

# **Eastern Iowa Acacia Alumni Association**

## **-Strategic Plan-**



**ACACIA  
FRATERNITY**

**“So live...”**

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## **Executive Summary**

The active chapter of Acacia Fraternity at The University of Iowa ceased operations in the spring of 2005. This was done because recruitment attempts had turned up little interest and the current undergraduate members were inexperienced in leadership roles and showed no desire to learn or gain this experience. It was determined that all operations would cease starting June 2005.

The Iowa Acacians Corporation Board still owns the property and house at 202 Ellis Avenue. Beginning in August 2005 the Corporation Board leased the physical structure to Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity through Keystone Management Company. Keystone Property Management is the organization working with Pi Kappa Phi's Corporation Board and Acacia's. Keystone is also overseeing the lease agreements between Pi Kappa Phi and its members.

At this point the alumni in the Iowa City area got together and determined two major things needed to take place. First that constant and consistent communication with the entire alumni base needed to occur and second that an Alumni Chapter should be formed.

The first newsletter went out in late spring of 2005 and by the end of the summer the Eastern Iowa Acacia Alumni Association (EIAAA) was born. The primary goal of this organization was to form a committee and create a Strategic Plan to bring the active chapter of Acacia Fraternity back to the University of Iowa. The essential part of this plan and any future endeavors involving the EIAAA revolve around increased and improved alumni communication and participation involving Acacia Fraternity Headquarters, University of Iowa, all Acacia Alumni in the eastern Iowa area, and most importantly all Acacia Alumni from the University of Iowa.

This is that plan. The plan is broken down into four sections. The first section covers the Undergraduate Members. It outlines what characteristics or qualities will be targeted in Undergraduates whom we want as members, what themes or ideas will be stressed in the pledge

education program, and what can be done to get new members acclimated to the University and the chapter. Also included will be the standards to which all members will be held. These standards will allow us to produce leaders and members that will become good stewards and good alumni who represent the beliefs and ideals of Acacia Fraternity.

The second section covers Alumni Members. This portion lays out the operation of the EIAAA. It sets forth communication guidelines and targets for alumni correspondence. It implements the idea put forth by Alex Taylor to create Decade Alumni Ambassadors (DAA). The Alumni Decade Ambassadors would be two people from each decade who would be responsible for keeping track of the alumni for that decade and organizing them as needed. Alumni support does not end with bringing our chapter back. To maintain a strong undergraduate chapter strong, consistent alumni support will be required.

The third section covers fundraising. It outlines our basic financial target(s). The primary engine of our fundraising effort will be performed by the Decade Alumni Ambassadors. We will utilize the DAA's to organize and facilitate the fundraising for each decade or era. Ultimately, the re-colonization option we select will be largely dependent upon the amount of money we are able to raise beforehand and on an annual basis.

The fourth section covers the physical structure itself. The House is the most important physical asset we own. The location is good, the land is valuable, and the building contains decades of Acacia Fraternity history and memories. The Corporation Board is responsible for the physical structure and the property. They will handle all planning and fundraising for the structure and the property. We will work to support them in any way we can to ensure that when the time comes for our new chapter to occupy the house we will have the best facility possible.

This written plan will help the EIAAA obtain its goal of reorganizing the University of Iowa Chapter and of helping expansions in the Eastern Iowa area along with building a brotherhood for

all Acacians in the eastern Iowa area. It provides measurable goals, targets, and timelines for moving forth in these endeavors.

## **Undergraduates**

The Undergraduate section of the strategic plan obviously focuses on the undergraduate members. This focus can be divided up in to three distinct areas: types of members we want to recruit, what we have to offer new members through our pledge education program, and finally the expectations we have for our undergraduate members. Most of what is included will provide guidelines or a framework until such a time when the undergraduate chapter can adopt their own specific goals/criteria off of this framework.

### ***Who do we want to recruit?***

While we all want to believe our fraternity has the power to take questionable recruits and turn them into quality fraternity men and quality alumni, it is far easier and requires less time and investment if you start out with a quality recruit from the start. By establishing what we are looking for in new members and working off of established criteria, we make it easier to have higher standards for our active members. To find quality potential members requires quality recruitment. This means getting to know the people we are recruiting: what they are/have been involved in, their interests, and the quality of their character. The list of traits and qualities is endless: intelligent, studious, athletic, honest, social, loyal, creative, moral, artistic, leadership, etc.

### ***What do we have to offer our new members?***

In our National Strategic Plan there were four ideals that as an organization we challenge our members to become: Scholars, Leaders, Socially Skilled, and Socially Aware. Our pledge education program should create an environment in which to either reinforce or develop these ideals. These ideals will help to develop well-rounded individuals who will be successful academically, personally, and follow Acacia's motto, "Human Service."

To aid in achieving these ideals the following 10 goals have been outlined for the pledge education program for undergraduate members:

1. To aid them in achievement of their scholastic pursuits
2. To enhance their college experience by encouraging them in their campus activities
3. Create pride in Acacia
4. To enhance their college experiences through a community living environment
5. Increase their self esteem and self confidence
6. Unify the active chapter
7. Improve the individual mentally, spiritually, and physically
8. Improve the individual's interpersonal skills
9. Teach respect for the individual and others
10. To provide an enjoyable and safe experience

One of the best ways to ensure a quality and positive pledging experience is to have a strong pledge father program. The pledge father needs to be someone who first knows what it means to be an Acacian and has the time to act as a mentor to a new member. The pledge father needs to be someone who gets "it." A clear policy needs to be put in place explaining the criteria of a capable pledge father, the pledge father/son matching process, and what is expected of a pledge father.

### ***What do we expect from our members?***

There should be a simple, clear explanation of what is to be expected of members of Acacia Fraternity. This standard, while a minimum, will at least furnish our undergraduate members with a steady base upon which to gauge how they are succeeding at the University of Iowa, either individually or as a group. These expectations should take into account the above sections on the types of members we wish to recruit and what we have to offer new members, specifically through

our pledge education program. Additionally these standards need to take into account fraternity standards on campus, Acacia National Fraternity standards, and what we would expect of those we wish to call brother.

A list developed from the Acacia Fraternity National Strategic Plan is below. The specific points are vague. They provide a foundation for us to develop more specific guidelines in the future. However, we must also realize that regardless of whatever standards are developed they need to be realistic and applicable to the generation of young men we are recruiting. We need to take into account that by recruiting well rounded individuals their time will be spread between academics, jobs, other campus activities, social life, volunteering, girlfriends, etc. For the fraternity to maintain importance in this schedule we need to ensure that in exchange for members living up to these standards they are getting the benefits they deserve from their fraternity.

1. Attendance at chapter meetings
2. Attendance at recruitment events
3. Attendance at philanthropic events
4. Attendance at fraternity activities
5. Meeting fraternity financial obligations on time
6. Meeting chapter standards for grades
7. Compliance with the Laws of Acacia, chapter constitution and by-laws, University requirements
8. Involvement in campus activities
9. Involvement in chapter leadership positions
10. Participating in personal development activities

Sources:

Acacia Fraternity Strategic Plan, "Rising to the Challenge" 2004

University of Iowa Acacia Fraternity Pledge Manual

University of Wisconsin Acacia Fraternity Pledge Manual

## Alumni

Each aspect of the Strategic Plan needs to address the actors that will be involved with Acacia Fraternity University of Iowa. These actors would include the student, the student's parents, the Alumni, the University, and the Community. The focus of this section is on one of these actors, Alumni. Alumni seek a number of different things from an active fraternity chapter. They include the maintenance of living Acacia legacy. The alumni want to see the house they lived in being used by its current members. The chapter and its active members provide a way for the alumni to connect and to remember their past glories, memories, and fellow brothers. More importantly, it provided them with a reason and a vehicle to alumni to keep in touch and to keep the spirit of Acacia alive in alumni as well as members. The Eastern Iowa Acacia Alumni Association has been formed to help facilitate this relationship.

The alumni can also provide resources for the chapter. No alumni group can survive without the support from their fellow alumni. There are two essentials alumni must provide: physical resources and time. Physical resources do not just include money; it includes any donation that aids in the bettering of the fraternity and helping the fraternity to achieve its goals. Examples include: providing a location for a meeting to take place, donation of needed items for the fraternity house or for an Acacia event, or providing or giving discounts. Giving time includes volunteering at rush events, writing an article for the newsletter, making phone calls to help keep addresses current, helping with fundraising efforts, or providing technical expertise to the fraternity.

The two easiest things for an alumnus to do are to pay his voluntary annual dues and to keep his address and other contact information up to date with the EIAAA and International office. When our undergraduate chapter is re-established on campus many other opportunities will present themselves for alumni to get involved. These opportunities can include recommending students as

potential rush candidates, providing advice on career planning, mentoring undergraduate members, serving as a chapter advisor, chapter visits, and attending fraternity functions.

### ***Eastern Iowa Acacia Alumni Association***

One of the primary functions of the EIAAA was to improve and maintain communication with alumni from the Eastern Iowa area and all alumni from the University Of Iowa Chapter Of Acacia. Consequently the EIAAA will endeavor to have two social events per year. The fall event will ideally correspond with a home football game, preferably homecoming. The second event will occur in the spring. This event does not need to be tied to any specific event but it has been suggested that it be tied to the spring football game or to the anniversary of the founding of Acacia Fraternity at the University of Iowa.

These events will be announced well in advance through the newsletter or separate mailings to the alumni being serviced by the EIAAA. By creating opportunities for the alumni to get together the EIAAA is providing opportunities for nostalgia and a sense of belonging. In addition to EIAAA sponsored events, we hope to encourage other alums to put together or host their own Acacia events. Because these events become annual traditions there is always a legacy at the University of Iowa for these alumni to cherish. These traditions can be passed onto the undergraduate chapter when it is reformed.

The most important part of making these things happen is consistent communication with our alumni. The most efficient way to stay in touch with our alumni is through a consistent newsletter/ mailing and through a properly maintained website.

### ***Newsletters and Chapter Communications***

The EIAAA will be responsible for four newsletters per year. It will also publish and maintain a website at the URL [www.uiacacia.com](http://www.uiacacia.com). The Alumni Chapter Publications Chair will

oversee these endeavors. The newsletters will be mailed to any Acacia alumni living in the Eastern Iowa Area (zip codes 52000 – 52999) and all alumni from the University of Iowa Acacia Chapter that are in good standing, have a current address in the Alumni Database, and have not asked to be removed from the mailing list.

The “Keeper of the Roll” will maintain the Alumni Database. It will be his responsibility to make sure that all alumni updates are entered promptly into the database and that anyone whose address becomes non-current is marked as such. The Keeper of the Roll will also be responsible for publishing the “Lost Alumni” list for the newsletter and website.

It is the goal of the chapter to minimize the number of hard copies mailed out to the members. With this goal in mind every member when updating their information will be offered the options to receive their newsletter via a) mailed hard copy, b) an email, or c) both. Regardless of choice, the EIAAA feels that it is important that EVERYONE on the mailing list receive one hard copy newsletter every year.

The website will be designed and maintained by the “Webmaster”. The purpose of the website will be to provide knowledge and communication to the members of the chapter. It will also have a “members only” section that will be password protected.

The website will contain all pertinent contact information for the officers of the EIAAA. It will contain helpful links to the University webpage, the International Fraternity’s webpage, and other pages that will be beneficial to the members of the EIAAA. The website should link to all major announcements being made by the International Fraternity and the Local Chapter. [It should allow members to search for their brother’s contact information and allows them to update and change their contact information easily. There will be a section for alumni to make important announcements such as marriages, births, and deaths. There will be a section for pictures of chapter events or alumni updates to be placed on the website. There will be a section where the documents

such as the strategic plan, the constitution and by-laws, the minutes, and the newsletter can be accessed.

In addition a University Communications chair will be created. This person will be responsible for representing our alumni group to the University, and more specifically, The Office of Student Life (OSL) and Greek Affairs. In addition, this office would try to keep the alumni group abreast of developments at the University of Iowa and with the University of Iowa Greek system.

### ***Decade Alumni Ambassadors***

This plan is set forth to help facilitate communication with many different alumni whose time as active members spanned a number of different generations. This plan will allow the EIAA to keep in better contact with our alumni by utilizing the strengths our alumni. With a roll number approaching 900 there are too many alumni for one person to be solely responsible for keeping track of all of them.

Ideally we would have two ambassadors per era or decade. The ambassadors will be responsible for building a comprehensive list of alumni from their generation. The Keeper of the roll will generate these lists from the Alumni Database. These ambassadors will then be responsible for the “Lost Alumni” from their generation.

These ambassadors will participate in developing communications targeted to their generational brothers and to acting as go to people for enlisting help or organizing resources for alumni from their era. Consequently communications could potentially be a little different in tone or in delivery, but all would share the same message. These ambassadors would also potentially provide support for the fundraising efforts for the reorganization of the University of Iowa undergraduate chapter and future expansion projects undertaken by the EIAAA.

## Fundraising

The ultimate goal of the plan is to bring our Acacia Fraternity back to the University of Iowa. This will require planning, time, and of course money. The ideal timeline allows for us to have enough Acacia members on campus to move in when the current lease ends in 2009. This means we could start recruiting as early as the Fall of 2007. Fundraising should start immediately. Because recruitment will be ongoing, all of the money does not have to be raised up front, but can be raised as recruitment takes place. We must keep in mind that fund raising will need to take place continuously during recruitment as the new members we do get will not be able to fund all chapter functions on their own.

Through the discussions at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting there were several viable options. The options ranged from several thousand to roughly \$40,000. The \$40,000 would allow us to hire a graduate student or pay for a Leadership Consultant from headquarters to oversee the recruitment effort and the initial years of the chapter. These options cover only the recruitment effort; they do not cover any improvements, maintenance, or changes to the physical structure and property. The option we will select will largely depend up on how much money we are able to raise.

The success of our fundraising campaign will depend largely on how organized we can get and how involved we as alumni get. To successfully raise funds alumni will have to buy into our plan. To do this all of the following come into play: communications, Decade Alumni Ambassadors (DAAs), locating lost alumni, etc. Alumni need to know what is going on.

The fundraising effort will be spearheaded by the DAAs. DAAs will help create a plan to achieve fundraising goals needed to successfully re-establish a functional chapter on the University of Iowa campus. Ideally we will have identified at least one DAA per decade or era by July 2006. An initial meeting of all DAAs could then be organized for early fall 2006 during which fund

raising goals are established and a more specific fund raising plan of attack is organized. By Homecoming of 2006 aggressive fundraising should begin. They should be able to communicate with other DAAs and National HQ to pool all lists and resources. Other areas the DAAs could be involved in include: working with the Corporation Board to restore the chapter house to a functional structure supportive of a fraternal organization in today's market and creating a plan to develop the cash flow necessary to attract a graduate student(s) (with ties to Acacia) to oversee/assist with colonization for a period of 1-2 years or longer if needed.

- Use DAA to start the donation process get alumni groups excited
- Give something for a donation (a dedicated brick on new front sidewalk?)
- Set "levels" of giving to encourage larger donations
- Send thank you's to EVERYONE who donates
- Announce donations on the website
- Announce donations in the newsletter
- Locate alumni in close proximity (Des Moines, Chicago, etc.) and organize local alumni fundraising events (golf outings, dinners, etc.) to aid in fund raising
- Develop some kind of a raffle with alumni support to collect funds from the wider community
- Ask for Annual Contributions, not a one time gift, an annual contribution of 200 over 3 years is better than a 500 dollar gift now.
- Need online donation made available through our website and nationals
- Make it clear that this is the time, there isn't a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance

## **Physical Structure**

The physical structure will be placed in the care of the Iowa Acacians Corporation Board. This group will oversee the property management, any physical repairs or improvements needed to the physical structure. The EIAAA will fully support the Corporation board in any efforts.

The House is the most important physical asset we own. The location is good, the land is valuable, and the building contains decades of Acacia Fraternity history and memories. The EIAAA and Corporation Board realizes that the needs and desires of college students in terms of housing is constantly changing and will consider these things.