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TKE, IWU Set Plans for Fraternity's Future Following Withdrawal of Recognition by University

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Tau Kappa Epsilon International and Illinois Wesleyan University agreed today (Nov. 19) to a five-point plan regarding the future of the social fraternity's Alpha Chapter on the IWU campus.

IWU has withdrawn institutional recognition of the chapter after repeated violations of university policy and lack of strong student leadership, as well as alumni support.

The agreement calls for:

- Closure of the TKE house, located at 1609 N. Franklin Ave., Normal, on Dec. 19.
- IWU will not entertain a request for TKE recognition before the spring of 1999.
- If various contingencies are met, TKE recolonization will begin in January 2000, with TKEs moving into the house in the fall of 2000.
- TKE will maintain the Alpha Chapter charter through the period during which IWU does not recognize the group.
- TKE will maintain staff in Bloomington during this period for educational purposes with the intent of giving their members the ability to lead a strong, well-manged chapter back to the IWU campus.

However, TKE recolonization hinges on two key conditions:

- There must be a strong and trained alumni board to provide guidance.
- There must be evidence of strong, proven leadership among the fraternity's student members.

The agreement was worked out by Craig McCallister, director of chapter services for the Indianapolis-based TKE International, and James D. Matthews, IWU's acting dean of students and associate professor of French.

"We recognize IWU's concerns about past actions of our organization that led to the decision to withdraw institutional recognition," McCallister said. "We are in complete agreement with the way the university is proceeding concerning past actions in the house.

"We also believe that we have reestablished a working partnership with the university," McCallister added, "to ensure the well being of our members and the future of our organization at Illinois Wesleyan. We have been through a great crisis and now we're back to a normal relationship."

Matthews said: "Our goal is to have a strong Greek system in which there is a place for a reorganized and vital TKE chapter. Our goal is to have the best Greek system in the country."

IWU President Minor Myers, jr., is in support of TKE being a future member organization in a strong Illinois Wesleyan Greek system.

"We believe that this agreement," Myers added, "puts us on a course to developing a model relationship between a campus and a fraternity. Many IWU alums have been concerned about what has happened here and have expressed their willingness to work in a positive way to make TKE a model house for the future. We look forward to their support in the next two years as we rebuild."

McCallister and Matthews agreed that TKE International and IWU are committed to educating fraternity members about their rights, responsibilities, and limits in connection with membership in an organization that does not enjoy the benefits of recognition. They also agreed to devise

written guidelines about these issues for the benefit of students.

TKE International will maintain staff in Bloomington through May of 1999. The fraternity will continue to work with its active members on education programs, McCallister said, that will bring the membership in line with university expectations.

That education program is slated to begin this weekend (Nov. 20-22), when upward of 37 TKEs will meet at Lake Bloomington for a retreat zeroing-in on personal responsibility, growth, and leadership. The retreat, which Matthews will attend, will be led by a senior executive from the telecommunications industry, who will focus on personal and organizational leadership skill development, especially in situations where difficult decisions must be made.

McCallister said that TKE International was committed to working with Alpha Chapter alumni in a fund-raising effort aimed at refurbishing the TKE house if recolonization should take place in 2000.

"The university and the fraternity," McCallister said, "want to help IWU bring the property to a competitive level with other campus residence halls. We want this effort to be a model of alumni support for the university."

Up to 36 IWU students will live in Franklin House, the former TKE house, beginning with the spring 1999 semester. It will be a theme house that places an emphasis on development of life skills.

Relocation of the honors theme house program to another facility is planned for fall 2000 with the intent that TKE will return to 1609 N. Franklin having met stipulated requirements in the agreement.

TKE, the nation's largest general collegiate fraternity, was founded at IWU on Jan. 10, 1899. Twenty-seven students live in the house.

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