



Fall 11-12-1998

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Recommended Citation

Aaron, Bob, "Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity Suspended; IWU Cites Alcohol, Other Violations" (1998). *News and Events*. 7038.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/7038>

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Nov. 12, 1998

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Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity Suspended; IWU Cites Alcohol, Other Violations

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Illinois Wesleyan University has withdrawn institutional recognition from the Alpha Chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) after repeated violations of the university's alcohol policy and fraternity rules and regulations.

The international headquarters of the social fraternity supported the university's decision by withdrawing the chapter's charter.

The decision was announced to TKE members at 5 p.m. today (Nov. 12) by IWU President Minor Myers, jr., and James D. Matthews, acting dean of students and associate professor of French.

The decision to withdraw recognition of the fraternity--founded at IWU a century ago--is effective immediately. It comes after review of the chapter's probationary status, violated three times in 12 months. The university-owned TKE house will close at 6 p.m., Dec. 19.

It may be possible, Myers said, to hold discussions in three years about ending TKE's suspension. "Tim Murphy, director of the TKE national organization, is very positive about working with us in future planning," he added.

The university has pledged to work with a group of TKE alumni headed by trustees Herbert A. Getz, class of 1977, and Robert E. Field, class of 1967, to plan for a possible recolonization of the Alpha Chapter after a three-year period.

IWU has determined that the chapter is not viable and doesn't represent the ideals of the fraternity or the university. This determination was made in the wake of several investigations, a Court of Inquiry by TKE International this year, numerous alcohol violations, expulsion of TKE members after various incidents, and blatant defiance of mandated corrective actions by the IWU chapter.

The TKE house is located at 1609 Franklin Ave., Normal.

Reaction to Fraternity Closing

"Regrettably and unfortunately, Illinois Wesleyan's TKE chapter has proved itself to be dysfunctional and irresponsible," Myers said. "After repeated and persistent failed efforts to reform the chapter by TKE International and IWU, there was no other sensible or responsible alternative than to close the chapter. Ensuring the health and safety of the 27

(more)

TKE/2

students living in the TKE House is the first priority of the university in this tragedy."

"The actions we're announcing today only affect the TKEs," Myers emphasized. "This is not part of any plan to close down the Greek system at Illinois Wesleyan. We have a good Greek system--and fraternities have been part of IWU's community for 132 years.

"What we have here," Myers added, "is a situation that is solely the result of the TKE's behavior. They have brought this on themselves. The lesson here is simple: Fraternity brothers must be responsible for the consequences of their actions.

"And now," Myers added, "our task is equally simple, we must help reintegrate the men into the general campus life and help them graduate on time."

Matthews emphasized that, "The culture of the TKE house--built up over several years--resulted in the chapter's suspension. This culture, which led to reckless behavior, put our students in danger--and that's something Illinois Wesleyan simply can't tolerate."

IWU, Matthews said, was compelled to take decisive action to avoid tragedies like those experienced at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Louisiana State University, where in 1997 two fraternity members died from alcohol use and abuse.

Announcement Procedures

IWU's fraternity and sorority chapter presidents, the Interfraternity (IFC) and Panhellenic councils (PHC), and Student Senate leadership were notified of the university's decision to withdraw TKE recognition at 6 p.m. today (Nov. 12) in a meeting with Kimberly Stash, assistant dean of students and Greek affairs.

IFC and PHC represent IWU's six national social fraternities and five national social sororities. They coordinate fraternity and sorority activities and projects on campus.

Letters have been sent to the parents of TKE members, parents of students involved in other Greek organizations, and TKE alumni informing them of the university's actions.

Counseling services will be available to affected students through BroMenn Healthcare. Counselors will contact chapter members beginning tomorrow (Nov. 13).

Students, faculty, and staff will be informed of the university's TKE actions in a Nov. 13 letter from Myers.

Housing Issues

TKE members will receive university residence hall housing assignments after IWU's Office of Residential Life receives request forms from affected students by the Nov.

(more)

TKE/3

20 deadline. Eligible students may opt to move off-campus.

The TKE house will be converted into an Honors-Wellness house, available for occupancy for the spring 1999 semester. IWU's Physical Plant staff will begin conversion work on Dec. 20. IWU residence halls--including the former TKE house--will be open for second semester move-in on Jan. 5.

"It will provide an excellent environment for studying," Matthews said, referring to the new Honors-Wellness house, "especially for seniors working on research honors and other projects. It will be a coed residence, accommodating about 25 students in single rooms.

"We polled students last year," Matthews said, "and the most popular theme house idea was wellness--spiritual and physical."

Additional wellness programming for the theme house will be developed in the coming months.

A Hall Director will be assigned responsibility for the Honors-Wellness residence.

Events Leading to Closing the Fraternity

During 1997-98, the Illinois Wesleyan TKE chapter was the subject of numerous disciplinary and related incidents, involving alcohol violations, damage to the fraternity house, telephone calls and correspondence between TKE International and the Dean of Students office, and a Court of Inquiry conducted by TKE International.

By May, Matthews contacted TKE's executive director indicating the chapter situation had reached a critical level and requested immediate action from the international fraternity.

TKE International conducted a Court of Inquiry on May 30. The IWU chapter was charged and found guilty of a range of issues, including:

- Continued flagrant conduct tending to bring reproach upon the fraternity and degrade it before the public.
- Failure of a chapter to obey the rules or orders of the administration of the college or university at which it is located.
- Failure of the chapter to enforce the fraternity's constitution, bylaws, traditions, and obligations governing its members.
- Failure to conform to the fraternity's constitution, bylaws, traditions, and obligations.

The chapter also was found guilty of violating chapter risk management guidelines

(more)

TKE/4

associated with illegal alcohol consumption.

In the aftermath of this ruling, the international fraternity imposed 10 sanctions on the IWU chapter, while Illinois Wesleyan levied six sanctions for violations of university policy.

Among the TKE-imposed sanctions were: the IWU chapter was placed on charter probation until May 15, 1999, when the group's status would be reviewed; the entire chapter must attend a mandatory three-hour alcohol education program; each active must perform 10 hours of community service per semester; officers must attend a vision setting mission retreat before the fall 1998 semester; a TKE international staffer will be on campus a minimum of two weeks at the beginning of the fall 1998 semester to assist the chapter; and 17 chapter members be expelled and not allowed on TKE property at IWU.

Among IWU sanctions were: a house parent/hall director must live in the chapter house; each TKE active and incoming pledge are required to perform five hours of alcohol awareness education, and all pledgship activities must be reviewed by the assistant dean of students.

Despite these actions, alcohol violations and related reckless behavior continued by the TKEs.

TKE, for example, was given permission to host a non-alcoholic barn dance, off-campus, over Homecoming weekend in October. Because the chapter was under investigation for a previous alleged alcohol violation, permission to hold the barn dance came with these stipulations: no alcohol was to be present at the event, IWU must receive a guest list and be notified of the event's location, and a university official must be present at the event. Despite these stipulations, alcohol consumption by TKEs was documented before and during the event.

TKE Creed

These events and others documented by IWU violate the letter and spirit of TKE's traditions and creed.

When five IWU students gathered together to launch TKE on Jan. 10, 1899, they said they were forming a society to aid college students' "mental, moral, and social development."

The TKE creed calls for belief in the "worthiness and dignity of my fellow man," "the goal of wisdom," belief in the life based on "integrity, justice, sincerity, patience, moderation, culture, . . . in order to serve as a responsible, mature member of society,"

(more)

TKE/5

and belief "in my fraternity as a brotherhood of gentlemen."

"I would suggest that much we have seen in the behavior of the TKEs violates this creed," Matthews said. "They not only have recklessly endangered their friends by irresponsible use of alcohol, but they also have trampled on the core beliefs of their own fraternity."

TKE Background

TKE, the nation's largest general collegiate fraternity, was founded at IWU on Jan. 10, 1899.

More than 207,323 members have been initiated into the fraternity since its founding. The fraternity has more than 300 undergraduate chapters and colonies in 48 states, two Canadian provinces, and the District of Columbia.

TKE will celebrate its centennial on Jan. 9, 1999, with Bloomington's Interstate Center, 2301 W. Market, as the banquet focal point.

Eight cities--Atlanta, Bloomington, Boston, Kansas City, Mo., Los Angeles, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh--will be hosting simultaneous black-tie events that evening. Satellite technology will enable attendees in all cities to view and participate in the evening's program.

"IWU looks forward to welcoming TKE members from across the country to Bloomington," Myers said, "to celebrate a milestone in the fraternity's history. And, as part of the centennial celebration, we're developing a guide to historic TKE sites. During the centennial celebration, we will also conduct campus tours. Several of our theatre majors have been involved in the shooting of a video marking TKE's 100th anniversary."

Among TKE's prominent alumni are former President Ronald Reagan, Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.), the late William L. Shirer, CBS News correspondent and author of "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," Nobel Prize winner William A. Fowler, and retired astronaut Gerald Carr.

The fraternity's headquarters, known as the Offices of the Grand Chapter, is located at 8645 Founders Rd., Indianapolis, Ind. 46268-1393; telephone: 317/872-6533; FAX: 317/875-8353.

IWU Policy

The university's policy permits students age 21 years or older to have wine and beer in designated campus areas. Student organizations are permitted to host pre-approved functions with alcohol. However, these events must be registered with the Dean of

(more)

TKE/6

Students office and must conform to IWU guidelines.

The Dean of Students office observes: "It is communicated to students that the expectation . . . is that student organizations will host safe and responsible events with appropriate risk management procedures in place."

About IWU

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.