

The Commanders' Dinner

Alumni Engagement Series

Today's Presenters

- **Todd Denson (Nicholls State)**
- **Bill Geddy (Georgia Southern)**
- **Kyle Lee (Eastern New Mexico)**
- **Kevin Kedzior (Northern Illinois)**



Today's Agenda

- Overview of the program concept – the why
- The mechanics – start to finish – Theta Kappa & comments
- Overview of Theta Sigma (Missouri State) event – Kyle
- Overview of Theta Eta (Northern Illinois) event – Kevin
- Comments & questions

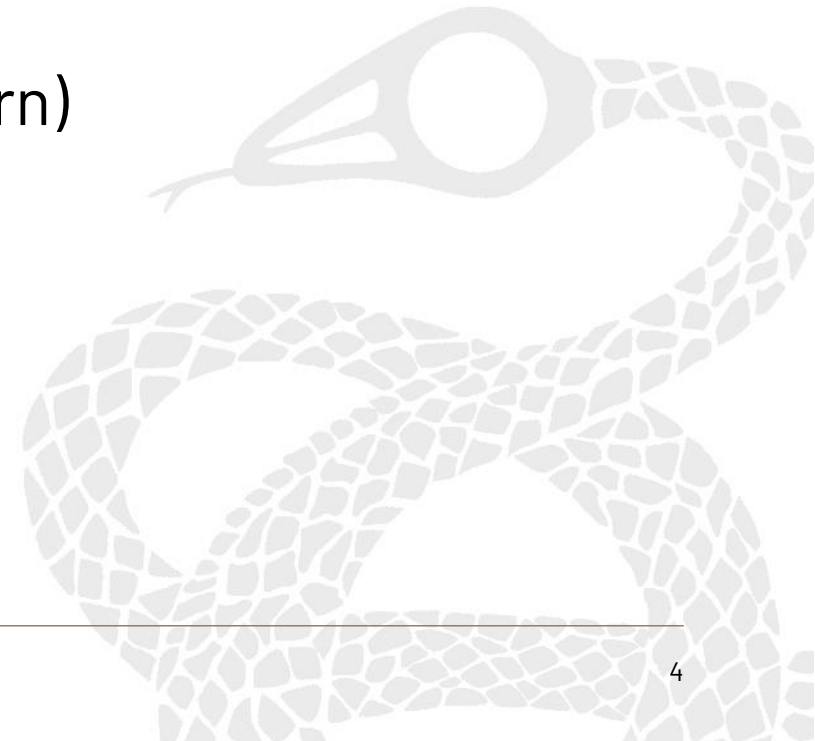
The Commanders' Dinner

... a tradition in the making



Presented by:

Bill Geddy (Georgia Southern)



Where it all started & why



- Mu Chapter, University of Georgia
- 3 alumni; 1 commander – dining room table
- Start with a handful – grow & sustain
- Engage alumni in a meaningful, memorable way that builds your own tradition
- It is our most sustainable, highest value, lowest effort program that we have
- Real value of dinner – **brotherhood**

The Why

- Welcome the new commander
- Meet upon the election of the new commander
- Convey the combined wisdom of our experience, our passion for leadership, our willingness to support and mentor him
- Impart the importance of the need to protect the brand and name of your chapter and Sigma Nu
- The need to make the right yet sometimes very hard and very unpopular decisions for the good of the chapter and fraternity.



More of “the Why”

- Demonstrate Support of Commander & Chapter
- Opportunity for Commander to “Stand & Deliver”
- Opportunity for Past Commanders to Demonstrate Support
- Deliver “State of the Fraternity”
- Demonstrable support for the Chapter Advisor & Alumni Advisory Board
- Follow the vision of “Excelling with Honor.”



"The When"

- Following the installation of new Commander
- Following College of Chapters
- Once a year is an easy(ier) commitment for all alumni
- January is an easy month to book a room (if needed)
- Book the reservation immediately; send reminders with the follow up email; send reminder 4-6 months prior to the dinner; send final reminder 1 week before the dinner. Make phone calls if helpful.



Benefits

- Grow a nucleus of members and servant leaders to the chapter and fraternity that will assist in advising and leading the officers.
- Build volunteer ranks of the alumni chapter, the house corporation, and the alumni advisory board plus other volunteer roles.
- Align the needs of the chapter alumni and volunteers with the needs of the collegiate leadership and membership.
- Unify the most active alumni of the chapter in a special event where they can collaborate and network with their peers, meet new generations of members, and connect with collegiates in a slower paced social setting.



- **History**
- **Traditions**
- **Heroes**

... brotherhood





Sigma Nu Fraternity

Celebrating Our History, Creating Traditions, & Recognizing Heroes ... the Commanders' Dinner

Looking start, restart, or re-energize



- Post Covid reset – get people back with something special
- Honor our **history, traditions, & heroes**
- Engage alumni in a meaningful, memorable way that builds your own tradition
- Celebrate the history of Sigma Nu & your chapter as well as saluting your heroes
- Easy to do – you can do your first tomorrow*

It's not just a dinner – it's a concept



- Make it a tradition
- Make it work for your chapter
- It's a dinner, a lunch, a breakfast
- Be mindful of your alumni characteristics
- Allow it to change with your needs
- It's about **brotherhood**

Random Thoughts



- Start **tomorrow** – start the tradition
- **Anything** is fine – it will catch on
- Use as an opportunity to infuse **the Big “F”**
- Make it the **centerpiece** of alumni events
- It’s about **brotherhood**
- Honor our **history, traditions, & heroes**

Comments from a Commander



- Brings younger generation of leaders in
- Extends generations of chapter
- Created touch points for commander
- First steak dinner outside of Outback
- A stage to practice ... with a new group
- In one setting see a wide array of generations
- Honor our **history, traditions, & heroes**

Quotes from a Commander



"It helps the younger generation of leaders stay involved and promotes involvement in the organization post-graduation"

"It does the same for ... (everyone), but for the guys right out of college it creates early touch points into the most active and influential alumni"

"It provided me the perspective that the job is bigger than just the active chapter and extends generations of Mus"

"It provided me a stage to practice professionalism, public speaking, networking and introduced me to the real world"

"It sets the stage for the year as Commander and what's expected to succeed (and also what is at stake)"

Comments from an Advisor



- It's our chance to showcase the current Chapter, its new leader
- It's an opportunity for the chapter to talk about the chapter and about the university
- Ensure alumni are feeling connected to what is happening on campus & in the chapter
- Dinner can be a megaphone to your alumni
- Honor our **history, traditions, & heroes**

Some key points to remember



- KISS – Keep it simple
- Make the date predictable
- Make it sustainable
- Make it interesting
- Make it memorable
- Make it enjoyable
- Make it so they are planning on next year's

Traditions – that last the test of time



- Make it an honor to attend
- Make it valuable (Commander/Chapter/Alumni)
- Make it self-funded
- Make it so others want to attend
- Make it the centerpiece of communications
- Don't Reinvent – Make it your own – Make it Special

Your first Dinner

Theta Kappa (Georgia Southern) Example



The Dinner – from concept to reality



- You can start tomorrow – it is that simple
- Welcome reception
- Group photo – professional photographer
- Opening remarks & presentations
- Introduction of incoming Commander
- Other presentations, recognitions
- Advice & Dinner

The invitation list – Who?

- Commander (to honor) & Lt. Commander from Chapter (Welcome)
- Immediate Past Commander (to recognize)
- All past Chapter Commanders
- All Chapter Volunteers:
 - Alumni Advisory Board
 - House Corporation
 - Alumni Chapter Officers
 - LEAD Facilitators
- Sigma Nu Staff, Division Commander, Foundation, & High Council nearby
- Alumni you want to bestow special recognition



Save the Date – Pick the Date

- Ensure the collegiate officers can attend
- Make sure your core alumni can attend
- Make it a date that everyone will remember
- Avoid conflicts that will decrease participation
- Make a date that is accessible to travelers, if needed
- Publish a “Save the Date” notification, so everyone marks their calendar
- Ensure that the date is well known before elections each year
- Publish an invitation as early as possible.



The invitation

- Publicize widely – website, Facebook, LinkedIn, email
- Email a calendar invite to everyone
- Create an RSVP means (Evite, Eventbrite, RSVPify)
- Create a call to action to RSVP – you need a headcount
- Publish multiple times
- Consider a printed & mailed invitation – arguments for & against
- Consider having the chapter call the invitees
- Reminders, reminders, reminders



Preparing for the Dinner

- What do you need for the dinner
 - Out-going Commander's Badge
 - Gavel & block
 - Any awards or certificates
- Prepare the Commander
- Composite, awards, displays for the dinner
- Contract with a photographer
- Building & printing a program



The Day of the Dinner

- Send a last-minute reminder out
- Consider sending a list of attendees
- Get there early
- Make sure the collegiates are there early
- Be prepared for last minute cancelations
- Have a great time!
- It's about the **brotherhood**!



Welcome Reception

- Make sure you get someone there early
- The bar area is usually perfect
- Early entry to the room works as well
- Have handout from chapter & HQs
- Get your casual photos
- Professional photographer is worth the money
- Get the little things knocked out
- Alumni Update forms to fill out



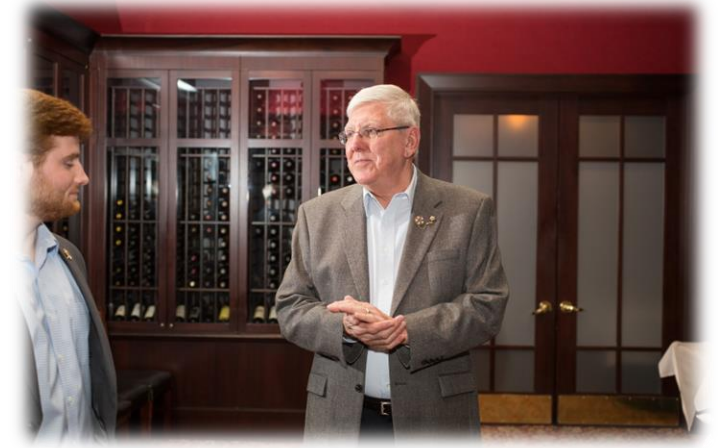
The Group Photo

- A professional photographer is worth it
- Maximize number of members are present
- Make sure the lighting is good
- Arrange so everyone is visible
- Do it right – this is what will bring others
- Consider specific group shots



Recognitions

- Recognizing Chapter Eternal
 - Empty Table/Place Setting
- Reenactment of Oath of Office
 - DO IT again – DO IT in front of peers
- Passing of the Chapter Pin to new Commander
- Presentation of Gavel & Block
- Recognize Outgoing Commander, Pin, and very brief comments



The Commander's Report

- Commander's opportunity to "stand and deliver"
- Requires thought, practice and dialogue with prior Commanders to be most effective.
- Provides a stage to practice professionalism, public speaking, networking and an introduction to "the real world".
- It sets the stage for the year as Commander and what's expected to succeed (and also what is at stake)
- The job is bigger than just the active chapter and extends generations.
- Cover the basics on number of members, prior rush, number of initiates, and what is going on in chapter & university



Advice for the Commander

- Welcome the newest commander of the chapter
- Follow the vision of “Excelling with Honor.”
- The need to protect the brand and name
- Convey the wisdom of our experience, our passion for leadership, our willingness to support and mentor him
- Choose the harder right over the easier wrong, and “these men” will stand with you.
- Keep it positive, professional, and upbeat – keep it moving



The Dinner itself – it's a wrap

- We place our order after the group photo
- Invocation – plan ahead; have someone prepared
- Thank all attendees – have a great dinner
- Keep the event moving, don't let it drag, keep people engaged
- After the dinner send a thank you to everyone
- A personal note from the honored commander is a nice touch
- Set the date for next year



“Rinse & Repeat” – you’re ready!



- **History**
- **Traditions**
- **Heroes**



Theta Sigma Commanders' Luncheon

Presented by:

Kyle Lee (Eastern New Mexico)





Sigma Nu Theta Sigma Chapter Missouri State University

Commanders' Luncheon Overview



Theta Eta Commanders' Dinner

Presented by:

Kevin Kedzior (Northern Illinois)







Questions?

Let us help you get started and create this tradition for your chapter – see our contact data next.

Thank You

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[Commanders' Dinner Sample Documentation](#)

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