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Why are you “Proud to be a Beta?”

I am proud to be a Beta because we exist with purpose. As Betas we add meaningful action to our values and vision. When I helped found Beta at James Madison, I wanted to change Greek life, but more importantly create a new space. Before fall 2018, there was no space at JMU for men to find brotherhood grounded in authenticity. A space where men are built up rather than broken down, where brothers find fraternity in vulnerability rather than hazing, where grades are held high and values held close. I'm proud to be a Beta because the brotherhood I helped create was the home many men at JMU finally found that they identified with.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BECOMING A FOUNDING FATHER?

I would recommend becoming a founding father if you want to be a part of something bigger than yourself. Being a founding father, let alone a Beta founding father, is a huge responsibility. I helped found the JMU Beta chapter, not because I wanted to be in Greek life, but because I wanted to change it. I wanted to show the men at my campus that there is a fraternity here for them who goes against the grain of modern joining and 'frat life' and instead emphasizes brotherhood through shared values and vulnerability. I didn't like fraternities at JMU – so I helped make one. Find your purpose for being a Beta Founding Father and then let it fuel you for the next four years.

HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGING?

The experience was very challenging, but infinitely rewarding. Building a fraternity is far from easy, whether it be creating your constitution and bylaws or long chapter discussions about your chapter's identity. However, the biggest challenge you may face is actually one of our strengths: diversity of opinion. You need to recruit men who share your values, but also those who don't always share your beliefs or ideas. It may sound counter intuitive, but from my experience the best decisions are forged

through adversity. Welcome a challenge into your fraternity, balance it and control it, then use it to build your fraternity. This is difficult to harness, but if you do your chapter will be much stronger for it.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PROSPECTIVE FOUNDING FATHER?

Advice I would give to a founding father is to ask yourself, not, what's in this for me, but what's in me for this? If you become a founding father you're embarking on a selfless journey, and you must be devoted to what you stand for and not blinded by what you stand on. This is a privilege and an awesome responsibility. Enjoy it, but remember your purpose.

WHAT HAS BETA THETA PI GIVEN TO YOU?

Beta Theta Pi has given me a sense of fulfillment. I made my change. I made memories and friends along the way that I will have for the rest of my life. It gives me a smile on my face every time I think about it. The road was hard, but so worth it. Beta gave me a chance to leave behind a legacy with my brothers and at my university that I am so proud of.

WHAT WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOUNDING FATHER EXPERIENCE?

The highlight of my founding father experience and also my fondest memory is a chapter meeting we had in spring 2020. We were having our first chapter meeting of the month in February – formal attire. I was president at the time, and I was arriving late from grabbing the room key. I got to the hallway where our room was for chapter, and it was filled with Beta brothers – all dressed up for the occasion greeting me as I turned the corner. I have never forgotten this memory because it was the moment that I knew my work as a founding father was working and worth it. From a founding class of 30 to a strong 70 Beta brothers, it was a visual representation of the fruits of my labor. This was just one of the highlights of being a founding father. You'll have moment like this too, where you realize the gravity of what it means to be a founding father.

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FOUNDING FATHER TESTIMONIES



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Why are you “Proud to be a Beta?”

I'm proud to be a Beta because we strive to uphold strong morals in addition to excelling in every aspect of our lives.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BECOMING A FOUNDING FATHER?

The founding father experience is all around a great opportunity for building friendships and engaging in a true leadership experience. As a founding father, you are likely to be involved in many things helping get the chapter established. Though I am the vice president of brotherhood, I am also a part of the recruiting and alumni engagement committees, so there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and learn a diverse range of life skills!

HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGING?

As the first vice president of brotherhood for my chapter, the biggest challenge so far has been learning how to create a diverse range of events that will foster strong brotherhood. Since we're starting out, it is our responsibility to serve as role models for future classes that we recruit, and I play a large role in helping our brothers achieve that.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PROSPECTIVE FOUNDING FATHER?

Don't rush into the process. Talk to your friends and family about the journey you are about to embark on and make sure you make the right decision for yourself. There can be a little bit of a time commitment, but it is an enjoyable one!

WHAT HAS BETA THETA PI GIVEN TO YOU?

While the intangibles such as friendship and brotherhood are priceless, I've already gotten an internship through a brother who I would've never met if I didn't join Beta. This fraternity allows you to network with more people, consequently helping you build your career.

Questions Continued...

WHAT WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOUNDING FATHER EXPERIENCE?

It's cliché but it has definitely been the brotherhood and relationships that I've started to form. From the spontaneous trips to watch a baseball game in San Diego from LA, to the smash bros tournaments at a brother's apartment, to Swim With Mike (our fundraiser), the experience has given me fond memories that I will cherish.

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Why are you “Proud to be a Beta?”

I am proud to be a Beta because I am proud of what this chapter stands for. We are trying to buck the stigma surrounding fraternities in a fraternity and sorority life culture that has struggled in recent years. We are trying to find a balance between social activities and academics as well as the philanthropic side of our organization. While it is a challenge to get everything up and running, I like the direction we are going and am impressed with all of our members and their commitment to what we think a fraternity should be/stand for.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BECOMING A FOUNDING FATHER?

I would recommend becoming a founding father because it allows you to shape not only the Fraternity that you are a part of, but it allows you to shape your own experience and the future experiences of the men who come after you. You get to choose what legacy to leave and pave the way for men to have the best Beta experience possible. I chose to be a founding father because I wanted to join a group who pushed one another to not only be better men but better human beings, growing not only in social but also in academic and career pursuits.

HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGING?

The founding father experience is extremely challenging in a number of ways. The first and most obvious is that you are trying to gain traction as a new group, yet often Beta is very different from what most people see as a “fraternity” experience (this was the case at my campus). It is sometimes difficult for people to buy into what you are selling as a fraternity, so recruiting members can be difficult early on. Additionally, founding fathers don’t have a lot of knowledge on how a fraternity should be run. We often ran into problems simply on the basis of inexperience and many people trying to find their way and their roles in the brotherhood.

Questions Continued . . .

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PROSPECTIVE FOUNDING FATHER?

It is a very challenging but very rewarding experience. Stick with the goals; you are going to hit road blocks along the way, but it is how you push through those obstacles that will shape you – both as a fraternity and as an individual. This experience gives you so much more than you can imagine, from leadership to brotherhood, and it is very much worth the struggle and effort.

WHAT HAS BETA THETA PI GIVEN TO YOU?

Beta has given me a group of men who I can call my brothers and have no trouble confiding in or having fun with. Being a transfer student, I thought it would be extremely hard to find a good group of people with whom I identified, but as soon as I found Beta, I found a group of people who gave me a home. I love the men that I have gotten to go through this experience with. They are some of the closest people to me in Boulder, and I look forward to bringing new members into this brotherhood.

WHAT WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOUNDING FATHER EXPERIENCE?

I think the highlight of this experience for me was the sunset hike that I was able to go on with a few of my brothers before initiation. This was the time that I realized how special of an experience this is and how close I had become with my Beta brothers.

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Why are you “Proud to be a Beta?”

I am proud to be a Beta because I believe the legacy I have left and the brotherhood I have created are not bound to now but will be with me and my brothers throughout and even after my lifetime. Beta was a place I could call home when it felt like I was far away from home, because I had found a group of brothers who excelled in pursuing their life goals, being leaders, playing an active role in their community, bettering themselves every day, and having a great time while doing it. I believe it is a recipe for greatness that is built into the core principles of our fraternity, and I am proud to have found it in the Zeta Beta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BECOMING A FOUNDING FATHER?

Becoming a founding father was truly one of the most challenging but rewarding experiences of my undergraduate career. The responsibility and hurdles it has provided allowed me to build my character and resilience to an extent I never thought possible, while the authenticity of the brotherhood and opportunities were vastly beyond my imagination. As a founding father, you inevitably develop a deep connection to your chapter and the General Fraternity, and there are few opportunities as rewarding as watching the fruits of your labor blossom, as founding fathers so often get to do. It will push you but as young men, that is the only way we will grow into men of principle, and I thank the founding father experience for that. I would recommend it to anyone because it is definitely one that pushes you outside your comfort zone and is really the only way to grow and learn about yourself.

HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGING?

The experience was challenging because as a founding father you are tasked with directly creating the culture that will guide your chapter of Beta Theta Pi for generations of brothers. The culture of principle that Beta aims to instill in us is one that takes discipline, commitment and an introspective view that

Questions Continued . . .

many of us are not taught as men in today's society. Trying to overcome these barriers while setting a good example for the brothers that will follow after you will not come naturally and developing the ability to navigate that is the challenge and the reward all in one. For most of you, this will be your first experience of this nature, and that will be daunting at times, but know that the experience, though good and bad at times, will serve you well.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PROSPECTIVE FOUNDING FATHER?

I would tell a prospective founding father to fully utilize all the support and resources the General Fraternity provides but make sure to apply them in a way that best benefits his chapter. This includes having an executive board that is always receiving guidance from its advisors but also in constant communication with general members to understand their perspectives and goals for the organization. It is easy to develop tunnel vision in certain positions but it takes actions from those in positions of leadership as well as those they serve to break down whatever barriers exist because open and effective communication or the lack thereof can be the greatest tool or detriment to a new chapter.

WHAT HAS BETA THETA PI GIVEN TO YOU?

Beta Theta Pi has given me the perspective, environment, opportunities and brotherhood necessary for the journey that comes with being a man of principle, which I don't believe would have been provided to me anywhere else. I myself have had to learn to be confident through playing an active role in the trajectory of my chapter and apply myself to school more effectively thanks to the support and encouragement from my brothers. It has given me a point of contact that will not only tie me to my undergraduate institution forever but also ties me to the countless Beta brothers that are spread across the continent and ready to help a brother every chance they get. Most of all it has given me brothers that will last a lifetime and whose success I am just as invested in as my own. That is a powerful thing that I know will inevitably drive everyone in our circle to success.

WHAT WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOUNDING FATHER EXPERIENCE?

A highlight for me from the founding father experience was one of the first round tables we had at our brotherhood retreat. We were spending the night grilling outside by the pool while we all shared with each other something that was core to our existence and our main priority in life while confiding in each other about the struggles that come with achieving these. Having this opportunity to be vulnerable with my brothers I think is something that has carried through my chapter so far, and I think it is an important tool that all men have to cultivate. Beta makes that a priority. This highlight is one that proves the ability of men to be both an emotional and physical force to be reckoned with when surrounded by other like-minded individuals.

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Why are you “Proud to be a Beta?”

I am proud to be a Beta because I am a part of a fraternity that believes in being the difference. There are many stigmas surrounding Greek life on college campuses. I am part of a group of individuals who follow and live the values of the organization that help break barriers for all. Being in Beta allows me to commit to serving a purpose much greater than myself. I am always proud to wear the letters, as a symbol of everything Beta represents.

WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BECOMING A FOUNDING FATHER?

Joining a new Beta chapter in its early stages allows for an opportunity to help set the direction of the Fraternity. You can work together with other founders to strategize and create a foundation that will motivate and inspire all the men who come after you to follow the mission, vision and core values that bond our brotherhood. There's no other leadership experience like it.

HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGING?

There is no finish line to establishing a fraternity on campus. Every experience is a first and can bring difficulties. Sometimes it feels as if you are walking on uncharted territory, but at the end of the day you get through it, together. Being the change is a difficult task, the odds are often against you. If you create the right goals and expectations, then you ensure that with time overcoming obstacles will be worth the effort.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PROSPECTIVE FOUNDING FATHER?

Trust the process. At times the direction of the group may seem unclear; be the advocate that steers the group in the right direction. Do not be afraid to be yourself. Take every moment as an opportunity to learn and grow. Although it may be difficult at times, be open-minded, bond with every brother, know that you are in it together. One of the best decisions I've made in college was joining Beta as a founding father.

Questions Continued . . .

WHAT HAS BETA THETA PI GIVEN TO YOU?

Beta has allowed me to be a servant leader. I can support my brothers personally and know they support me. I have been able to learn and grow by making decisions and learning from our mistakes. In working with my fellow brothers, we continue to establish the organization and help encourage others to follow and do things the right way. Most importantly, Beta has allowed me to meet some of my closest friends that I know will have my back well beyond our college years.

WHAT WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOUNDING FATHER EXPERIENCE?

The first brotherhood retreat away from campus is one of my most favorite experiences. During the retreat I realized how close I had become with all my brothers. I remembered that just a couple of months before we were all strangers in a classroom. This was also an exciting time for all, as we prepared to initiate our initial class of brothers. Through all the hard work in the beginning, we were able to create a memorable experience for those who came after us.

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