



BETA THETA PI
— MEN OF PRINCIPLE —

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

General Convention Sustains Trustees' Substance-Free Housing Position
Strengthens Policy by Adding it to Organization's Governing Code

OXFORD, OHIO, August 9, 2018 – In historic fashion, delegates to Beta Theta Pi's 179th General Convention upheld the Board of Trustees' substance-free housing policy announced on February 2, ensuring all Fraternity properties will be alcohol-, tobacco- and drug-free by August 15, 2020. Beginning in 1997 its march toward becoming a substance-free housed organization, two-thirds of Beta's housed chapters already live under such guidelines.

"Beta Theta Pi has made tremendous strides in cultural reform since inception of the Men of Principle initiative 20 years ago," said General Secretary Wayne Kay, the Fraternity's chairman of the board. "Yet, catastrophic incidents experienced by so many fraternities, including Beta's own tragic death of Tim Piazza at our Penn State chapter, proves the point that more must be done on college campuses everywhere if we are to return fraternity houses to their founding purposes: to refine young men, foster their personal growth and provide them with lifelong friendships and a sense of home as they begin to make their way in life."

"Our own recent tragedy has caused us to dig deeper in understanding Beta's local chapter cultures, and the statistical findings are compelling," he added. "Our risk management loss data confirms wet-housed chapters experience sexual assault, hazing, alcohol poisoning, assault and battery, bodily injury and falls from heights in dramatic fashion relative to their substance-free-housed Beta brothers. This is not tolerable in a fraternity whose mission is to develop men of principle for a principled life."

Following three days of intense [data analysis](#) and information sessions on the realities of alcohol and drug use in chapter homes, the more than four-hour legislative debate was comprehensive.

Rising senior Matt Stranzl, *Elon '19*, president of his 83-man chapter in North Carolina – the largest on campus and one that boasts the top fraternity GPA – articulated one of the most impassioned speeches on the legislative floor, which was met with thunderous applause:

“Our chapter at Elon University is the only dry house on a wet campus, and wet would be an understatement to describe the other houses on our campus. They use their houses excessively for parties and alcohol-related events. Based on that context, I’d like to address some of the arguments made by those who are in opposition of [substance-free housing].

First, regarding the claim that [substance-free housing] will affect your social relevance on your campus. I would question what you are prioritizing as a leader. Having a dry house has given us a significant advantage in recruiting; it has given us respect from school officials and the rest of campus that other organizations lack. Additionally, it has turned our chapter house into a place centered around meaningful relationships rather than those that are centered around alcoholic consumption. I will take that as a president over social relevance any day of the week.

Second, regarding the point that this is taking away your self-governance, I argue that this is the result of our failure to self-govern. If we were capable of self-governing effectively regarding wet houses, we would not be having this conversation.

Third, regarding the point that this is the actions of the few affecting the whole, I don’t disagree with that belief. However, sometimes the actions of the few have such drastic consequences on the masses that we need to protect the masses. The masses will not survive if the few continue to act in the same way.

Finally, regarding the point that this won’t work, and people don’t have to abide by it, there is no choice. With the way that the perception of Greek Life is trending, it is almost inevitable that all fraternity houses will be dry at some point in the next 10-20 years. We may as well get ahead of the curve and learn how to function in our reality rather than being left behind.”

“While we will continue to keep our heads down and work hard on the challenging issues before us, I remain incredibly proud of our young men and the volunteers who support them for having the courage to lead in an environment that oftentimes discounts young men and their ability to discern right from wrong and make important changes and sacrifices for the good of the order,” said Kay following the General Convention casting its decision. “Beta’s contribution in advancing bold reform measures that go to the heart of the high-risk fraternity culture on campuses across North America will continue to be our uppermost priority.”

With a decisive 91 to 49 vote in favor of adding the Trustees’ substance-free position to the Risk Management Policy of the larger organization, Beta becomes the fourth of five international fraternities of the 62-member North-American Interfraternity Conference to adopt such a policy, including interfraternity leaders Farmhouse, Phi Delta Theta, Sigma Phi Epsilon and Delta Upsilon.

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Beta Theta Pi is a college fraternity committed to developing men of principle for a principled life. Founded in 1839 and boasting nearly 210,000 lifetime members, today Beta serves more than 10,000 undergraduate members on 139 campuses across North America, 134,000 living alumni and 1,800 volunteers. The Fraternity’s Foundation and Administrative Office is located near its founding site at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.