

**Lion Trophy Application - 2012**

**Sigma Alpha Chapter**

**Virginia Tech**



**Report prepared by Jeff Rose, Brother Beta**

## **Introduction**

We believe this is first submission ever, in our 40 year existence as a DKE chapter, of a Lion Trophy application by the Sigma Alpha chapter. We do not have any records of previous submissions and several of our alumni were questioned as to any previous submissions. Despite our non-participatory status in years past, we look forward to making regular submissions in years to come, hopefully in defense of the award! The Sigma Alpha Chapter roots date back to 1941, when the Delta Kappa Sigma fraternity was founded at Virginia Tech by 4 students. This makes the DKS-DKE fraternity, the oldest fraternity at Virginia Tech with a rich and proud history. Delta Kappa Sigma (known as "DEEKS") petitioned and became a DKE chapter on April 22, 1971. The fraternity was also the first fraternity at Virginia Tech to purchase a house. In 1967 the DKS members acquired the property at 302 East Roanoke Street which remains the DKE House to this day. This house is located in the historic district of Blacksburg. The house is 100 years old and also represents the longest continuously used fraternity property in the Virginia Tech area. DKS/DKE was a founding member of the IFC at Virginia Tech.

The Sigma Alpha Chapter today finds itself a strong and vibrant chapter worthy of the Lion Trophy. Our chapter is will have over 40 members to start the 2012-2013 academic year in the fall, the largest group in over two decades and a size that creates financial stability for the chapter. Likewise, we have an alumni group with over 700 living alumni, and our alumni organization is actively involved with the chapter. Our best days are still ahead of us.

The start of the 2011-12 academic year was ominous for the Sigma Alpha chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon. In the Spring of 2011, we lost recognition from Virginia Tech for a five-year period. This followed on the heels of a similar loss of recognition (suspension) in November 2009, which stymied our recruiting and left the chapter with low membership levels. Against such odds and with a chip on our shoulder, we set out to improve Sigma Alpha in every possible way. We saw our chapter as a tight-knit brotherhood with an unlimited amount of potential.

The effort and results put forth this past year makes Sigma Alpha a strong candidate for the 2012 Lion Trophy. A six-fold increase in annual recruiting numbers compared to the previous year, coupled with seismic changes in chapter operations solidified DKE as a strong fraternity at Virginia Tech. The alumni association contributed more to the chapter than ever before through reunions, newsletters, and house management/maintenance. Sigma Alpha's scholarship numbers beat the average Virginia Tech fraternity, and our brothers are inspired to use their education to make an impact on the world. Finally, our community service and philanthropic efforts improved our reputation with the school and the community dramatically.

## **Chapter Improvement**

### *Recruitment*

The success of the Sigma Alpha chapter depends on recruitment. The brotherhood began the 2011-12 academic year with 23 brothers, and dues were barely enough to keep the house and the

fraternity afloat. Furthermore, 6 brothers (25%) were graduating at years end. Coming off a tough recruitment year the previous where we only brought in 4 new brothers, we knew that our methodologies had to change to insure that we reached our goals.

Over the summer, Brother Florian Mayer and his rush committee devised a recruitment plan for the upcoming semester. Beyond the standard schedule of events during the two-week rush period, Mayer stressed the mentality the brotherhood should have during rush. In our first meeting he stated, "Nobody will join this place until they have met, and like, at least half of the brotherhood."

Once the school year started, the Sigma Alpha Dekes greeted the students of Virginia Tech with open arms. As rush continued, the brotherhood met new perspective members and build stronger relationships with old ones. At the end of our fall rush, we handed out 18 bids, of which 11 were accepted. With newfound success in pledge retention, at the beginning of the next semester the Sigma Alpha Dekes were eleven brothers richer. Compared to the previous fall semester, we had a +11 increase in recruitment success.

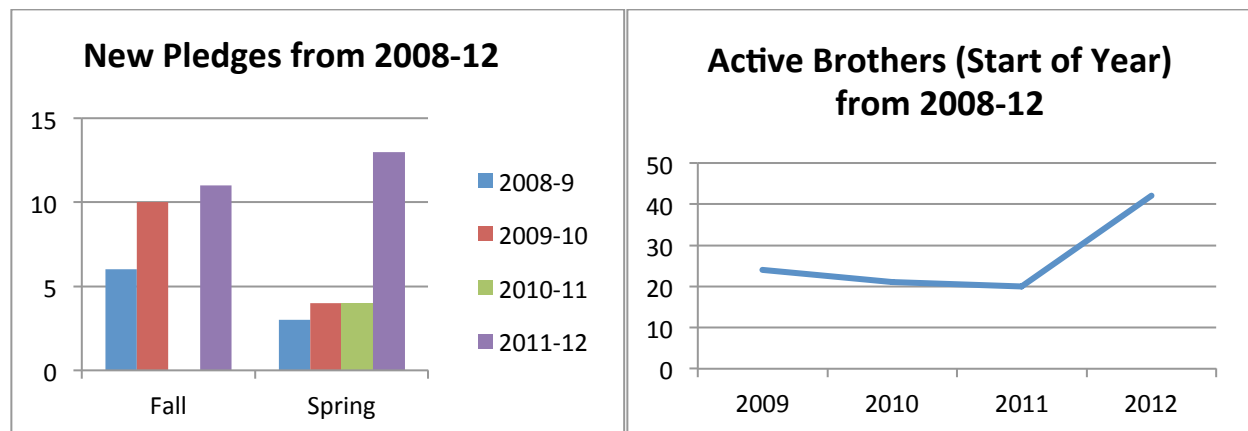
We started the planning of our spring rush in the winter before the spring semester in conference calls with the rush committee and DKE international representative Tom Hudson. In these calls, we discussed recruitment strategies like dynamic recruitment. Instead of having a static schedule of events during the 10-day fraternity rush window, dynamic recruitment aims towards building friendships with the prospective members through free-forming events like lunches, dinners, and late-night video gaming. Also as an unrecognized fraternity, we were free to adjust our recruitment timing and strategies separately from the IFC which tended to favor the very large and on-campus fraternities. Also, we discussed the shortcomings of our rush programs in the past. We simply relied too much on "having a good time" to impress and attract new recruits, and we failed to build friendships with students that were interested in joining.

Traditionally at Virginia Tech, spring recruitment is smaller than the fall. The Sigma Alpha chapter would typically average just half the amount of Fall recruits in the Spring. Needless to say, we saw a large untapped market and looked to capitalize on the spring's potential. Using our dynamic recruitment strategies, our entire brotherhood was meeting perspective members and introducing them to the brotherhood. At the end of our rush period we handed out 14 bids, of which 14 were accepted. At the end of the pledge period at the beginning of the Fall, the Sigma Alpha brotherhood will have gained another 13 new brothers.

New recruitment strategies and brotherhood initiative created a 100% increase in chapter membership on a year on year basis. With 23 new brothers, this was also the most successful recruitment year that the Sigma Alpha chapter has ever had. Our recruitment numbers were, in fact, far greater than most VT and IFC recognized fraternities. This feat has even reignited the passion of some alumnus that have previously been absent from our events.

Most importantly, we now have techniques that will help ensure recruitment success for years to come. Brother Matt Wilson, the incumbent Rush Chairman, was closely involved with the planning and execution of the 2011-12 recruitment, and looks to continue and improve the success that we had

for the next school year. We are confident that we have turned the corner on recruiting and can even use our unrecognized status as a benefit and not a detriment to recruiting.



Year-On-Year Recruitment: 4 to 24 -> 500% increase

### *Campus Presence*

For Sigma Alpha, campus presence is more difficult than most other chapters. Due to our lack of recognition by Virginia Tech and the IFC, our organization cannot freely participate in Greek Life events. Moreover, given our small size, off-campus location, and lack of University recognition our ability to participate on campus was severely restricted because of the sanctions imposed against us. The Sigma Alpha chapter leadership through our Executive Council realized that it would take creativity, and indirect approaches, to get and keep Dekes involved in the community and University.

Our first opportunity came when we caught word that a new student organization was attempting to bring two well-known rappers to Virginia Tech. Through the connections several Sigma Alpha members, we organized a meeting between the leadership of the Student Hip Hop Organization (SHHO) and our Brothers Tim Sweet, Matt Wilson, and Jeff Rose. During this meeting, we committed to our entire brotherhood to promoting the on campus concert in return for a promotion of our major philanthropy activity for the year, The Run for Ryan, during the concert. Also, we agreed to host the After-Party for the concert at the DKE house to further boost the DKE name with other organizations on campus.

Curren\$y and Pac-Div came to Virginia Tech in early February and put on a great show. SHHO made a profit on the concert and The Run for Ryan was successfully promoted during the concert along with an unplanned but direct reference to DKE and the planned after-party. With the unplanned onstage plug for DKE, the after party turned out to be triple the size planned as simply was a legendary event. The VP of Risk Management, Brother Steve Mattoon, knew that our risk management procedures had to be even stronger than normal and bullet-proof due to the large scale of the party. Beforehand, we notified the local law enforcement of the event in case of a mishap. Furthermore, a

restricted list of invitees to the event to ensure that only people affiliated with the concert attended the party. Finally, Brother Mattoon designated brothers to run shifts at key areas in the house to keep everything under control. With our risk management procedures in place, we successfully hosted a great party and fostered relationships with over 12 different student organizations providing access to the Sigma Alpha Dekes to participate indirectly with a variety of student organizations. We all got a chance to meet the rappers and celebrate a great concert and after party with them.

Another way to improve our reputation was through continued community service and philanthropy even outside VT sponsored. Our entire brotherhood participated in the Big Event, where VT students and student organizations help local, underprivileged families with manual labor. Sigma Alpha chapter also raised money for the Relay for Life, a campus-wide cancer research fundraiser. In both of these cases the entire brotherhood participated as collective individuals and as an off-campus sponsor. Finally, to honor a close friend of Brother Jeff Rose who passed away in the spring of 2009, we teamed up with the Delta Gamma sorority to host the “Run for Ryan”, during the VT Ut Prosim (“That I May Serve”) weekend, where Dekes raised money for the Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS) Foundation. All of our philanthropic efforts will be described in more detail in the community service section.

Despite our status with the university, we still managed to have more socials and mixers than the past several years combined. With the efforts of Brother John Surotchak, Social Chairman, we communicated with sororities and organizations that were more understanding with our situation and de-linked from the IFC. As a result, we built strong relationships with two new and emerging Gamma Delta Sigma and Sigma Alpha sororities.

### *Chapter Management*

One of the goals of Brother Beta, Jeff Rose was to rethink every aspect of our fraternity. In search for areas for improvement, the more he looked the more he found. The way we ran executive and general meetings were inefficient and lacked direction. Our election process held at the end of the Spring semester left the incoming incumbent leadership group with a blank slate and no guidance. Also there was also no formal system in place to reward brothers who contributed to the fraternity and encourage those who didn’t to participate. Throughout the past year, we implemented several new ways to combat these issues with revised chapter management practices.

Every Sunday, our executive council meets at 7:00 pm followed by the general brotherhood meeting at 8:00 pm. In the past, meetings were unstructured and disorganized. Often brothers spent more time discussing what music to play at that weekend’s party than more pressing matters. Since Jeff Rose was responsible for directing both meetings, he decided to revamp the proceedings to adhere closer to the way the chapter By-Laws required. This involved officers producing reports every Sunday about the status of their committees and informative treasury and executive council reports. This has completely improved meeting efficiency while also keeping the entire brotherhood up to date on the issues and everyone on the same page.

Meeting Agenda for 2/20/12

- a. Call to order
  - b. Executive Council report
    - ~~Current~~ Sy Concert, Pluses minuses
    - GDS Social
    - Farmhouse dude
    - Pledge Party
  - c. Treasurer's report
    - Current balance
    - Collect Dues
    - International dues, dues in general
    - Rookie Expense Report
  - d. Committee reports
    - Pledge
      - Scavenger Hunt Next week
      - Pledge Books
    - House
      - Keep clean
      - House Projects
      - New holes in walls
    - Social
      - Pledge Party
    - Fundraising/Philanthropy
      - Run for Ryan Club
      - Find out what other organizations are doing for philanthropies so that we can participate
  - e. Unfinished Business
    - Recruit, recruit, and recruit
    - House work, cleaning
    - Nominations cont'd
    - Mention responsibilities
  - f. New Business
    - 1. Executive Council Agenda
      - RUSH, RUSH, RUSH
      - Keep house clean
      - Respect
      - No Complacency
    - 2. Any other issues
      - Respect the house and other brothers
      - When you do something stupid, it reflects on us as a whole.
      - Point deductions
  - g. Motion to adjourn
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**Figure 1: Example meeting agenda**

In an effort to give newly elected incumbent officers experience before they enter office, Sigma Alpha moved the election date to the beginning of the spring semester, as opposed to the end. Now, the elected officers have a chance to observe and shadow the current officers to see how they manage their responsibilities. Only time will tell how effective these measures are, but we have already seen initiative from the new officers to improve their positions. For example, 2012-2013 Treasurer, Brother Joey Loss has already proposed a brand-new dues payment plan that will help ensure chapter financial stability.

The Sigma Alpha chapter's biggest problem over the past several years has been attendance/participation. Whether it was for meetings, rituals, community service, or even composite photos, brothers continued to show up late or even not at all. Since there was no punishment, or reward, for showing up to these events and contributing to the fraternity, the brothers who were common offenders had no incentive to change their ways. The fraternity was in need of a system to keep track of who was attending the events and who was not.

Spearheaded by current secretary and 2012-2013 President, Brother Kevin Buchanan, we implemented an attendance-based point system to combat our attendance problem. First, we assigned a point value to every type of event where attendance was required. For example, cleanups and meetings were 2 points, philanthropy events were 4 points, and rituals were +/- 5 points. A brother would earn the allotted amount of points if he attended the given event, otherwise he would not receive any points, or in the case of rituals he would lose points. Finally, if the brother did not have

over 80% of the total possible points, then he was prevented from attending parties, social events, or tailgates until he was in good standing with the fraternity.

The attendance point system proved to be quite valuable as the year went on. We saw a sharp attendance increase for all events. Moreover, when brothers attended events they were more active and involved. Now, Sigma Alpha has a way to generate metrics to evaluate the current brotherhood and seek out future areas of improvement. This system has unlimited possibilities for improving Sigma Alpha's management.

Condition Met?		%	Brother	Brother Total	Out of	Punish	Xtra	Mtg 1/22	C-U 1/28	Mtg 1/29	PS 1/28	Poker 2/1	BPT 2/2	Sup. Bowl	So. X 2/9	PS 2/10	Closed Rush	Mtg 2/6	C-U 2/11	Bid Acc
			Max Points >>>			0	0	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	97%	Jon Doe	65	67			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	93%	Jon Doe	62	67			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	1	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	97%	Jon Doe	57	59			2	2	2		2	2	2	2		5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	94%	Jon Doe	61	65			2		2	4	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	97%	Jon Doe	61	63			2	2	2		2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
0		56%	Jon Doe	24	43			2			4	2	2	2						5
1	Over 80%	102%	Jon Doe	62	61		6		2	2		2		2	1	4	5	2	2	5
0	Almost Satisfied	73%	Jon Doe	43	59			2		2		2	2	2	2		5			5
0	Not Satisfied	70%	Jon Doe	39	56			2		2	4		2		2		5	2		5
0	Not Satisfied	61%	Jon Doe	41	67			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2		5
1	Over 80%	92%	Jon Doe	56	61			2		2		2	2	2		4	5	2	2	5
0			Jon Doe																	
1	Over 80%	98%	Jon Doe	62	63		4	2	2	2		2	2	2	1	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	94%	Jon Doe	59	63			2	2	2		2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	89%	Jon Doe	47	53			2		2		2	2				5	2	2	5
0			Jon Doe																	
1	Over 80%	97%	Jon Doe	65	67			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	107%	Jon Doe	61	57		20	2	2	2		2		2			5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	84%	Jon Doe	53	63			2	2	2	4	2	2	2			5	2	2	5
0	Not Satisfied	15%	Jon Doe	8	53			2			4									
1	Over 80%	90%	Jon Doe	55	61			2	2	2		2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
0		33%	Jon Doe	20	60															
1	Over 80%	97%	Jon Doe	61	63			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2		5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	91%	Jon Doe	59	65			2	2	2	4	2	2			4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	84%	Jon Doe	51	61			2	2	2		2	2	2	2		5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	83%	Jon Doe	48	58		8	2		2	4	2	2	2			5		2	5
0	Not Satisfied	63%	Jon Doe	32	51			2	2		4									5
1	Over 80%	89%	Jon Doe	58	65		-2	2	2	1	4	2	2	2		4	5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	94%	Jon Doe	59	63			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2		5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	91%	Jon Doe	59	65			2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2		5
1	Over 80%	89%	Jon Doe	50	56			2		2	4	2	2	2	2		5	2	2	5
1	Over 80%	88%	Jon Doe	59	67		-2	2		2	4	2	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
Total in Att (Ctrl) ↓								28	20	26		27	26	24	18		26	24	22	30
Event Attendance Percentage								93.3%	66.7%	86.7%		90.0%	86.7%	80.0%	60.0%		86.7%	80.0%	73.3%	100.0%
Total Eligible Brothers:								23	76.7%											

Figure 2: Attendance points spreadsheet

## Inter-Chapter Relations

One of the true values of being a Deke is the vast network of chapters that are all part of the same brotherhood. A goal of ours this year was to reach out and connect with nearby chapters to form new relationships with fellow Dekes. We pursued this goal by visiting one chapter, and having three chapters come down to Blacksburg to visit us.

Every semester we attempt to take our pledges on a trip to visit another chapter to show them the vastness and variety of other Delta Kappa Epsilon chapters. In the fall of 2011, we drove down to Maryville, TN to visit the Mu Chi chapter of DKE. Serendipitously, they were planning on renting a cabin for the weekend to host a party for their school. This made for an amazing night where we sang songs and shared stories about our respective chapters. Mu Chi could not have been a better host for us, and we would love to return the favor in years to come.



We couldn't find such a host in the spring semester, but we were fortunate enough to have three chapters come visit 302 East Roanoke Street. The Phi Gamma Dekes from Syracuse stopped by on their trip to Wake Forest to see our house and meet some of our brothers. On their way down to Florida for spring break, a group of Delta Chi brothers from Cornell spent the night at our house. Finally, towards the end of the year, the Richmond Dekes of Rho Beta came down to pay us a visit. The chapter visits showed us the pervasiveness of DKE culture.

### *House Improvement*



### **Sigma Alpha Chapter House**

The DKE house on Roanoke Street continues to be one of the finest pieces of real estate in Blacksburg. In fact, this historic building just turned 100 years old this past year. Because our house is so old, it is in constant need of upkeep and maintenance. The common goal of the Sigma Alpha chapter is to simply keep the house standing.

This year was no exception, and we not only maintained the house, but improved it. In conjunction with our alumni we started an annual Habitat for Inhumanity weekend to tackle major house improvements. In July of 2011 during our first Habitat for Inhumanity weekend, a group of alumni and active members tackled several jobs including the replacement of the yard fencing. To encourage greater participation we moved the second Habitat for Inhumanity weekend to coincide with VT football Spring Game taking on several additional tasks. A torrential downpour limited the planned activities for this year. During Spring Cleanup, a service ran by the town of Blacksburg, we took advantage and got rid of enough junk collected over the years to fill dump truck.



The only way to keep the aging house in great shape is to regularly maintain it. Therefore, our House Chairman Brother David Marshall would organize house appreciation days once/twice a semester. For house appreciation, the entire brotherhood would show up at the house on a weekend and individually sign up for a project described by Brother Marshall. This activity was coordinated with our alumni, to coincide with our “Habitat for Inhumanity”, where we would tackle more skilled labor projects. 302 East Roanoke Street is still looking good (at least for a 100 year old house serving as a fraternity house for 45 years), and we have created measures to ensure that its quality improves in the future.

## **Alumni Relations**

The VT-DKE Alumni Association consists of over 700 living Delta Kappa Sigma and Delta Kappa Epsilon brothers. Our active chapter is closely linked to our Alumni Association in numerous ways. First and foremost is that every brother will become a member of the group upon leaving Virginia Tech.

The chapter works hand in hand with the alumni organization. The chapter president is given a board of director seat on the alumni board and regularly attends the teleconference Board meetings. The alumni association is also the owner of the DKE House and acts as the landlord for the brothers residing in the house. The house is always open to any alumni visiting the area.

## *Alumni Communications*

Newsletters are sent out to alumni on a regular basis, generally three or four times per year. Each newsletter includes an active chapter update section. We also send the newsletter to parents of current students. In 2011, the Alumni Association obtained a non-profit mailing status from the USPS reducing the cost of our communication program. We also jointly share a website ([www.vtdke.com](http://www.vtdke.com)) where both the active chapter and alumni post news. This also serves as an archive for the alumni group. In additions to the website, we have established an alumni Facebook page which is also open to active members. Over the past year four written newsletters and several additional email news-blasts were sent out.

This is on top of the regular communications with our alumni associated with the DKE Tailgate Club at VT football games, Alumni Reunions, and of course the regular and steady stream of alumni visiting the house when they are in town. The chapter has a tradition whereby a paddle from each pledge class adorns the wall of the DKE house.

## *Financial*

The VT-DKE Alumni Association has an Annual DKE Giving campaign as an avenue to provide financial support to the fraternity. In 2011 our alumni contributed \$28,400 to the fraternity in the donations and in-kind support. Alumni donations over the past 10+ years have been the lifeline for the major renovation and repair work associated with a 100-year old property. Over \$350,000 of capital improvements have been made to the property since 2006. As part of a new initiative started this year,

all of the graduating brothers pledged their first alumni contribution as parting gifts. Alumni gifts also support the DKE Tailgate Club and Reunion activities.

The VT-DKE Alumni Association has set up two scholarship awards for 2012. Brother Kevin Buchanan has been awarded the *Dan Johnson Leadership Scholarship*, awarded to a DKE leader on a bi-annual basis. Secondly the *Dave Calhoun Scholarship* will be awarded each year to the DKE House resident with the highest Fall semester GPA to promote academic learning in a fraternity house setting. Both scholarships are in recognition of the cumulative financial support provided by Brothers Calhoun and Johnson to the VT-DKE Alumni Association. Dan Johnson '77 serves as the President of the VT-DKE Alumni Association as well as the sister Sigma Alpha Properties LLC which is the fraternity's housing corporation. Dave Calhoun '79, the CEO of AC Nielsen, also served at the Co-Chairman for the Virginia Tech "Campaign for Excellence" which successfully raised over one billion dollars for the University.

### *Social*



**Little sisters and alumni at the tailgate club**

*DKE Tailgate Club* – For the past four years we have a designated DKE Tailgate Club location directly adjacent to Lane Stadium for all VT football home games. The Lot 4 location is donated to the fraternity by Brother Mickey Hayes '64. From humble beginnings just four years ago, DKE Tailgates have

grown to where attendance can easily exceed 250. Given the immediate proximity to Lane Stadium it has become a major asset for the chapter and regular way for actives to meet the alumni. The DKE Tailgate Club was formed to organize the tailgate activities. Alumni brothers Charlie Webb '86 and Phil "Theta" Bowden '73 (yes in true DKE fashion he was re-named after the DKE Theta chapter at Bowdoin College, and due to his dedicated service over many years the chapter room at the DKE house is named after him) manage the DKE Tailgate Club. The entire chapter along with family and friends attends the DKE tailgates and we regularly assist in set up, storage and providing tailgate supplies. Each year the chapter fully "sponsors" a tailgate by making a donation to the DKE tailgate club to cover the catering costs for a tailgate. To our knowledge we are the only fraternity at VT to have such an event organized adjacent to Lane Stadium.



**Active chapter speech at the Sigma Alpha reunion**

*70 Years of Dekes Reunion-* In October 2011, we held the 70<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the founding of Dekes at Virginia Tech which also coincided with the 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Sigma Alpha Chapter of DKE when the original Delta Kappa Sigma fraternity was admitted into Delta Kappa Epsilon. The alumni organized event included a banquet at the historic Hotel Roanoke, in nearby Roanoke, Virginia on Friday night. This was followed by an open house catered brunch at the DKE House and later on in the afternoon with an expanded tailgate near Lane Stadium followed by the VT-Clemson football game. The actives charter a bus to and from the Hotel Roanoke and during the evening's festivities awarded plaque

of appreciation to four alumni for their service to the fraternity. Brother Doug Lanpher, Gamma '77, Executive Director of DKE International attended the festivities on Friday night. Hotel Roanoke also serves as the pre-game hotel for the Hokies football team. A brief interruption to the reunion ceremonies allowed for the attendees to greet the team upon their arrival. Theta Bowden served as the emcee for the evening and guest speakers from each decade of Dekes made presentations. The active chapter was also provided an opportunity to address the alumni. On Saturday even more alumni attended the events and the large party tent arranged for the tailgate proved to be a godsend as the weather turned cool and wet and the tent accommodated the 200+ attendees. Other than the shellacking handed down by Clemson, the event was a smashing success.

## Scholarship

Scholarship is of paramount importance at the Sigma Alpha chapter. We preach to our pledges from the beginning, "Your academic performance should be your priority. What good are you to DKE if you are not in school?" Moreover, throughout our pledge period, we mandate study sessions twice a week. Many members of our brotherhood also attend the pledges study hall to show that our academics are important beyond the pledge process. As one of our prerequisites, scholarship is one of the most important qualities to instill in our new members.

It is difficult for Sigma Alpha to get accurate statistics on our scholarship because the university refuses to disclose such information to an unrecognized organization. We estimate that the average GPA of the brotherhood was 3.1 and the average of the pledges was 3.0. This is in line with Virginia Tech, where the average fraternity GPA is 2.97 and the average men's GPA is 3.0.

At Sigma Alpha, we believe scholarship to be more than just a GPA number. Brother Alpin Kahveci sets our bar for academic excellence by excelling as a triple major honors student, who takes upwards of 25 credits a semester. Finally, we have representatives from each of the six colleges at Virginia Tech in our chapter.

The reason that we choose to go to college is to eventually join the workforce. Additionally, we are inspired by all of the prominent Dekes who made their impact on the world through entrepreneurship. Therefore, a subset of brothers met for roundtable discussions about new ideas, technologies, and business strategies. One of our current members, Alex Maier, has created [CampusMarket.co](http://CampusMarket.co), a college classifieds website that has been recently experiencing a rapid growth in traffic. We believe the fraternity is a perfect canvas to experiment with management techniques and business practices.

The alumni have also contributed to our academic welfare. Two of our most prominent contributors have created scholarships for DKE brothers in their names. The *Dan Johnson Leadership Scholarship* will go to a distinguished brother who has shown leadership through example during his career as a Deke. Additionally, the *Dave Calhoun Scholarship* awards the Sigma Alpha house brother



who earns the highest GPA in the previous academic year. Both scholarships aim to encourage scholarly excellence from the Sigma Alpha chapter.

### **Community Service**

The Sigma Alpha chapter consistently contributes to the town of Blacksburg. We participate in the annual Roanoke Street Cleanup, where in the fraternities located on and near Roanoke Street provide assistance to help our neighbors. We also hold an open house to show nearby residents the DKE House. We have expanded our philanthropy work in the past two years. In addition to the annual cleanup, in 2010-2011 the Sigma Alpha chapter worked with three on-campus philanthropies and fostered a strong relationship with the Blacksburg Methodist Church nearby. Brother Peter Corrales, the Philanthropy Chair, continued the progress that we made in giving back to the community.

#### *Helping the Church*

Blacksburg United Methodist Church has been a long time neighbor of the Dekes. After all of the help they have given us in the past years, we wanted to give back to them and build a strong relationship. Every year we participate in Roanoke Street Cleanup, where the entire brotherhood starts early one Sunday morning and cleans up the local five block radius around our house for 5 hours. Despite the cleanup being the church's initiative, the entire cleanup process is done by local fraternities.

Furthermore, we helped in other projects where they needed manual labor. For example, upon completion of a new playground at the church, they asked Sigma Alpha to mulch the lot. The brotherhood assembled and the brotherhood contributed over 60 hours of work to landscape and mulch the new Church and daycare playground. Finally, we continue to assist the church with set-up and tear-down for various events that they host many times organizing a group of brothers on short notice.

#### *Big Event*

The Big Event is a campus-wide community service event that gives help to the underprivileged in the Blacksburg community. All participants meet on campus in the morning to receive their assignments and tools, and then arrive at the locations at noon. The service involves helping families with yard work, house cleaning, or even trash removal. The Big Event is one of the best ways a Hokie can give back to his local community.

This year the Sigma Alpha Dekes came in full force. With over 40 men, the brothers and the pledges took on three separate projects. Each man put in around 4 hours of manual labor to help out the community. DKE was one of the largest groups at this year's Event, and we look to continue that reputation in the future.

### *Relay For Life*

Virginia Tech hosts the largest collegiate Relay for Life American Cancer Association fundraiser in the world. With over 5,343 participants and 472 teams, the Hokies raised over \$435,000 this year for cancer research. Relay epitomizes our university motto 'Ut Prosim' or 'That I May Serve.'

This year the Dekes participated in full force. Brother Corrales handled all of the administrative work opening up the brotherhood to participating in all the great events during Relay. We sold pies baked by Brianna Nielsen, a little sister, and collectively raised over \$500 to contribute to the efforts. This is an overnight event and we plan to participate for a great cause next year.

### *Run For Ryan*



**Figure 3: The Lopynski friends and family with Jeff Rose (far right)**

For our most committed philanthropic effort, we collaborated with the Delta Gamma sorority for the second annual Run for Ryan. The event was a 5k run in honor of Brother Jeff Rose's dear friend Ryan Lopynski, a fellow Hokie who passed away at the end of his freshman year, in 2009. His condition, known as Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome or SADS, causes sudden, nearly undetectable heart attacks in young adults. The goal for the run was to raise money for the SADS Foundation, which contributes to SADS research and aids families who are affected by the disease.

The first avenue for raising money was through corporate sponsorship. We offered local companies advertising space on the back of the official t-shirts for a minimum \$50 donation. If a company wanted to donate more, then their logo would be proportionally larger. Erin Lopynski, Ryan's



sister and a Delta Gamma, and Jeff Rose went out on the town to attract as many local businesses as possible. We raised over \$1000 in corporate sponsorship.

The run was a fantastic event. We attracted over 250 people from universities and towns all along the east coast. The 5k went quite smoothly, despite the fact that no Dekes were on the leaderboard. After the run, we held a raffle to give away corporate and homemade prizes. At the end of the day, the Run for Ryan raised over \$8000 for the SADS Foundation, eclipsing last year's mark of \$6000.

For the year the average Brother's Service Hours -> 18 hours

Philanthropic money raised -> ~\$4500

## **Conclusion**

As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Considering what Sigma Alpha started with at the beginning of the school year, what we accomplished as a chapter was remarkable. The strong leaders on the executive council inspired the brotherhood to accomplish feats that have never been seen before at our chapter. Moreover, with the help of the international representatives and our alumni, the Sigma Alpha chapter has transformed into one of the best DKE chapters in the country. We would be proud to be the keeper of the Lion Trophy for this year.

After hearing that our chapter was applying for the Lion Trophy, Brother Colin Reef wrote a passionate letter about the merits of our chapter. To end our application, we will leave you with an excerpt from his writing,

*"Only a week ago I moved out of the Deke house—the place I have lived for three years. I hate to leave but am proud of our accomplishments and what we made happen there in our time. I urge you to strongly consider Sigma Alpha for the Lion Trophy this year. It would be ultimate honor to us hardworking Dekes who pulled our chapter up from the depths and made it what it is today—the greatest chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon in year 2012."*

In the bonds,

The Sigma Alpha chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Rose', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jeff Rose

Brother Beta, Sigma Alpha Chapter

(703)489-3922

[jffrose@gmail.com](mailto:jffrose@gmail.com)

I attest to the truthfulness of this application.