

186th Beta Theta Pi General Convention Minutes

Saturday, August 2, 2025, Morning Session

Call to Order

Roll Call

Comments by Chairman-Elect of Committee of the Whole Steve Gardner

Comments by General Secretary John Stebbins

Appointment of the General Convention Officers

- Slate of officers
 - Brother John Smid, *Toronto* '99, for convention president.
 - Brothers Douglas G. Houser, *Willamette* '57,
 - Lloyd L. Kirk, *Kansas* '55.
 - David R. Spence, *Missouri* '80,
 - Edward J. O'Malley, Jr., *Kansas State* '97,
 - Alfred J. Simmons, *Kansas* '82
 - John M. Hillhouse, *Missouri* '69, and
 - Paul B. Swartz, *Kansas State* '64, as convention vice presidents.
 - Brother Kevin Levy, *American* '16 for convention parliamentarian.
 - Brother Jason Steckel, *Case Western Reserve* '92 for convention secretary.
 - Brother Don Juszczuk, *Cincinnati* '91 for convention marshal.
 - Brother Steven Gardner, *Missouri* '79, as committee of the whole chairman.
 - Brothers Ethan Bell, *Wisconsin-Oshkosh* '16,
 - Grant Steffen, *Wisconsin-Oshkosh* '22,
 - Remy McClain, *Truman State* '19 and
 - Jacob Tidwell, *East Carolina* '04, as floor managers
- No objections; slate of Convention Officers passes with unanimous consent

Convention President **John Smid, *Toronto* '99** moves to allow non-members into the legislation hall for the duration of our convention at the discretion of the chair and the marshal.

- Second: **Martin Lewison, *Columbia* '88**
- Objection: **Jim Curtis, *Wisconsin* '86**
- Motion passes by voice vote

Introduction of Convention Officers

- General Fraternity President Jonathan Brant, *Miami* '75

- General Secretary John Stebbins, *Emory* '92
- General Treasurer Ken Bryan, *M.I.T.* '88
- Trustees:
 - Robert Beall, *Oklahoma* '80
 - Dr. William Fox, *St. Lawrence* '75
 - Scott Fussell, *Middle Tennessee State* '95
 - Bill Haywood, *Miami* '74
 - Aaron Kozuki, *Washington in St. Louis* '05
 - Willie Romero, *UNLV* '95
 - Robert Selsor, *Missouri* '82
 - Nick Sexton, *Eastern Kentucky* '11, and
 - Joel Stern, *U.C. Riverside* '94
- Chief Executive Officer Jeff Rundle, *Kansas State* '03
- Collegiate Commissioners
 - Christopher Cardenas, *Texas* '24
 - Tyler "T.J." Hockett, *Florida State* '25
 - Henry Jonas, *Appalachian State* '25
 - Joseph Kosak, *Furman* '26
 - Phillip Miavelstück, *George Mason* '25
 - Jake Polzin, *Minnesota* '25
- General Fraternity Officers
 - Archivist and Historian Zachary T. Haines, *Miami* '05
 - Assistant Historian Ryan Westberry, *Clemson* '98
 - Alumni Affairs Commissioner and Advisory Council
 - Commissioner Mike Okenquist, *Villanova* '94
 - Chorister Brock Johnson, *Oklahoma State* '09
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commissioner Ryan King, *Southern Illinois* '01
 - Insurance Commissioner David Schawe, *Louisville* '06
 - Scholarship Commissioner Mike Wortman, *Nebraska* '70
 - We're also joined today by officers of the General Fraternity House Corporation, Beta Theta Pi Foundation Board of Directors, members of the Advisory Council, and a host of regional and district chiefs.

Committee on Credentials and Registration Report

- **Jackson Hughes, *Westminster* '27**
 - 503 total people registered and 447 people present.
 - 162 total delegates.
 - 143 in attendance with voting privileges
 - 15 not in attendance with voting privileges
 - 25 in attendance without voting privileges
 - 7 not in attendance without voting privileges.
 - 65 general fraternity officers

- 36 alumni and guests
- **Jackson Hughes, *Westminster* '27** moves to approve the Minutes of the 185th General Convention
 - Second: **Jeff Malinowski, *Central Michigan* '16**
 - APPROVED by unanimous consent

Convention President **John Smid, *Toronto* '99** moves to ask unanimous consent that all speeches during debate be limited to not more than five minutes, that all speakers alternate between “in favor” and “in opposition,” and that no more speakers be permitted to speak when the other side had been exhausted.

- Second: **Tommy Raimondi, *Ohio* '16**
- APPROVED by unanimous consent

Committee on Chapters Panel Two Report

- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from Samford University are asked to exit the legislation hall.
- **Zach Posinski, *Depauw* '27** moves to grant the Alpha Mu Chapter at Samford their charter. The chapter demonstrates: excellent advisor relations; a commitment to the cultivation of their new members, as well as a commitment to the continued growth of their current members; strong leadership from the members, as well as strong leadership and support from advisors and other campus professionals; excellent risk management policies, including having no reported incidents since the colony was started.
- Debate:
 - **Chuck Graves, *Middle Tennessee State* '94** (Yes) stated he serves as the Regional Chief for this chapter. He said this is a tremendous group of guys, strongly dedicated to ritual and presenting it well. Another interesting fact is that by reinstating the Alpha Mu chapter, by extension, helps re-establish a portion of the Cumberland University chapter, our Mu chapter in Lebanon, Tennessee, that closed in the late 1800s. In the 1960s, Sanford University purchased the Cumberland School of Law, so the Cumberland School of Law and their alumni are part of Samford University, including Forrest Lurton, Cumberland '68, one of eight brothers who has served on the United States Supreme Court. The founder of the chapter, Alpha Mu I, went on to attend law school at the University of Virginia and affiliated the chapter there. Later, he moved to Atlanta and became the 13th mayor of Atlanta. So those 44 young men back in the 1800s who founded the chapter certainly left a great legacy. He encourages a yes vote.
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote
- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from the Samford University return to the legislation hall.
- Comments from General Secretary **John Stebbins, *Emory* '92**: Our Alpha Mu chapter at Stanford University stands as a testament to the enduring power of Beta's core values. Since recolonizing, the men of Alpha Mu have diligently lived out

the principles of mutual assistance, responsible conduct, trust, integrity, and the cultivation of the intellect, all while forming a tight-knit, forward-looking brotherhood. With a chapter GPA of 3.36, a peer-led tutoring system, and over 90% pledge retention, their commitment to academic and personal growth is undeniable. The brothers serve their local community through hands-on partnerships with organizations like Firehouse Ministries, and they've cultivated a culture of trust and belonging as reflected in their Beta Brotherhood Assessment. Risk management has been impeccable, with no violations since recolonization, and their finances remain sound thanks to transparent practices and flexible support for members in need. Leadership development is deeply woven into their work, and they've been doing so for a long time. And with multiple members attending Beta's national leadership programs and actively improving internal operations, including the recent passage of a new constitution and bylaws, with strong alumni guidance and a clear roadmap for growth, including goals to expand membership, increase visibility, and deepen campus engagement, the men of Alpha Mu are more than ready for this next chapter of their journey. It is with great pride that we welcome back our Alpha Mu chapter of Beta Theta Pi at Samford University.

- Comments from Chapter President **Ian Viner, Samford '26**: Brothers, myself and the rest of the Alpha Mu Chapter sincerely appreciate your approval of our charter. We are proud to continue the legacy of our chapter on Samford's campus. Alpha Mu was originally chartered in 1872 at Howard College, which is now Samford University, and in 1881 the Board of Trustees passed a resolution against secret societies, removing our chapter from campus. That means our chapter has a proud history spanning 153 years. Remarkably, the initiation of our new founding father class aligned with the 150th anniversary of the Alpha Mu Chapter. At this anniversary banquet, Sebastian Gamboa, a brother and founding father of the Kennesaw State Colony, came to speak with us. He emphasized the importance of our roles in our chapter's history and the deep commitment to the fraternity required of a founding father. He even mentioned that, as a founding father, it may be tempting to consider stepping away from the fraternity. I can personally attest to the challenges he described, and there were moments of stress along the way. Our chapter has experienced its fair share of growing pains, and I know there are still many ways we can improve. But seeing the tenacity and dedication of my brothers, I am confident that we will continue to thrive. I want to extend special thanks to our chapter counselor, John Gillespie—a 50-year member of Beta Theta Pi—who has been with us since our founding. To highlight John's dedication and support: he was named IFC Chapter Counselor of the Year for two back-to-back years, has attended nearly all of our chapter meetings, and has supplied and maintained our ritual props. When his home chapter, the Delta Zeta Chapter at Auburn University, was recently reestablished, he thoughtfully chose to continue serving as our chapter counselor, helping to build the bridge for new Betas on Samford's campus. As I mentioned, we still have room to grow, and this charter is a testament to the fact

that we can—and will—continue to do so. It provides Alpha Mu with a renewed foundation to build even more Men of Principle at Samford. Thank you.

Committee on Chapters Panel Two Report continued

- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from the University of Illinois are asked to exit the legislation hall.
- **Zach Posinski, Depauw '27** moves to grant the Sigma Rho Chapter at the University of Illinois their charter. The chapter demonstrates: excellent communications with alumni connections; the development of internal leadership and a strong underclassmen desire for success; a GPA that goes above and beyond; a house that shows the potential for long standing brotherhood as well as a place for connection.
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote
- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from the University of Illinois return to the legislation hall.
- Comments from General Secretary **John Stebbins, Emory '92**: Our Sigma Rho Chapter at the University of Illinois, originally founded in 1913, has reemerged with renewed energy and purpose. Since beginning the rechartering process in 2023, the chapter has made incredible strides — from earning the top GPA among all fraternities to achieving 100% retention of new members over two consecutive semesters. Their commitment to academic excellence, brotherhood, and leadership is matched by strong alumni engagement, with more than 100 returning for the Beta Lodge dedication and dozens contributing to the chapter's growth. Whether raising funds for Project Fire Buddies, excelling in campus leadership roles, or building a home base at the state-of-the-art Beta Lodge, the men of Sigma Rho are laying a new foundation of success rooted in Beta's core values. With active participation in 48 student organizations, a growing membership, and a culture of excellence, the chapter is once again a pillar of strength at Illinois. It is with great pride that we welcome back our Sigma Rho Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at the University of Illinois!
- Comments from Chapter President, **Carson Katzmann, Illinois '28**: It is with immense pride, deep gratitude, and unwavering resolve that I stand before you today as the president of the Sigma Rho chapter, to officially accept the charter that grants us full status in Beta Theta Pi. Today marks more than just a milestone. It is the culmination of months and years of shared vision and relentless work. We honor those who came before us by laying the foundation for future generations of Betas at Illinois. Let this not be the end of a journey, but the beginning of a legacy that will be cemented on our campus for years to come. I accept this charter with great honor and pride, not just as myself, but as a representative of all the work and dedication our members and alumni have shown towards our reestablishment and to the future of our chapter. Thank you once again, proud to be a Beta.

Committee on Chapters Panel One

- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from Louisiana State University are asked to exit the legislation hall.
- **Ethan Jung, Furman '26** moves to grant the colony at Louisiana State University their charter. The chapter demonstrates: excellent campus involvement; developing internal leadership; a GPA above the all-men's average and all-fraternity average; the ability to sustain chapter development has been demonstrated by the use of established recruitment techniques, thorough member education, excellent retention, and consistent growth; membership development has been demonstrated through the variety of involvements that chapter members participate in as well as consistent academic improvement and philanthropic endeavors; in order to ensure the chapter continues to grow in number and in merit, we recommend working with the General Fraternity to continue developing recruitment strategies, a focus on proper execution of ritual, and developing alumni engagement and outreach.
- Debate:
 - **Chuck Graves, Middle Tennessee State '94** (Yes): I serve as the Regional Chief for the Colony at Louisiana State University. What you may not know is they've been a colony for a decade, ten years. I'm not sure if we've ever had a colony last that long. They've been a colony so long that they actually have a chartered alumni association. They had a voting delegate last year. They have never given up. Halfway through this past decade, they lost a huge chunk of the membership early on. COVID, of course, affected all of our chapters. For them, it was almost devastating. Somehow, they were able to survive all that. It was just perseverance. They've been on a steady, positive, upward trajectory since then. One of the things I'm proudest of is the philanthropy they chose. One of the brothers has diabetes, so they decided to adopt the American Diabetes Association. These associations are fantastic. It's been 10 years, so I encourage all of you to vote yes.
 - Point Of Information: **Dave Thompson, Purdue '64** asks how many members do they have?
 - **Chuck Graves, Middle Tennessee State '94** responded 29.
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote
- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from the Louisiana State University return to the legislation hall.
- Comments from General Secretary **John Stebbins, Emory '92**: After nearly a decade of dedication, growth, and principled leadership, the LSU Colony of Beta Theta Pi is poised to reclaim its full chapter status. Since its founding in 2015, the men of LSU Beta have exemplified the values of our fraternity—achieving academic distinction with a GPA above the fraternity average, developing a strong and resilient brotherhood despite being the only unhoused IFC chapter on campus, and showing deep commitment to philanthropy by raising thousands in support of the American Diabetes Association. Backed by a robust advisory team and an increasingly active alumni network, the colony has built a culture defined by purpose and unity. With

members actively engaged in over 30 student organizations—including several they helped found—and consistent representation at leadership conferences like Wooden Institute and General Convention, these brothers are shaping the LSU community in meaningful ways. As they have moved from colony to chapter, the men of Beta Theta Pi at LSU are not only honoring our founding principles—they are building a legacy worthy of them. Brothers, it is with great pleasure that I introduce for the first time – along with its new Greek designation – the Theta Kappa Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at Louisiana State University!

- Comments from Chapter President **Tucker Mullenax, Louisiana State '27**: After 10 years of dedication, perseverance, and brotherhood, we're incredibly proud and grateful to officially be recognized as the Theta Kappa Chapter of Beta Theta Pi. This milestone is not just a celebration of where we are now, but a tribute to every brother who came before us and everyone who continues to shape our legacy. While we turn the page from being the LSU Colony, our commitment to honoring the values and efforts of those who paved the way remains as strong as ever. I'm deeply honored to serve as President during this historic moment—and even more excited for what lies ahead, and to be able to share this with my brothers here and also back in Baton Rouge means everything. I'd like to close with a story that means a lot to me. Last year, my dad underwent surgery, and due to complications, his condition quickly became critical. He was transferred to another hospital, where he stopped breathing and eventually fell into a coma that lasted over two months. During that time, a new doctor stepped in—Dr. Michael Kachmar. Dr. Kachmar ultimately saved my father's life. He gave my family hope when we had almost none left. And what makes this meaningful to me and my family is that the man who saved my dad's life, Dr. Kachmar is also a member of Beta Theta Pi. Which I think is a true testament to the brotherhood and mutual assistance that our organization was built upon. Thank you to my executive board, my brothers here today, our alumni, everyone who has in any way been involved with our chapter over the last 10 years, and especially our regional chief, Chuck graves Middle Tennessee State 94. I think I says a lot about his dedication to our fraternity that he has not 1 but 2 chapters receiving their charter today. Thank you again and geaux tigers.
- Comments from LSU Alumni Association President **Brad Rosenston, Louisiana State '22**: We had an alumni association before we were chartered. When we were founded, we had the Sigma Chi house. We just wanted to save the house. After Sigma Chi got the house back, we moved down to about 30 or 35, which is where I joined in late 2018. We had a big graduating class of seniors. Then our president dropped along with five or six of his friends. At one point, we were down to eight members, and it was looking pretty bleak. The fall of 2019, I stepped up to be president. It was my mission to not dissolve. I stayed in the role for another term. And after that, we were finally able to start building a real foundation, one that was purely us. And I think the guys have done a fantastic job building that and making it their own. And I'm really excited to see what's going to come in the future. Go Tigers.

- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from Boise State University are asked to exit the legislation hall.
- **Zach Danzo, Colorado '27** moves to grant the Boise State University chapter their charter, The chapter demonstrates: excellent internal leadership, both present and future; a renewed focus on the values; an interest in being community partners both on and off campus; a positive investment in recruitment and member education; a comprehensive understanding of past mistakes and the steps necessary to rectify them.
- Debate:
 - **Nick Gilson, Utah '03** (Yes): I've been a regional chief in the Northwest Region, which encompasses the Boise State Colony. They were here last year to get their charter and had some pretty significant risk management issues come up that ultimately caused them to withdraw their application. I've come to believe very firmly that a chapter or colony can completely destroyed by one bad exec team or one bad pledge class and I'm here to tell you that that was the case with them. I had never seen a colony or a chapter do a 180 on the level that they did in risk management training with the colony. Everybody was engaged. It really is the model for how I hope to see colonies and chapters pivot when something goes wrong. I hope you're in agreement that the hard work they've been doing over the past year is deserving of the statement of charter.
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote
- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from the Boise State University return to the legislation hall.
- Comments from General Secretary **John Stebbins, Emory '92** – From its founding in 2021 to its present momentum, the Boise State Colony of Beta Theta Pi has become a thriving community of principled men driven by academic achievement, leadership, and genuine brotherhood. In just a few years, the chapter has transformed challenges into opportunity—dramatically raising its GPA, expanding philanthropic impact, and building one of the most vibrant fraternal presences on campus. With an emphasis on academics, the chapter boasts one of the highest IFC GPAs and has implemented structured support like mandatory study hours, peer tutoring, and textbook-sharing programs. Its dedication to service is equally impressive, logging over 1,000 hours and raising more than \$5,000 in the 2024–2025 academic year alone. Through consistent leadership development, campus involvement, and alumni engagement, the Boise State Colony has emerged as a model of integrity, perseverance, and self-governance. Now in good standing, with a strong advisory team and 100% participation in the Beta Brotherhood Assessment, the chapter is proud to stand ready for chartering. As they look to the future, the men of Beta Theta Pi at Boise State continue to live our values every day—proving that brotherhood, when rooted in purpose, can thrive anywhere. Brothers, it is with great pleasure that I introduce for the first time – along with its new Greek designation – the Theta Lambda Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at Boise State University!

- Comments from Chapter President, **Jade Zazzara, Boise State '26** – One year ago, I stood up on this podium, the 185th General Convention, facing a motion for our colony being placed under reorganization. We went through a very difficult time in our colony. It is with great pleasure for me to say that our colony has worked endlessly and tirelessly in the past academic year to reach this outstanding achievement of becoming the Theta Lambda chapter of Beta Theta Pi. I can't express enough gratitude to all our advisors that helped us so much, the whole executive team, and every single member of the Boise State colony. I also would like to thank all of the General Fraternity officers who have done us a great service in getting us back on track after our status downgraded last year. I'm damn proud to be a Beta.
- Comments from Chapter Advisor **Don Curtis, Puget Sound '90** – It's been my honor to be a chapter advisor at Boise State for the last four years. I'd like to also acknowledge my brother Brad England, who was the first chapter counselor. It's been a great four years. I reflect back on five summers ago when I was approached to consider being an advisor for this colony. And I thought, if I could give even one modicum of what I experienced as a Beta at Puget Sound to these guys, it would be my honor to volunteer in a different way for Beta Theta Pi. It's not about me at all. It's about really hard work that I have seen these men do over the last four years, and particularly over the last year. We had a very serious conversation at the beginning of the fall semester and Jade and the executive team have done an outstanding job just really focusing on all the hard work, acing it, and I'm tremendously proud of them. Damn proud to be a Beta

Committee on Chapters Panels Three, Four, and Five

- Reports were not read, but have been submitted for inclusion in the minutes
- **Nate Hall, Centre '27** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 5 has recommended for the Arizona Chapter the following: Familiarize yourselves with SCOE; Continue to focus on recruitment efforts. While being selective. have a recruitment numbers goal; Participate in all required leadership development programs.
- **Nate Hall, Centre '27** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 5 makes the following recommendations to the University of Central Florida: Formulate a plan for recruitment improvements; Focus on improving the pledge to initiation rate; Aim to meet SCOE; Aim for increased participation with the BBA.
- **Nate Hall, Centre '27** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 5 makes the following recommendations to the Vanderbilt Chapter: Formulate a plan for recruitment; Plan a staple recruitment event; Aim to meet SCOE requirements; Participate in all required leadership development events.
- **Jacob Busch, Lawrence '26** submits the following report. The committee on Chapters, Panel 3 makes the following recommendation to the Auburn chapter: Work on getting people to the Wooden convention; Continue to improve and reflect

on summer recruitment events; Continue networking with alumni; Watch out for the bad eggs; Ensuring accountability for every new member they add.

- **Jacob Busch, Lawrence '26** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 3 makes the following recommendations to the Colorado State Chapter: Accountability with collecting dues; Increased engagement with other fraternities and Greek Life organizations; Utilize growth coaching; Participating in other chapters' philanthropies; Encourage continued membership in IFC exec; Study other chapters and bring what works for them into your chapter.
- **Jacob Busch, Lawrence '26**, submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 3 makes the following recommendation to the West Chester chapter: Increasing philanthropy and more involvement from brothers; Make sure to get high quality members as you reach enough people for charter; Creating a full academic assistance plan.
- **Matthew Slovak, Texas at Arlington '25** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 3 recommends that the Hanover chapter continue doing the work they have already been doing. They started strong and we believe that they should continue doing what they're doing. We also recommend that the chapter introduce an academic plan to help improve the chapter's GPA.
- **Matthew Slovak, Texas at Arlington '25** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 3 recommends that the Tulane chapter fully utilize their house to foster a stronger sense of brotherhood and enhance their visibility on campus. Hosting events and creating a welcoming environment within the house can be a key tool in building connections and promoting the chapter's presence. We encourage the chapter to better engage their alumni base. Alumni can be valuable mentors and resources—both financially and professionally-and should be regularly involved in chapter programming and long-term planning. We recommend a focused effort on building and maintaining strong bonds through recruitment. While bringing in new members is vital, retention should be treated as a top priority to ensure sustained chapter health and stability. The chapter must articulate a strong set of virtues that clearly communicate Beta Theta Pi's goals and expectations. These values should be consistently reflected in all chapter activities, especially during the new member education process. We recommend the development of a structured and comprehensive educational track for new members. This program should include clearly defined expectations, responsibilities, and lessons that reinforce the principles of Beta Theta Pi. We strongly recommend that the chapter begin allocating funds and establishing a plan to pay down their outstanding debts to the General Fraternity.
- **Matthew Slovak, Texas at Arlington '25** submits the following report. The Committee on Chapters, Panel 4 recognizes that this is a critical year for the WVU chapter, and we believe they have a strong plan for the future with the right priorities. Therefore, they should continue on their current path. We recommend that the WVU chapter improve its collection of dues by implementing a structured payment plan system. Additionally, it may be helpful to establish consequences for

members who fail to submit dues on time. We also suggest that they increase Beta's visibility among their fraternal peers. Finally, we recommend that they continue reaching out to alumni and actively work to strengthen those relationships.

- **John "JJ" Cichonski, *Quinnipiac* '26** submits the following report. The Committee on Charters, Panel 3 met with the colony president from Kennesaw State, Ethan Anderson. The president shared that the colony is currently at 8 active members, and that they have experienced an extended period of stagnation in regard to membership growth. They also shared that the colony has not utilized resources from the General Fraternity to assist with further recruitment and growth. The committee recommends that the colony utilize all available resources from the General Fraternity to assist with recruitment and membership retention, and improve their communications with their advisory team. The committee also recommends dedicated efforts to utilize additional means of communications to make the student body aware of their organization, establish a social media presence, and outreach to additional organizations on campus.
- **John "JJ" Cichonski, *Quinnipiac* '26** submits the following report. The Committee of Charters, Panel 3 met with the Colony at Temple University, represented by its President Robert Spero, and finance advisor J.B. Andersen. The colony is less than a year old, having only been initiated during the Spring '25 semester. The colony has done a great job becoming engaged with Beta's leadership development events and brings a lot of energy around recruitment into their first Fall semester. The colony recently had their VP of Recruitment resign, and has been meeting weekly this summer to develop a solid Fall recruitment plan. Our recommendations are to make sure that the colony views recruitment as a chapter wide event rather than falling under one titled individual, to establish a social media presence, and continue to focus on their brotherhood. We also strongly encourage the chapter to remain engaged with their advisory team and the support provided by the general fraternity, and embracing the challenge by choice inherited within that process.
- **John "JJ" Cichonski, *Quinnipiac* '26** submits the following report. The Committee of Charters, Panel 3 met with the Colony at University of Nebraska at Omaha, represented by its President Simon Pinkerton, and chapter counselor John Anderson. The colony is 2 years old, and at this current point has 17 members. The chapter has done an awesome job maintaining a high GPA average and having lots of optimism pertaining to future growth. The committee recommends approaching recruitment with a heavier focus on quality over quantity, and process over outcome. A strong focus on the process will help the colony achieve a stronger recruitment class as they desire. Building a culture where everyone shows up to recruitment is a sustainable recruitment process over a one-time benefit. The colony has an exceptional roster of advisors at its disposal, however the committee also recommends to not shy away from accepting help from the General Fraternity, and to respond to General Fraternity outreach.

- Convention President **John Smid, *Toronto '99*** provides the context for this report. In March 2025, the General Fraternity opened an investigation into alleged violations of the Fraternity's Risk Management Policy. Based on the results of the investigation, the General Secretary changed the status of the Eta Gamma chapter to "Under Reorganization" in an effort to address the deficiencies in the chapter's culture and realign its members with the principles and values of the Fraternity. Unfortunately, the results of the reorganization led the General Secretary to downgrade the chapter to "Disbanded." In accordance with Chapter VIII, Section 2 of the Laws, "A chapter under reorganization is one which is being reorganized under the order of the General Secretary, the Board of Trustees or the General Convention to determine which members are willing to follow the standards and principles of Beta Theta Pi. The charter of a chapter Under Reorganization shall, by virtue of such designation, be suspended." In accordance with Chapter VIII, Section 2 of the Laws, "A disbanded chapter is (1) the charter of which operations have been suspended and (2) the members of which have been ordered to disband." Due process is provided by The Code which states, "A change in designation of a chapter may be appealed to the body modifying the designation or any higher body." After receiving notification of the General Secretary's decision to disband, the members of the chapter submitted an appeal to the Board of Trustees. On July 7, the Board heard the appeal, which consisted of a presentation from individual members, a presentation from the General Secretary, and a review of substantial documentation. After extensive discussion, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously, with recusal of the General Secretary, to deny the chapter's appeal. Finally, the Code further provides, "If the appeal is denied, the chapter may continue to appeal to higher authorities up to the General Convention. The General Convention supersedes the Board of Trustees." Members of the Florida International chapter have opted to exhaust their opportunities for appeal and have appealed their disbanded status to you, the General Convention. As such, their appeal was assigned to the Committee on Chapters, Panel One.
- Andrew Holowaty, *Colorado Mines '25*** recommend to deny the Eta Gamma Chapter at Florida International University their appeal for disbandment. The chapter demonstrated through the materials submitted by the General Fraternity and the Chapter itself: First, concerning continuation of the Chapter Culture, including six hazing incidents reported between 2023-2025. Two of those cases are still open, pending the Convention's decision. Second, a disregard for General Fraternity and University directives. For example, during the Membership Review process, the chapter hosted an event with Sigma Kappa that was hosted at a brother's house with music, food, and drinks. The event was fully funded by the Eta Gamma Chapter and the event was registered by Sigma Kappa with their Nationals. Third, concerns regarding the viability of the Chapter growing. Pending the chapter's potential suspension, at most 7-10 brothers continuing in this chapter. Lastly, concerns regarding their commitment to change. It took three alcohol-related incidents and six hazing incidents until they took things seriously about disbandment.

- The delegate, members, advisors, and other guests from Florida International University are asked to exit the legislation hall.
- Debate
 - **Nick Gilson, Utah '03**, Point of Order: Was the motion to deny?
 - Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** states that the motion is to reverse the disbandment, but that the chapter recommends to deny that approval.
 - **Pieter Verbeek, Case Western Reserve '26** (Yes): There are about seven to ten guys left from a group of 60 men. There were huge problems with this chapter. There are six hazing incidents from 2023 to 2025. These remaining ten members are individuals of virtue who are sympathetic to our values and decided to exhaust the appeals. Their appeal letter was one that was heartfelt, demonstrating a deep understanding of the values of the fraternity, of all the board members, and our members of the chapter that had an history of problems. With their withdrawal from campus, there's an implicit return a handful of years later. And the reason I seek an approval of the reinstatement of this chapter is because I don't see how it would be easier for them to reestablish than for them to power through as they say they've been and are willing to do. Most of the members of the chapter have two to three years left as undergraduates. They face open cases where they will likely be suspended from social events or possibly even recruiting for a year, additionally adding to their issues. What convinced me to reinstate them to a probationary period is that it's very hard to instill the values and understanding in people who are recruited from nothing. These remaining members know firsthand what the consequences are and that any presence of these behaviors in the chapter harms everyone. I really was moved by the letter that they wrote for the repeal. It is clear to me they are willing to put in the work to make a comeback story.
 - **Jack Ritter, Kansas '27**, Point of Information: Requests password for documents
 - **Malcolm Duncan, Carleton '25** makes a motion for a ten-minute recess to review documents.
 - Second: **Karl Edelmann, Michigan '86**
 - VOTE: Passes by voice vote
 - General Secretary **John Stebbins, Emory '92** (No): This chapter has had a history of repeated violations and were on deferred suspension since July 2023 for violations of the risk management policy, but instead of addressing those they have continued to have additional hazing investigations. We had hazing charges in Spring 24, Summer 24, Fall 24, and Spring 25. That looks like a chapter that really doesn't desire to change. We also had an issue with lack of integrity. This chapter, when they were put under reorganization status that comes with a cease and desist, we asked for them to take that as a moment of reflection and discontinue all social activities and other chapter activities. They had a special event with Sigma Kappa that we were able to

confirm. That didn't give me great confidence that whatever directives the General Fraternity would place on this chapter, this chapter would honor those and do what they were instructed to do. I also considered safety and risk. Some of the hazing concerns and allegations were what I would call severe, included in the reports that was described as extensive calisthenics, the vomiting from the ingestion of substances, likely alcohol, and swimming in canals and lakes. There have been deaths from people swimming in those canals and lakes in South Florida. It was certainly the general fraternity's intent to try to reorganize this chapter. Speaking candidly, this was the worst reorganization of the nine or ten we had to do this year and the worst one in terms of the chapter's attitude towards the process. We got to the point that we could not find a viable group to carry this group forward. During our pre-work process we got another hazy investigation, so this group is facing two additional investigations from the University where they may be facing a one-year suspension. They're down to seven to ten members at best and so when you think of all those factors and the resources that we have at the General Fraternity level to help the chapter, there's a lot to overcome. My heart goes out to these brothers. I've visited with them multiple times after my decision and the Board's decision. I like these guys a lot, but there's nothing that, at least in my good conscience, I can say we need to continue to put resources into this group. FIU is a school that we want to be at. It's an important chapter within Beta Theta Pi, but I think it's best that we just clear the slate and come back in a few years. We can restart the chapter and build a successful chapter we can all be proud of.

- **Nicolas Quintero, *Florida International '28*** (Yes): We are newly initiated brothers and over the past weeks, we have been working diligently on this appeal and continue to seek for an opportunity. Like District Chief Ian Ross said on Thursday in our opening session, failure is growth. We reflected deeply on the chapter's past action and understand the issues that occurred within our chapter. We recognize the negative culture that developed. That is not brotherhood we will represent. Moving forward, we are committed to ending the cycle for good. We have contacted all of our founding fathers and several dedicated alumni to rebuild a strong support system and receive mentorship. Our founding father Gabriel Chepenko, who sadly passed away, always would set the bar high with our members and hold each other accountable. We respectfully ask that you consider both the progress we've made. The chapter that's standing before you today, asking for a second chance, is not the chapter that created our problems, but we are the chapter willing to face them.
- **Luke Diener, *Oklahoma State '27***, Point of Information: What is result of yes vote?
 - **Jacob Tidwell, *East Carolina '04*** replied that a "yes" vote would put them back to under reorganization and the current members would be evaluated.

- **Ian Ross, Michigan '21** (No) states I'm sympathetic to this case because I experienced a chapter closure myself last year. I got to a point with Michigan where I was advocating we move on as hard as that was and close the chapter because viability is a real concern and because of finite resources. In our view, the most productive thing would be to restart after a few years to allow new people to come in and build something from the ground up. I'd also add, when we make a decision as a group, we make a statement about what we believe. After everything that's happened, to make a statement that we want this chapter to continue to me, makes a statement not aligned with our values. Whatever happens today, continue your Beta experience. It doesn't have to end because the chapter is closed. You can be part of the rebuild down the road. With the outstanding investigations, it may be that the chapter can't operate or recruit at all as a result of whatever the decision the university makes, so we might be in a situation where we have five to seven members on the campus who can't recruit for a year or more. I don't know how many of us think that that'd be viable.
- **Jose Villalonga, Florida International '28** (Yes): Emphasize they are all newly initiated members and everyone at this Convention is a freshman. Faculty from FIU, the FIU IFC, and the university are willing to work with us. Yes, we are down to ten guys, but we are willing to push forward and work with everything we have. We're still here fighting for our chapter.
- General Treasurer **Ken Bryant, MIT '88** (No) provides context and perspective from the Board of Trustees. I want to start by recognizing the passion and enthusiasm of these men, they've worked very hard. They came to the board, and we took this very, very seriously. General Secretary John Stebbins had made the decision to disband the chapter, so he recused himself from the process and the General Fraternity President ran the process. We reviewed all the documents, the same documents you had a chance to see. The brothers joined a Zoom and had a chance to present their case. We discussed it thoroughly and thoughtfully, considering all the facts. Based on the facts, we made a decision. The main points for us were the following. One, there is a history of putting the physical safety of our members at risk. The number one priority of the Board of Trustees is the safety and security of our members. When you've got to swim in canals with high bacteria levels, it's not the right thing to do. Second was the fact that this was a history of violations nearly every semester for two to three years. That's not the kind of behavior that we're looking for. The third point is about living our values. Our values include integrity and responsible conduct. The brothers were put under reorganization and asked to cease and desist these behaviors, then they went and had a party at Sigma Kappa and tried to hide it as a Sigma Kappa party. That was not consistent with our Beta values. Speaking as a General Treasurer, we have finite resources to spend. One of the mantras I really respect in the staff is that it's the boys' money. The majority of our money in the fraternity comes from you, so we want to spend

your money wisely and well. Do we want to spend that money on trying to fix what has been a bad situation over the years or are we going to want to take a pause there and spend that money on other campuses where we have greater opportunities at the moment. As General Secretary said, we want to be at FIU in the long term, but we don't believe now is the time to do it. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously to turn down this appeal. This is not any judgment about the quality of these men or the appeal they're making, but when we looked at the facts, we thought it did not support overturning the statement.

- **Dom DiRienzo, William and Mary '28** (Yes) stated his chapter also underwent reorganizations this past year. We went from a thriving chapter, roughly 65 to 70 members to 17 with more people wanting to drop. It's brutal. It's a lot easier for our brothers to fall into this nihilistic pit of I don't care anymore, I don't want to be here anymore, it's already over. I've been trying and rallying my brothers in my chapter to rebuild, but it's been hard. We got our chapter house taken last Thursday so I was at the end of my rope. I called Nick and told him I support you guys. This is what happened with us we got to bond over what happened in our chapters as freshmen. Nick convinced me of their cause and reinvigorated what it means for me because these men drove 20-something hours from Miami to be here, and to state their case. They have exhausted every single opportunity to prevent this. These are the people who I want in my chapter. These are the people who you guys want in your chapter.
- **Eli Conley, Iowa State '27** (No) I want to give you a perspective from somebody that was in these meetings. We took this very seriously. We were in the meeting for the whole three hours hearing both sides. The reason we came to the deny decision was because seven to ten guys is not enough. The pending cases are most likely going to get a suspension from recruitment and any type of events. That's not a Beta experience anybody should have. How is this going to be a great experience, clawing for everything, not getting anything? Their president said in our committee meeting they wouldn't do any socials anymore. What kind of experience is that? They wouldn't have socials. They wouldn't have recruitment. That's not a Beta experience for anybody. Somebody earlier said they were a thriving chapter on campus earlier. That was the culture of hazing and alcohol incidents. They were thriving off hazing and alcohol incidents. Is that a chapter we want? Those guys were recruited into a chapter with that culture. They might want to change now because everything's finally come up. We have to stop hazing now. Everything's public to everybody now. Now they want to stop the culture of hazing and alcohol. They were thriving off the culture of hazing and alcohol incidents. That's not a Beta chapter. If they go through this, their experience is also going to be awful. Pending suspensions, no recruitment. They're not going to grow from the seven to ten guys. I don't think this is a viable option to put resources in.

- **Alain Santos, Florida International '28** (Yes): I understand what we have done, or what the chapter has done, is not viable. It should have never happened. The last three years, the chapter has been getting second chances after chance after chance. The opportunity was given to the same brothers. These brothers kept making the same mistakes. We are a completely new group of guys. I understand that we were recruited into this, but the fact that we're here fighting for our chapter should show we understand the mistakes the chapter made. When we had our discussion with the Board of Trustees, they all stated it was a great presentation and we had a thought-out plan, but we had a unanimous no. I respect the decision and I get it. We made careless mistakes. Throwing an event while being under cease of operations is terrible, but we're here to put in the work. In the past three months, I feel these guys that put in more work than the previous executive board even ever tried. Once they told us we were disbanded, they decided to leave. We decided to stay and push through with it because we know we can make an impact on campus positively. I understand that there's a possibility that we might not have recruitment, but it's a lot of what ifs. What if the sanctions we receive aren't as strong as they say they are? You would never know unless we return to campus and have our letters back on campus. What if we come back and we are able to recruit? We're going to be able to recruit men that align with our values, that aren't here for socials or hazing or partying, but to see the fraternity grow. There's been multiple guys showing up to the IFC that want to rush this fraternity, and the IFC directors have to say we're gone. It's a horrible reputation. I completely understand that, but I'm here to one day become a model chapter, not a risk chapter.
- **Eric Bedrosian, Butler '26** (No): First off, none of this is a reflection on the brothers that are here today. The consequences and actions of brothers before you is a reflection of all of us here today. It doesn't matter what you guys did or did not do, the brothers before you were the ones that did it. The brothers before you did not build a bridge for you guys; I'm very sorry about that. I joined Beta because I believe in its values and its members, but to hear incidences like this, this is not Beta. Those actions, those decisions to do that to incoming members, that's not a thing that we should be about. One of the first brothers that talked in the FIU chapter up here said that this would be a great second chance. According to the 20 plus pages of documents I read, this is not a second chance or a third chance or a fourth chance or a fifth chance; this is ten plus. They've had opportunities to improve themselves, to fix the chapter, and unfortunately still have not taken it. I am not always one to like to listen to the adults in the room. I feel like I have a lot of experience as a 21-year-old. However, I will say both the Board of Trustees and the General Secretary have both made it plainly clear that this chapter has not worked with them in the best manner or tried to put in the effort to fix their opportunity to get better. This is one of those times

where I think we should listen to the adults in the room with a little bit more experience and help them out. If we can help them, they're going to continue to help us more. I think this sets a bad precedent if we allow this chapter to continue operating after having this many instances that are known by all of us in this room today. I worry that we're creating an environment where another chapter could do this down the road and expect the opportunity to come back with anything else that happens to them. I think voting against them coming back puts our foot down on what we believe is a fraternity. We want to be a place of respect for our members. We want to be a place for people to feel welcome. The hazing instances, as described, are not a welcoming environment at all. That's not what our fraternity is about. I think getting a clean slate, going back in a couple of years.

- **Simon Pinkerton, Nebraska at Omaha '26** (Yes): If you are a founding father, you know what it feels like to be up against the wall, where it feels like you don't have the support you need, to be without supplies, to be low on money, to be scrappy, to be hungry, to make something better. We're working on founding our chapter at Omaha. We've been at it for three years. After the first year, we thought there's no way we're going to do it. It can be incredibly hard to fight for your chapter. But here we are today, and we just welcomed some new chapters who have to fight just as hard as any of these guys to be members of Beta Theta Pi. We talk about they don't have the supplies; they don't have the resources they need to succeed. Let them try. My class was eight members and that felt so incredibly small that I never thought we'd ever get anywhere. But we're making progress. As I've been given a chance by the fraternity, I'd really love to give these guys a chance. They've reached out and been willing to learn from other brothers.
- **Dom Dempsey, Wisconsin-Oshkosh '27** (No): We've got to think about the brother that's not here today at the convention and that's Timothy Piazza. In the hazing prevention training, those stories really resonated with me. It was that type of reckless behavior that cost him his life. He is looking down on us today and the decision we are going to make. I feel like we have an obligation to do what's right and set a precedent. I don't think this is the time to allow them to continue. I think it's better if they take a break. They need to have a culture shift. To those members that are here arguing for their chapter, I hope down the road you can be part of that revitalization. I want everyone here to remember Timothy Piazza, who's not here with us today. I think it is very important we take that into consideration as well. I do not stand for any of that type of behavior. They've had several chances, and it's been happening semester after semester.
- **Jeffrey Flannigan, Rhode Island '93** moves to suspend the rule that debate is closed when one side of the debate has been exhausted.
 - Second: **Miles Meeker, Eastern Kentucky '26**
 - VOTE: Fails

- **John "JJ" Cichonski, Quinnipiac '26** (Yes) I think the act of hazing is absolutely disgusting and is not something I support in any capacity whatsoever. I think the ability to do that to any man is abhorrent. I would say that the fine young men who came up here today are asking for a chance to become something that encompasses Beta's values. One thing that has come up a few times today is viability. We're saying there are seven to ten men here who are trying to revamp this chapter. How many men did it take to found Beta Theta Pi in the beginning? Did those men have you support a national fraternity or did they have social on the weekends or fun activities. No, they came together because of shared beliefs, shared values, and a shared passion for one another. These brothers I see today are not coming to ask for all the niceties back. They are asking for a chance to live Beta's values and encompass those in their day-to-day lives. I am voting for the future of something beautiful.
- **Nick Sexton, Eastern Kentucky '11** (No) notes that he is a member of the Board of Trustees. I'd like to thank the collegiate brother who said listen to the adults in the room. I've never been called an in the adult in the room. I'm hearing an emotional argument and I'm hearing a logical argument. When we're talking about liability, the reason the Board of Trustees were unanimous in their decision to decline their appeal was because we really didn't see an action plan of where they would go from here. We hear a lot about passion and drive, but what is their support system? And talk about FIU, the institution supporting them. FIU, if you look at the bottom of the documents, said they would support the process of us continuing our reorganization investigation. They're not supporting the brothers. They're supporting the process of getting them from point A to point Z. When folks talk about new colonies or re-founding chapters, there is staff support in the administrative office. That would be minimal for the brothers at FIU, maybe even non-existent as we look to invest our resources at new universities and returning chapters this fall and spring. Couple all of that with their competitors on campus, the two pending investigations, and the fact we'll have to restart the one we're doing now, we're looking at a semester, if not a year, and it could be longer depending on what FIU decides. I call the question.
 - Second: **Malcolm Duncan, Carleton '25**
 - VOTE: Passes
- Henry Snyder, Centre '22, Point of Information: Can alumni associations vote on this matter?
 - Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** confirms they can.
- Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** clarifies this is a vote to move the Florida International University chapter from "Disbanded" back to "Under Reorganization" status.
 - VOTE: Fails

Committee on Finance and Risk Management

- **Grant Coulson, *Pennsylvania* '26**
- The Committee on General Fraternity Finance and Risk Management is pleased to report great financial wellbeing due to historic recruitment as well as heightened upperclassmen retention. Active member dues are going up \$4 due to insurance as well as inflationary increases, and new member dues are going up \$15 due to inflation, insurance, the Beta Theta Pi magazine, and ritual investments. CPI was 2.9%. These increases come in below it. Chapter fraternity financial assistance scholarships coming down as we move further away from COVID. We are allocating twice as much money from the foundation to help offset any financial burdens that may prevent new members from joining and helping upperclassmen stay members. Travel reimbursement and payment plan assistance will continue to be available but will be scaled back slightly with more chapters gaining financial stability. Looking ahead to FY26, the fraternity is budgeting a similar level of surplus with a slight increase to 130k, more investments in initiatives within belonging and wellness.
- The Committee on General Fraternity Finance and Risk Management moves to approve the financial report for Fiscal Year 2025.
- VOTE: passes by voice vote

Convention President **John Smid, *Toronto* '99** moves to recess until after lunch.

- Second: **Ethan Jung, *Furman* '26**
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote

Saturday, August 2, 2025, Afternoon Session

Call to Order

Roll Call

Committee Nominations of General Fraternity Officers

- **Ian Viner, *Samford* '26**
- The Committee on Nominations of General Fraternity Officers met on July 16, 2025. We reviewed the resumes of four candidates for the Board of Trustees and interviewed each candidate. After discussing each candidate's qualifications and listening to their visions for the future of Beta Theta Pi, we believe that all four will be outstanding leaders and will contribute meaningfully to the strategic direction of our fraternity. Therefore, the committee voted unanimously to advance the following slate of candidates for the Board of Trustees and recommends their election by the 186th General Convention:
 - John Stebbins, Emory '92, to serve as General Secretary.
 - Rodney "Rod" Kelley, Florida State '14, to serve as a Trustee.
 - J. Nicholas Gilson, Utah '03, to serve as a Trustee.

- Willie Romero, UNLV '95, to serve as a Trustee.
- Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** calls for a vote to approve the recommended slate of officers as presented.
- VOTE: passes by voice vote
 - Remarks by **John Stebbins, Emory '92** – I first just want to thank you for the trust and confidence that you placed in me. You know, the first term, we're kind of taking a chance, and you don't know what you're going to get. You're buying off on a vision, but the second term is really an endorsement of the direction that we're headed. getting together and where the fraternity is going. So that means a lot. And I'll keep that in mind each and every day as I execute my office. The second thing I want to say is I can't stand here and be void of humility. I mean, there's so many people that play a part in the building up of a great and good fraternity. It comes from the alumni and friends of Beta who serve our chapters in Beta's broad domain. It comes from our professional staff who individuals choose this as their profession to further our mission. And it comes from all of you sitting here and the work that you do in your chapters every single day to make Beta Theta Pi better. So the third thing is literally I stand here and I say, are you kidding me? Do I really get three more years to be a part of this great and good fraternity? It is a little bit like living a dream. That's it. I tell people often I had a phenomenal experience at the Emory chapter, and I'm still very close with my brothers there. And what has been even a greater gift to me has been to experience the general fraternity in the way that I have. Dear, dear friends that come to convention year in, year out, the ability to be with members of the Board of Trustees and working to further Beta Theta Pi and what it means. It's an incredible honor you've given me yet another incredible gift. Yeah, I'm damn proud to be a Beta, and I thank you for this very much.
 - Remarks by **Nick Gilson, Utah '03** – Brothers, I promised my brother Scott Fussell that I would take some time to enjoy this moment, so I will ask your forgiveness as I take a minute to do that. As I stand before you today, I am overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude. Gratitude for my membership in this organization, to you for trusting me with this role, to the countless mentors, advisors, and leaders who helped shape me into the volunteer I am today, and gratitude to my Beta sweetheart Alyson who gives me the freedom to spend as much time as I do “working for Beta.” I am here today because I believe, with every fiber of my being, in our Mission to Build Men of Principle for a Principled Life. There are not many values based organizations, aimed at 18-22 year old men, that aren't some form of organized religion, and I think that we need more of that in our world. Whether it's things like accountability, toxic masculinity, emotional vulnerability, compassion, or mental health, we need resources to help us develop these things in ourselves, and I don't know of an organization more committed to these ideals, aimed at us, than Beta Theta Pi. And I truly hope that each of you recognize that this is not just a resource you have as a collegiate member;

I've benefitted from all of these things in my various roles as a volunteer for Beta over the nearly past two decades. My Beta journey began when I pledged in the Spring of 1999. Beta was a different organization when I joined; the Men of Principle Initiative was new, and we were in the very early stages of re-evaluating and shaping who we wanted to be as an organization. So, as with many of my peers, my participation focused more on the types of brotherhood that focused on belonging and shared social experiences. The parties were epic. Hazing was much more widely accepted, risk management was not a priority, and concepts like mental health were not discussed or addressed. And even though we talked about brothers being brothers for life, the reality is that after graduation, you largely fell away from Beta Theta Pi. The model that we have been working on for the past 25 years has made us a better organization, and is providing a strong foundation for us to continue to build upon in the future. Although I would not trade the experience that I had as a collegian, I admit I'm jealous of the experience you get now, since it absolutely develops you better, and prepares you for post graduate life much better than my generation. To the collegiate delegates in the room: You are the leaders of your chapters, and the members that are influencing the direction that Beta will take next. I know that as you near graduation, a sense of relief, or maybe even burnout, may create some distance between you and your respective chapters. But I can not emphasize enough how blessed I consider myself because of the personal growth and development that I have experienced through volunteering for Beta by reengaging with the Fraternity several years after I graduated. The skills I have acquired, and more importantly, the relationships that I have built, with other brothers, volunteers, staff members, or friends of Beta, literally from coast to coast, give me one of the most diverse and valuable families of choice anyone could ever imagine. There is literally nowhere I could travel in North America where I couldn't find someone willing to do just about anything for me, just by asking, and that shared connection has enriched me in ways that I will never be able to repay. As I conclude, I'd like to extend two challenges to you today. First, get to know another member from a different chapter that is here at convention. Get out of your comfort zone and meet some of your brothers. In the years that I have been a General Fraternity Officer, I have been given the opportunity to learn about unique, obscure historical nuggets from Zach & Ryan, had a front row seat to incredible leadership by Wayne, Jeff, and John, and received priceless personal and professional counseling from Scott. A year ago, Anne sat with me for several hours in an emergency room outside of Oxford, and this summer, Ted insisted that me and my family stay at his home while on our summer vacation. I could stand up here all day and list names of people tied to Beta, and how they have impacted me, made me a better person, but the point I'm trying to make is that none of these people were members of my home chapter at Utah, and none of that would have happened if I stayed insulated

with them. Take advantage of the opportunity you have to grow your family across Beta's broad domain. Second, let's normalize telling each other "I love you." I know it can be awkward and uncomfortable to say I love you to someone in a platonic way, but if you think about it, all of the things we do for one another, hell, even our mission, are acts of love. We just initiated 3 new members into our organization the other day, and we promised them that they would "realize a bond of fraternal union that becomes a more valued tie, cherished with ever increasing affection, even amid the graver cares of our later lives." That sounds like love to me. Let's use our words to tell each other that. I'll leave you with a quote that was shared with me by my father. He carried it with him everywhere he went in his wallet, as a reminder to be a good person, and since his passing, I've carried it with me daily. I find it fits well with our goals as members, friends, and supporters of Beta Theta Pi. "In the time of your life live...so that in that wondrous time, you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it." Thank you again for the opportunity you have given me to serve, and thank God I'm a Beta.

- Remarks by **Rod Kelley, Florida State '14** – I thank you all for taking the time to be among brothers in St. Louis and for providing me with the opportunity to share with you a little bit about my upcoming service as a trustee. The biography, if you did your homework, you read my biography and you saw a little bit about the glimpse of my journey, particularly in terms of my professional journey as well as my daily journey. It is important for me to let you know that I am deeply driven by a sense of community, whether in a sense of family, alma mater, on a professional level, or fraternity. To know me is to know that I'm the oldest of five kids who were raised in a household in the rural South. I grew up as the oldest son of a deaf mother who taught me patience, although she oftentimes was not the most patient person. And in... instilled in me a love for reading. I grew up learning I had older half-siblings on my dad's side and through my father, I learned an appreciation for extended family and knowing and learning how some of the most meaningful gifts in life are unquantifiable. I brought this energy to a collegiate experience where I was uncertain of what to expect. As a first-generation college student, I heard negative stories of what fraternities were like and had no clue of what benefits I could gain from a value-spaced organization. I felt incredibly honored to have learned at a place like Furman and so I was incredibly involved as a student leader and tried my best to be a positive influence on my campus. As good as Furman was to me, I wanted more. I needed to push myself to see what collegiate life had to offer, to see something different than just a small liberal arts experience I had in particular. Coming to Florida State to pursue my master's in higher education and the additional 10 years, after, I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to do that, but I'm going to be able to do that. Not only set me up incredibly well professionally, but of course, it led me to my future home

here at Beta. I will always fondly remember August of 2013. A young expansion consultant asked me to consider serving as an advisor for a returning chapter at Beta at FSU. Little did I know that an ask of committing three years of service would turn into something, that would amount to supporting a 100-plus-man chapter through its founding years, supporting them getting across the finish line to get their charter in Norfolk, navigating campus tragedy and a subsequent shutdown of our Greek life system, and trying to understand how brotherhood could function at a new chapter house amongst COVID. My experiences with Beta have also led to some enriching leadership development experiences as a concept facilitator in spaces like Keystone, Wooden, and most recently, of course, Leadership Conflict. My progressive growth and engagement, with Beta has involved me taking on a chapter counselor role at my alma mater term and supporting the Zeta Lambda chapter through its own growth and highlighting for them their great potential and the real difference they can make in that campus community. I aim by sharing this with you. Beta men are not shy at working hard and getting the job done. You're looking at such an example right now. My determination to do right by our good and great fraternity is shared by a strong sense of honor and respect. My credentials as a higher education professional for nearly 20 years positions me to be mindful of the ever-changing needs of our undergraduate men and how Beta can adapt without losing its focus on being a principal home for our men across the globe. I'm passionate about our commitment to developing men of principle for a principal life and ensure that this organization can support decisions that are congruent with our mission. vision to stand as a pillar within the larger fraternity world. It's my hope that hearing my story a little bit today will inspire you to at least consider how you can elevate your impact with the fraternity. I am more than willing to have a greater conversation about the tricks and turns my story has taken and the potential it has moving forward. I thank many of you who have had conversations with over these past few days through your convention, and I look forward to the future conversations you all know will happen with several of you moving forward. Thank you all.

- Remarks by **Willie Romero, UNLV '95** – Thank you for the privilege of serving as a Trustee for the past three years. Your trust and confidence to serve another term, keeps Beta strong and moving forward, and is something I appreciate and look forward to with my sleeves rolled up. Like you, Beta holds a special place in my collegiate experience, in so many ways, to grow and be a better man. While Beta Theta Pi no longer has a chapter at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, I think that truth helps bring awareness and perspective to our decision making about growth, sustainability, and thriving, on college campuses. Professionally, I have been in Higher Education since college graduation, and over those three decades, a lot has changed....the world has changed, and indeed Beta has also adapted. I continue to pride Beta's historic purpose, innovation, and entrepreneurship, all with a limited

budget serving 10,000 collegians at over 140 schools, and nearly 150,000 alumni around the world. We all know that when we head back to our respective schools and communities, universities and collegiate life are under the microscope and yet here we stand ready with grit to take on what needs to happen. I often share how proud I am to be a Beta, and probably like you, it is hard to be a Beta when we have not lived to our ideals and principles. While we are not perfect, after all we are humans; but that also means we can and should learn, adapt, and be strategic in our life choices. While none of us have a crystal ball, I do think this is the time for fraternities and sororities to prepare for what uncertainty lies ahead, especially with accountability on social media and electronic devices seemingly everywhere. As you well know, our world is changing quickly and dramatically...while we all have various views on that world; and I think that is what makes life interesting; we have some headwinds to consider, especially as we march towards Beta's upcoming historical bicentennial, but I am confident we in this room have a large can of grit.....and we will use it wisely. Thank you again for your belief and support and I look forward to serving you and catching up at this Convention and beyond. I am proud to be a Beta!

- Installation of Officers
- Recognition of outgoing Board Member, Robert Beall, Oklahoma '80
 - Remarks by **Robert Beall, Oklahoma '80** – As I come to the end of my time on the Board of Trustees, I want to express what an honor it has been to serve this Fraternity. To the General Fraternity: It has been a privilege to represent you on the Board of Trustees. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve, to give back, and to support a brotherhood that has meant so much to me and to so many others. To our General Secretary, our Chief Executive Officer, and my fellow Trustees that I have had the honor to serve with, thank you for hearing me, inspiring me, and your belief in the good of our fraternity. I leave this role with gratitude, respect, and great confidence in the future of Beta Theta Pi. Thank God I'm a Beta.
- Recognition of outgoing Trustee, Bill Haywood, Miami '74
 - Remarks by **Bill Haywood, Miami '74** – First, I want to thank all of you present and not present today for entering the faith and allowing me to have the opportunity. I did this and accepted it with great honor. And it was just very, very humbling to have this position and I hope I've served you well. And you can tell by the quality of the guys coming in, I think it's an upgrade. But I also want to correct this. I was watching TV with my wife, the news. And I said, honey, they keep talking about this great, big, beautiful bill. Is that me? Yeah. Well, my wife and I will be married for 50 years next year. So she quickly corrected that, rolled her eyes and said, not hardly. So I want to thank everyone. Thank my wife, who's been around with me. She's a Beta sweetheart. We met in Miami. I have two wonderful children. And something has happened in the six years I've been involved. I now have five

grandchildren. I also want to thank the Board of Trustees. It's been a pleasure to serve with all of you, a very august group. I can tell you all the collegiates in the room. Our focus is to provide a safe environment where you can thrive. We take that seriously. It's an important task. We cuss and discuss, but we all come together around the things that are really important to Beta Theta Pi. And it's a great group of people. You know, six years ago when I took this job, it was different. We were just coming off a tragedy with Mike Piazza and we had to change things. We couldn't go the way we would have gone before. Those changes were probably needed and delayed, but we had a very strong pull to get that done. And I can't help but now recognize some incredible people. Wayne Kay, he's not here today. He's a wonderful guy, and he's showed incredible leadership through a very tough period of time. I think we need to shout out to him. He's recovering from cancer. He's in remission, but again, his oncologist will not allow him to come, so we need to thank him. The other person is Jeff Rundle. Jeff showed incredible moxie and grit. I remember talking to him several times during that period of time. Tremendous litigation we were facing. Jeff's a lawyer. He doesn't tell too many people that. He's a recovering lawyer. But he was incredible, and I often asked him, I said, Jeff, I just want to make sure you're not going to go anywhere. I mean, a lot of people would have bowled and run, but Betas don't do that, and he showed that kind of integrity and grit to hang with us, and we need to give him some snaps to him for leading us. I'd also like to recognize John Stebbins. I can't believe it's three years. I mean, it's incredible. He came in, nobody better for the job. He knows everything you need to know about Beta and his subtle ways of getting things done. He's commanding. He listens with empathy. He's a great, great person. You know, we're lucky to have guys like this lead us. It's really incredible. So snaps to him as well. You know, one thing, when I walked into this hall, it reminded me of something. We had an incredible Beta, Richard Lugar from Denison. And he came to one of these meetings. And we were in a big divide. You talk about the lineups here. They were out the door. It was during substance abuse. We're facing this hazing that we need to change our MO. Richard got up and he addressed everybody. And he said, you know, if Congress ran the way Beta Theta Pi did, we'd get a lot more done. And I think there's a lot of truth to that. I have some Betas out there. Pete Barnhart, he wrote me in and got me started back in this when he asked me to chair the recolonization of Beta Theta Pi. And I said I could do that, but I need to pick someone to help. So I picked Phil Fernandez. What a great guy. Phil and I did that. Phil's like a brother to me and just an incredible human being. And you've seen Zach talk. So the Alphas have given back a lot. Jonathan, I want to tell you, I pledged him. I feel good about that. And I promise not to use it, by the way. Newt, Jeff Newton, a bit important. Again, Zach is our historian. I had the occasion to play golf with both Jeff Newton and Phil Fernandez. Our new president, Andrew King. This guy hit it 260 yards off the fairway. If you put us in a putt on

a par five, we were there in two. So, you know, great job. We've got some great leaders coming up. It's been a lot of fun. It's been tough work. My wife's birthday is tomorrow. Our anniversary has always conflicted with this event. She's got some plans for me. I'm going to have to comply. I have to come up with a better excuse. But I will continue to help A&M any way I can going forward. I want to, real quick to the collegiates here. You're not done when you become a junior or senior. Your most important role is to find three or four guys like yourself or better. In my case, my seniors said, better than you, Haywood. I said, okay. But I think that's an important thing. We've got to keep this long march going. And it's up to you, big responsibility, to continue that. I get energy from meeting all of you. Every time we come to convention or other opportunities, it's just tremendous. We have a great pool of talent coming up to join the talent that has been here for years and years. So keep that long march going. The collegiates, we're there for you. We support you in any way we can. Don't be shy. I think Nick Gilson said it beautifully, and Rod as well. Go out and meet people. Make yourself known to people. And if you need help, seek it. With all that, I'll say I'm damn glad to be a Beta.

Committee on Permanent Organization

- **Jade Zazzara, Boise State '26**
- The Committee on Permanent Organization moves to approve Proposal 1 to standardize chapter officer elections. This proposal gives chapter officers the ability to learn the requirements and expectations, along with being given the tools and resources to succeed in their positions at the Winter Leadership Conclave. The proposal also provides consistency across the organization to ensure that all chapters are running on the same operating schedule. There is an exemption process for chapters who may require different election terms due to their campus requirements and/or local bylaws.
- **Dominik Dempsey, Wisconsin-Oshkosh '27** makes a motion to Amend Section 3, "All chapter officers will serve a term of one full calendar year...selected by each chapter." by adding the following after "selected by each chapter."
 - "If Officer is unable to conclude the term for any reason, such as removal by Kai Committee, graduation, sickness, family emergency, etc., the chapter may hold an election at any point to replace them."
 - Second: **Malcolm Duncan, Carleton '25**
 - Debate
 - **Eric Bedrosian, Butler '26** (No) The way that it's written right now we're saying graduation could be a reason to hold another election. Aren't we supposed to be electing only officers that will be in school still until the end of their term, so why would we include the word graduation in that?
 - **Dominik Dempsey, Wisconsin-Oshkosh '27** (Yes): The reason I included graduation is because for a chapter my size, for example, we only have twelve members and it is absolutely vital that we have

senior participation to fill some of our holes. You know while the General Fraternity is going to propose to have it be generalized to try to make it for a full year, if for some reason you just don't have the numbers and you want to place a senior in that role, I think that is very important. I also have a strong belief that our seniors who go to these leadership events are going to be there to fill in the incoming person who is going to take over for them.

- **Ken Bryant, MIT '88** (No): I think this is a great sentence and it should be added. I think this is the wrong place in the paragraph to put it. To me it makes no sense to say all chapter all officers will serve one full year and then add the approval and then the sentence about you have to begin earlier than January 30th. How do you begin your term by January 30th if you get elected in March? That makes no sense to me. I love the sentence; I would put at the end of the paragraph. I don't know how to do that administratively or legislatively.
- **Jacob Tidwell, East Carolina '04** states that the Code allows the legislative team to make unsubstantive edits and the author of the amendment stated he was comfortable with it being moved.
- VOTE: passes by voice vote
- **Jack Ritter, Kansas '27** (No): I want to point out that the 185th General Convention received this same piece of legislation last year and voted it down. Brothers from Oklahoma, TCU, and our chapter made the point last year that there are chapters of varied differences in size, makeup, and school years. I realize there is an exemption clause in there, but I think it would just be remiss and it would be tough to require standardization across every single chapter. We have chapters of eight that do elections very differently than chapters sized 160 people that do things through a slating committee. The second clause or the second section of it would require every election to be majority. There are chapters like TCU that do elections a different way. They elect representatives and those representatives choose or elect people to fill positions because they're very large, and it would be tough to get a quorum and to get 81 votes for a single person for a position. I think we should honor our brothers at the 185th General Convention by once again voting this down for the reasons that they did last year and for a few that I've given today.
- VOTE: Fails by voice vote

Committee on Constitution and Jurisprudence

- **Patrick Halvorsen, Arizona '25**
- The Committee on Constitution and Jurisprudence moves to approve Proposal 2 as proposed by Ethan Bell. The proposal demonstrates wise consideration of risk and liability.
- No debate
- VOTE: Passes by voice vote

Committee on Constitution and Jurisprudence continued

- **Patrick Halvorsen, Arizona '25**
- The Committee on Constitution and Jurisprudence moves to approve Proposal 3 by Mike Wortman with the following amendments:
 - "Every candidate for initiation into Beta Theta Pi must obtain, for the term immediately prior to his initiation, a grade point average of not less than the minimum average grades required for graduation by the high school (or educational equivalent) or college in which he is enrolled."
 - "Each chapter or colony may establish a minimum grade point average in its bylaws in excess of this standard. This requirement may be waived or modified by the General Secretary upon a showing of undue hardship to the chapter, colony, or individual involved. This requirement shall not apply to Special Initiations as defined in Chapter VIII, Section 1(F)."
 - **Ben Swartz, Connecticut '05**, Point of Information: Is what was read different than what's in the book?
 - Convention Parliamentarian **Kevin Levy, American '16** – Yes, the committee reported favorably the proposed legislation with a new amendment that does not appear in your book. What will be proposed initially for conversation, for discussion, is the amendment to what appears in your book.
 - **Ian Ross, Michigan '21** (No); I served as the GFO liaison to the subcommittee that reviewed this proposal and decided on it. While I appreciate the work that we put in, I learned this weekend in conversation with some of our staff and some of our volunteers who are universally professional, that there was some pretty key information that we did not have on our call, that the committee did not have when they made their decision to amend it, some requirements the NIC has. I've spoken with the chairman of the committee, the secretary, and one other member. We did not have an opportunity to reconvene as a whole. Collectively, the position at this point is to go back to the original legislation. The North American Interfraternity Conference has standards, and as a member organization and one that wants to lead in the fraternal space, we want to, at the very least, be compliant with those standards. Their expectation is a 2.5 for members and to be initiated. It does not distinguish clearly between high school and college, so there's a hard numeric requirement, and it's explicit. Our current code says you have to have good enough grades in your semester before rushing that if they were cumulative college grades, you can graduate. Speaking with some campus professionals, that is conservatively maybe about a 2.0 average. So currently, we're not complying with the NIC standard. The proposed amendment, similarly, is not compliant. And I would argue, to no fault of the committee, it doesn't really give clarity. It's my position that we not adopt it and then debate the

underlying original proposal with the 3.0 high school and 2.5 college. I leave it to you to determine whether you think those figures are reasonable and fair, but my view would be that we at least meet that NIC standard of the 2.5 across the board. With that, I move to call to question.

- Second: **Eric Bedrosian, Butler '26**
- Passes
- VOTE: Fails by voice vote
- Debate
 - **Oliver DiCerbo, Denison '26** (No): The high school requirement of 3.0 is a little bit silly. I'm quite a different person than I was in high school. If a guy comes into college not having a 3.0, the fact that he can get into that university, the GPA that he has there should determine more of his rush status. We do spring rush, so that's easier for us, but for universities that do fall rush, I'm in favor of making that as low as possible, because a guy coming in that has quite a low GPA might end up being one of the best members and have good academics in college. It's a very different environment than high school.
 - **Kevin Levy, American '16**, Point of Inquiry: Would you be opposed to the legislation in its entirety, or would you prefer a different number for the high school GPA requirement?
 - **Oliver DiCerbo, Denison '26** I prefer whatever the NIC has. If we have to be compliant with that, then lowering it to their standard, which you said is 2 out of 2.5, or someone said, yeah, 2.5. Keeping them both potentially 2.5, I think would be a more fair option.
- **Ethan Jung, Furman '26** (Yes): We're all going to be better than the average guy, right? That's what Beta is. We want the cream of the crop. Part of that is academics. It is putting our best in school, putting our best in the classroom. We don't do the bare minimum. We're Betas. That's our nature.
- **Harrison Caswell, Georgia Tech '27** (No): I have a friend who attended Georgia Tech, and he did dual enrollment in high school. He had some college credit before freshman year. He did multivariable calculus and got a C in that during his senior year. That's a hard class, but according to his bylaw, his college credit or course load was a 2.0, but in his first semester, he had good grades. So would he technically not be able to be initiated, because of his already collegiate GPA? For that reason, I'm against this. The NIC regulations make sense.
- **Jeff Malinowski, Central Michigan '16** (Yes): I've been a high school teacher for eight years. I've worked as college admissions, and I know that there is a serious issue in terms of grade inflation at the high school level. There's also an issue with declining the college applications, leading to which we just do college acceptance. So more of them are getting in. Saying someone was sent into an institution and saying that just means they're good enough

because they got here, that is not as true as it was 10, 15, 20 years ago. And for schools that have spring rush, you have that first semester in the books. What about fall rush? I think the majority of us were freshmen who take a straight high school GPA coming in. You have to hold a high standard.

- **Zach Posinski, DePauw '27** (No) At my school, we're a small primarily undergraduate institution and our rush is all in the spring. The entire first semester is spent with fraternities trying to get some other students, then we'll do formal recruitment over in the spring. This legislation would just hurt my chapter, because we have a decent number of students that mess up their first semester in college. They get to college and party and have fun. Then they get in the house and realize they need to get it together and get their GPA up. We've got a number of guys, especially one guy in my pledge class, he's actually our treasurer now. He came in with a 2.1 and he's gotten his GPA up every single semester since then. If we let this legislation pass, we're not giving people a chance to get into the fraternity and to have a chance and a room for growth after messing up. Second chances are always a good place to go.
- **Oliver DiCerbo, Denison '26** moves to amend the proposal from “3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent” to “2.5 on a 4.0 scale for both college and high school level course work.”
 - Second: **Eric Bedrosian, Butler '26**
 - **Patrick Mason, SMU '26**, Point of Inquiry: Does grade inflation apply to everyone? Are we excluding a lot of people?
 - **Jeff Malinowski, Central Michigan '16** – In general, high schools have seen an increased need in higher GPAs since COVID. That's done through graduation rates being tied to funding that's done through schools pushing dual enrollments, giving 4.5 scale for honors classes and dual enrollment. Every state is different, but there's been a general trend in the last six years of high school graduation rates and high school graduating GPAs are higher and higher than they were before. Holding the higher standard, I think, is good. That's a good question.
 - **Patrick Mason, SMU '26** – Is the wording of this taking into account weighted or unweighted?
 - **Jacob Tidwell, East Carolina '04** – That's not addressed in the wording.
 - VOTE: Passes by voice vote
 - **Tyler Daria, Alabama '26** moves to call the question
 - Second: **Andon Peacock, Wittenburg '26**
 - Call for division following voice vote
 - VOTE: Passes

- Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** calls for a vote on the amended proposal
 - Call for division following voice vote
 - VOTE: Passes

Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** makes final comments

- At the 173rd General Convention in 2012, the Board of Trustees devised a way to recognize a Beta brother who may arguably be considered one of the most high-profile champions of Greek life in North America, and that's Senator Richard G. Lugar, Denison 54. Brother Lugar's advocacy for the Men of Principle Initiative and our beloved Beta Theta Pi remains unmatched. Recognized by President Ronald Reagan as a man of matchless integrity and perhaps the Senate's leading intellect, this great American statesman entered the chapter eternal on April 28th, 2019. The accomplishments and accolades attached to Brother Lugar's name are nearly too many to count. He was an Eagle Scout, a pianist, a high school valedictorian, Rhodes Scholar, mayor, the 20th longest serving U.S. Senator, a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Of course, his 20-year role as spokesman for the Men of Principle Initiative and his attendance at 23 General Conventions cement his name in Beta lore. For his inspiring example, Beta presented him with the Oxford Cup in 1989 and the Shepardson Award in 2005. Like the motto of the Union Literary Society that gave birth to Beta Theta Pi, cooperation makes strength. And that motto embodied Brother Lugar's heart and soul. In that spirit, today it is my honor and a privilege to recognize all of you as Luger Fellows for the work you have done on behalf of your individual chapters and associations, and this great and good fraternity, and how your legislative efforts resemble so closely those of one of mankind's greatest servants and our dear Beta Brother, Brother Lugar.
- All non-members are asked to exit the hall for a members-only activity.

Committee of the Whole

- Convention President **John Smid, Toronto '99** moves to suspend the rules and the Convention resolves to a Committee of the Whole
 - Second: **Andon Peacock, Wittenburg '26**
 - Passes by voice vote

Closing Remarks