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IU Kokomo expands student life opportunities, colonizing fraternity this semester

KOKOMO, Ind. — Indiana University Kokomo will expand its student life opportunities this fall, with the colonization of Phi Kappa Tau fraternity this semester.

Men interested in learning more about joining the fraternity should attend a call out meeting, set for noon to 3 p.m. Friday, August 30, in the Kelley Student Center, Room 223.

Students Cody Phelps and Sam Williamson led the effort to bring the national group to campus, seeing a need for the benefits fraternity membership provides.

Phelps said the idea first came up after a cross country team practice, when they were talking about what they could do to get more people to attend games and participate in campus activities.

“We were thinking of what would make it feel more like a traditional campus, rather than a commuter college,” he said. “A fraternity is a big part of the college experience for many young men.”

Dean of Students Sarah Sarber encouraged them to research fraternities and choose one that best met with their goals and philosophy. They chose Oxford, Ohio-based Phi Kappa Tau, because of its emphasis on service. It also has chapters at IU Bloomington and at Purdue University.

Phelps, a nursing student from Anchorage, Alaska, serves as president, with Williamson, a communication arts major from Logansport, as vice president. Kory George, a business student from Peru, is treasurer.

They attended leadership training at fraternity headquarters, preparing for colonization, in September or October.

Michael Tulley, faculty advisor, anticipates membership of about 50 men at first, gradually expanding to 100. About 30 potential members attended a call out meeting during the spring semester, and he plans additional recruitment opportunities in the fall.

Sarber said the campus has a successful history starting strong Greek chapters, as Phi Sigma Sigma sorority recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.

“The women in our sorority are excited to work with the fraternity, and make it successful,” she said. “They look forward to working together on projects and events.”

Williamson has been surprised by how much interest the fraternity has drawn.

“I have people ask me about it all the time, and want to join,” he said. “It will add a social dimension that didn’t exist before, and gives us an opportunity to network not only with our campus fraternity brothers, but with alumni nationwide. There’s no disputing the networking you do in a fraternity can help you later in life.”

He added that campuses with sororities and fraternities benefit, according to his research.

“When you bring in a Greek system, enrollment skyrockets,” he said. “There are also philanthropic benefits, as the members perform community and campus service projects, and contribute to the campus community. It’s not just about partying.”

It also gives younger students a chance for mentoring from upperclassmen, George said, and provides incentives to do well in class. Members have to maintain academic standards to remain in the group.

“We want to have a good quantity of members, but quality members,” he said. “There are academic standards, and we have to maintain a GPA that is significantly higher than the student body.”

Tulley said a fraternity brings another social and service opportunity to campus.

“It brings a more collegiate feel to the campus,” he said. “Being in a Greek chapter is a part of college life that our students want. It’s another opportunity for students to find their smaller community, and to connect to the campus and other students.”

Phelps is looking for Phi Kappa Tau alumni who would like to work with the chapter, and be included in events. The group also needs community volunteers to serve on the local Board of Governors.

For more information about membership or volunteer opportunities, contact Tulley at tulley@iuk.edu.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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