

Red Door House Corporation Addresses Colorado Gamma Chapter's Closure

In January, you should have received an email from Red Door House Corporation (RDHC) President, **Bryan Harmsen '01**, regarding the Colorado Gamma Chapter's closure. Many of you read the subsequent news articles in both the *Coloradoan* and *Collegian*. The RDHC would like to provide additional information to further address the situation and provide our plan for the future.

Over the past 10 years, the Colorado Gamma Chapter has been very successful. It won numerous awards from both the national fraternity and Colorado State University. Recruitment, academics and campus leadership have all been strengths. Another key strength has been the support provided by the RDHC and the Alumni & Volunteer Corporation (AVC). The RDHC primarily deals with house ownership details and is the governing body of the Colorado Gamma alumni. The AVC deals with the undergraduate chapter on a monthly basis and reports to the RDHC.

Ten years ago, the RDHC set a positive direction for the chapter. The direction and policies were aggressively implemented by the RDHC, the AVC and the undergraduate chapter. There was a great relationship between all these groups and cooperation at all times with Sigma Phi Epsilon National Headquarters.

A series of alcohol-related incidents concerning individual members began two years ago and resulted in the chapter being put on social probation by CSU. University officials sat down with the undergraduate chapter leadership and reviewed campus policies. The AVC coached the chapter executive board and standards board to handle these situations proactively and worked with SigEp National on programming for alcohol and drug awareness and action plans. The major focus was changing the underlying culture of one focused on the social experience towards a more Balanced Man mentality, with sound mind and sound body.

Two additional alcohol-related incidents occurred in September 2013. One involved an allegation of sexual misconduct. Fort Collins Police investigated the incident and determined the allegation "was not substantiated and no charges were filed." Despite the outcome, the allegation drew negative attention to the chapter and was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

The university Student Affairs Office and top administration officials became involved. The alumni boards and the National Headquarters were made aware of the incident. A disciplinary hearing was convened by the CSU Office of Student Affairs.



After we learned of the incident, the local alumni boards and national fraternity worked together on a plan to sanction the chapter: including expulsion of unfit members, chapter accountability improvements, and developing a clear communication plan between the University and alumni leadership. However, Colorado State officials looked at the chapter's behavior over the last two years and saw a pattern of alcohol abuse and ultimately decided the chapter had repeatedly violated CSU risk management policies. They ruled that this conduct was detrimental to student life at Colorado State.

There was a disagreement between undergraduate groups near the end of the semester at the time of the leadership change from one undergraduate executive committee to the successor executive committee. The cause of this disagreement was based on the alcohol policy of Sigma Phi Epsilon and the university. There is zero tolerance for alcohol in the house. At this time the RDHC Board voted unanimously to close the chapter house.

The next day, a letter dated December 23, 2013 arrived from Colorado State University which withdrew recognition of Sigma Phi Epsilon on the campus. This letter stated that CSU would entertain an appeal to the decision if submitted by January 7, 2014.

The RDHC, AVC and national fraternity worked extremely hard over the Christmas holiday to lessen the long-term impact of the sanction and submitted a 181-page formal appeal on January 7, 2014. The submittal was a proposal for immediate corrective action, long-term improvement of chapter governance and accountability, and strengthened collaboration and communication between the university and fraternity. The appeal did not refute the findings related to CSU risk management violations. The appeal asked for a reduction in the length of the suspension and that the improvement plan would be immediately implemented. Our proposal was reviewed by the VP of student

affairs, the dean of students, and the president of the university and was ultimately rejected after lengthy deliberation.

This means Sigma Phi Epsilon is not a recognized student organization at CSU, and cannot participate in any campus activities, use university facilities, nor use the CSU name and brand in any way. As a result, the Sigma Phi Epsilon National Board of Directors suspended the Colorado Gamma charter by policy: non-operation chapter that is not recognized by our host universities.

In due time, we will have a plan to appeal our sanctions before 2018, and we are working diligently to make that happen. **Please know your support is vital.**

The alumni reaction over the past couple weeks has been overwhelmingly positive. Colorado Gamma alumni need to treat this as a unifying experience and not a divisive one. We need to collectively move forward toward a common vision of bringing back a Colorado Gamma Chapter that is stronger than ever. We need to communicate to CSU in positive ways that SigEp is important to us and we would like university support and engagement in re-establishing a healthy chapter. Despite the chapter's status, we will continue to host alumni events and will have a grand centennial celebration in the fall of 2015. While these events have always been important opportunities to reconnect with brothers and our SigEp heritage, they will be even more important in the next few years as we all work together to re-establish the chapter.

Rules and regulations have changed at Colorado State and we cannot judge the chapter's mistakes against university and community expectations of previous eras. Members of our undergraduate chapter knew the expectations of them. They violated those expectations and rules, made mistakes, and we cannot overlook that. Alcohol abuse in the Colorado Gamma Chapter should not and cannot be tolerated moving forward.

Status of the Red Door House Corporation and 121 East Lake Street Chapter House

The RDHC has been diligently protecting the chapter house since the members moved out on December 22, 2013. This includes, but is not limited to, having a security guard on site during move out, having regular security drive-by inspections indefinitely, and installation of a security system that includes numerous cameras and motion detectors.

We want to dispel any rumors that CSU is trying to take the property via eminent domain. This is simply untrue. Additionally, the RDHC will not sell the property to Colorado State or any other non-SigEp entity. Since the closing of the chapter, we have already received several requests to temporarily lease our facility next year. In the absolute worst case scenario, the facility would be transferred to SigEp National Housing, LLC, which owns and/or manages approximately 13 other SigEp properties around the country. Lastly, the RDHC has cash on hand (roughly \$300,000) and has no debt.

Over the past 10 years the RDHC has been developing a plan for the future of the chapter house. We are still moving forward with that plan and will be reaching out to alumni to discuss how you can be a part of our effort. If you don't want to wait for us to call you, call us! Now is the time to channel your energy toward a true new beginning.



The Spear

Colorado Gamma Chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon

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Fort Collins, CO 80522

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Planning for the Future of Colorado Gamma

As a board, we are not treating this like the end, but as a new beginning. The RDHC has a long term plan to improve the chapter house prior to re-colonizing the chapter. We will revisit the sanctions with university officials next year to determine if there is any opportunity to recolonize the chapter prior to 2018. That said, our plan highlighted below reflects Colorado Gamma's return to campus in 2018.

Recolonization involves a partnership between CSU, the national fraternity and local alumni. SigEp will send their expansion team to Colorado State regularly for a period of four months and will hand pick the best and brightest members on campus. We will rely on the national fraternity's experience from past recolonization efforts.

Typical refounding members include undergraduates involved in campus leadership, varsity athletics, and student government. Alumni referrals are also critically important. Refounding members are generally entrepreneurial in spirit and are well respected on campus. While there will be some fundamental changes in the recolonized chapter, members of the new chapter will be Colorado Gamma SigEps as much as any other era. Our chapter has evolved through the decades and the experience has changed from era to era, but we all share a kinship and common ties that bind from our SigEp experience. That will continue when the chapter is re-established.

RED DOOR HOUSE CORPORATION AND ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS

Chairman and President
Bryan A. Harmsen '01

Director and Secretary
Albert Hornung '61

Director and Alumni & Volunteer Committee Chairman
Tony Mauro '99

Director and Design/Construction Committee Chairman
Mitch Christ '79

Director Emeritus
Archie Lind '64

Alumni Volunteers
Don Hoch '50
Al Hornung '61
Don Rutledge '61
David Jenkins '64
Robert Frey '65
Jerre Dixon '67
Jim Benemann '78
Mitch Christ '79
Dan Reagan '82
Todd Donovan '86
Breck Vassios '87
TJ Gordon '87
Mike Jensen '96
Andy Odenbach '96
Trevor Armstrong '99
Tony Mauro '99
Bryan Harmsen '01
Josh Clark '02
Mike Flemming '03
Ross Hendrix '07
Ben Lucas '07

Rita Williams, Housemother

If you have any questions regarding this information, please feel free to contact any member of the board or alumni volunteers.

TIMELINE OF RECOLONIZATION EFFORTS

Fall 2014 Begin 121 E. Lake renovation	Fall 2015 Host CSU SigEp Centennial Celebration and 121 E. Lake St. ribbon cutting	November 2017 Submit application to CSU to for recognition of Sigma Phi Epsilon in 2018
Spring Semester 2015 Submit application and re-appeal to CSU for recognition of Sigma Phi Epsilon in 2015, publicize 121 Lake property for short-term rental (if re-appeal unsuccessful)	If 2015 Re-appeal Unsuccessful Fall Semester 2015 Open 121 E. Lake St. for non-SigEp student organization to move in	January-May 2018 Sigma Phi Epsilon expansion team on campus to recruit Colorado Gamma colony
Fall 2015 Complete 121 E. Lake renovation		August 2018 Open 121 E. Lake St. for Colorado Gamma chapter undergraduates

WE NEED ALUMNI SUPPORT

There are many ways for alumni to get involved with Colorado Gamma Chapter. Please let us know how you would like to be involved by contacting the brothers listed below.

Alumni Newsletter *The Spear* Development
Tony Mauro '99
(303) 859-9413 / anthonymauro@yahoo.com

Facility Planning
Al Hornung '61
(303) 880-7892 / achornung@hotmail.com

Recolonization of Colorado Gamma
Tony Mauro '99
(303) 859-9413 / anthonymauro@yahoo.com

Centennial Celebration
Bryan Harmsen '01
(646) 385-6843 / harmsen@w303.com

Please update your contact information at www.csusigep.org/update and please join the conversation in the private CSU SigEp LinkedIn group at <http://CSUSigEp.org/LinkedIn>