporation," which will lease the property to the undergraduate brothers in much the same manner as any other Ithaca landlord. The alumni board will be separate from the Housing Corporation board and will naturally require separate officers.

Working through these steps has taken time over the past year, and the finish line has not yet been reached. Drafting new documents is never easy, particularly when alumni board members each have their own perspective as to what will be needed. Trust me when I say that a finished product will soon be available for review and, i hope, approval.

This has resulted in the past two years of a complete overhaul of the previous light-handed methods by which an undergraduate joined and participated in Sigma Pi life. New occupancy agreements were drafted, as well as a lengthy brotherhood agreement spelling out each brother's obligations and the ramifications of a failure to abide by the agreements (e.g., the penalty for leaving one's room in disrepair at the end of the term). Currently, all new brothers are obligated to execute a master contract with the Alumni Board, with obligations for living and dining in the house spelled out and backed up with the guarantee of a parent or guardian and a connection to an active credit card. Meetings are held to inform new brothers of the anticipated costs associated with Sigma Pi. With a yearly contract with an organization supplying meals running to approximately **\$140,000** and with average yearly rent hovering in excess of \$10,000 per person, we couldn't afford to take any other path.

This year did see the culmination of our approach to those lingering "bad eggs", and the drafting of pleadings ready to be filed in the local courts to take the ultimate step when multiple appeals by both Alumni Board members and E-board active brothers failed to result in payment, in some cases, of unpaid invoices approaching \$10,000. That was quite a change. I don't believe we have ever sued a brother for an unpaid bill in our entire history. Fortunately, the lawsuits did not need to be filed, and currently, the house is in much better shape due to our stricter approach; contracts must be fully signed before each semester. Without signature a brother is not permitted to move into the house, dine in the house or participate in house social activities.

As in prior years, the Legal Committee continues to be blessed by a dearth of the kind of litigation we all fear in connection with college life, with death due to hazing being at the top of the list. We hope this good luck will continue. That said, this is a period of transition as we consider taking steps that apparently have been taken by most other fraternities and that are increasingly mandated by insurance companies, steps to separate the all-encompassing scope of the Alumni Board, which currently handles all responsibilities and oversight associated with the running of Mu Chapter and which also undertakes the duties of owning and maintaining 730 University Avenue itself. Currently, with all of Mu Chapter members both active and alumni technically being the owners of Pi house, the potential for a serious lawsuit resulting in a judgment lien on the house is an uncomfortable fact. We are currently working with local counsel to structure our operational and governing entities in such a way that our main physical asset is positioned to avoid the reach of any such judgment. Hence, this year is guaranteed to shift our operations in some meaningful ways. Stay tuned.

Nominating Committee: Peter A. Muth '74

In past I have emphasized how the alumni board has constantly been trying to find new blood to step in for those of us who were born during the Eisenhower administration. Because of our "collective wisdom", we might be ideal for carrying part of the task of imparting what might be loosely labeled "Sigma Pi culture" to the undergraduate brothers. But the operations of a fraternity in today's atmosphere at Cornell has radically changed over the years and the undergraduate brothers often connect better with a younger set of alumni. (There has been some improvement in these attempts). I reiterate my appeals from prior years for those who would like to keep Sigma Pi as a vibrant institution, to volunteer to help, and it need not be as a member of one of our boards. Volunteering to lend expertise to a committee is similarly valuable.

In my summary for the Legal Committee, I note the ongoing process to turn 730 University Avenue into a singular asset run much as an apartment complex, with little connection to the undergraduates other than leasing them rooms.

As I mentioned last year, another entity means another board. This "companion board" will not have the direct communication with the undergraduates the current alumni board exercises and enjoys. It means, however, that we will need people to serve on or with this new board of directors. We currently have people spotted for critical positions, but for anyone who has a love of our grand old University Avenue facility and the task of keeping it in shape, this is a wonderful opportunity to get involved in a new way. Any thoughts or offers, shoot me an e-mail at pmuth@roadrunner.com.

Mu Chapter Annual Giving Summary

Comparative Year over Year

	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total All Gifts	..... \$111,720.69	..... \$1,121,877.90
Total \$ Alumni Assn.	..... \$33,614.20	..... \$754,126.38
Total \$ Ed. Foundation	..... \$78,106.49	..... \$377,751.52
Total Number of Gifts.	..... 125	..... 528
Total Unique Donors	..... 93	..... 435

Mu Chapter Undergraduate Brotherhood Metrics

Comparative Year over Year

Recruitment		
Fall 2023	13	Fall 2024 3
Spring 2024	19	Spring 2025 15
Total	32	Total 18
Numbers by Class Year		
2023-2024	2024-2025	Fall 2025-2026
Seniors . . . . .	. . . . . 18	. . . . . 22
Juniors . . . . .	. . . . . 24	. . . . . 20
Sophomores . . . . .	. . . . . 18	. . . . . 15
Freshmen . . . . .	. . . . . 18 –
Total . . . . .	. . . . . 78	. . . . . 57
Live-In by Class Year		
Fall 2023-2024	Fall 2024-2025	Fall 2025-2026
Total . . . . .	. . . . . 36	. . . . . 31

