



A Rough Patch, Lately

President's Message
July 25, 2018

My DU Brothers:

Much has been afoot at Dear Old State since my last missive. What is happening with DU? It has been like juggling shoes, not knowing which one will drop next. I will do my best to bring you up to speed on all DU happenings. Here is a summary of current developments:

1. **We are financially sound, for now.** Depending on how our new member recruitment goes, we can weather a financial storm for the short term. Thanks to prudent management of your alumni board, we have a financial reserve; but, it may not sustain us for more than two years of belt-tightening.
2. **The University suspended our recognition.** A series of unfortunate circumstances involving our UGs in the Fall 2017 semester led to the University suspending our recognition. DU International also put us on reorganization status. Suffice to say that, those mishaps revolved around blatant violations of alcohol policies. This was a big deal, given the heightened concerns following the well-known campus tragedy. Your Alumni Board, in conjunction with our UGs, elected to take our medicine of a one-semester suspension. At the time, eleven other fraternities suffered one-year, two-year or permanent suspensions. DU was suspended for merely one semester. We thought it best to accept the sanction and to ride the storm. DU is the first Penn State fraternity since to apply for re-recognition. We are under an administrative microscope. Our experience will set the standard on how to regain the University's good graces. Everybody is watching. We should lead the way.
3. **40 UGs had to vacate.** Our Chapter house at 229 Locust Lane has a pre-existing, non-conforming use variance within the State College Borough zoning ordinances. In order to continue that status, we must be recognized by the University as an ongoing fraternity. If we lose the University's recognition, our Borough occupancy permit is at risk of being revoked. The University notified the Borough that our recognition was suspended. On November 17, 2017, the Borough issued an order for DU to vacate the premises as a fraternity. In compliance, we required our 40 residents to vacate the Chapter house by December 17. It created much turmoil for our UG Brothers, to say the least. We also lost about \$70,000 of revenue in house bills for Spring 2018 semester. Ouch!
4. **UG Brotherhood review.** In conjunction with DU International (and in order to comply with University requirements to regain recognition), our then current UG membership was subject to review. At that time, there were 66 UG Brothers registered. International reached out to all of them to discern their respective interests in remaining DUs. All of

them were given opportunity to schedule an interview with the International team at the Chapter house over a three-day period in January 2018. About 30 scheduled those interviews. The remaining others either submitted written resignations or did not bother to be interviewed. They were expelled by International. Upon those interviews, 24 current UG Brothers were invited to return, according to International's, and our local Penn State Chapter's, expectations and parameters.

5. **Private apartment leases.** Of those 24 returning UGs, each of them was displaced when they had to vacate the DU premises in December pursuant to the Borough order. With all the uncertainty foisted upon them, each of them thereafter signed private apartment leases for academic year 2018-19. As a consequence, they (and their parents) are obligated on an apartment lease for the coming year. They are understandably hesitant to break those leases in favor of living at DU. But, it's not that simple.
6. **DU housing contracts.** Our 24 returning DUs are in a bind. The State College apartment market is not sympathetic to students who want to change their minds on lease contracts that they signed many months prior to when things were hard to predict. Would DU be recognized by the University? Would DU reopen? Those landlords play hardball. They buffalo and ballyhoo the uninitiated. Our Alumni Board offered to reimburse each of them up to \$550 for a standard fee for anyone breaking any lease. But, that was little comfort for most parents, who are nervous about the prospect of paying the DU housing contract plus possibly being stuck for the private apartment rental contract. A tough dilemma for anyone.
7. **University Recognition.** Among all this turmoil, the Alumni Board reached out in May to the University to request that our re-recognition not be delayed until August. That uncertainty was affecting our ability to re-organize, to get returning Brothers to sign DU housing contracts, and to plan for recruitment of future DUs. Though the timing wasn't great, the University granted us provisional re-recognition as of June 27, 2018. DU is once again a recognized fraternity at Penn State, though provisionally subject to certain counseling and other requirements that our UGs must tend to in August. We will make sure that everything will be timely complied with by our returning UGs.
8. **Rooming house.** We'd prefer not to be a rooming house. But, we must do so, at least for 2018-19. In light of the housing/apartment issues illustrated above, it is impractical that all or some of our 24 returning UGs could get out of their previously signed apartment contracts. We worked with our UGs as best we could. We set a deadline of July 13 for the UG executives to obtain at least 15 signed DU housing contracts. Not to fault them under these trying circumstances; but, we received zero housing contracts. Upon that deadline, the Board determined that we will operate as a rooming house under Borough ordinances. In compliance with those ordinances: no DU can reside in the premises; we must have a non-student resident manager on the premises; and our leases and tenants are subject to Boro review. We will advertise for roomers, charge appropriate rents, set rules and regulations and mitigate our financial downturn. We are making headway on this.
9. **Zero tolerance of alcohol.** Times being what they are, our continuing DU legacy at Penn State is in jeopardy if our UGs violate the zero-tolerance alcohol policy. That goes

the same for returning alums. We all have our college experiences to share with old and young. We can gripe all we want about the absurdity of this policy and some might flagrantly violate the rules when they return to our Chapter house. I recommend that we not push the veil. For now, zero means zero. Dry means dry. We are one episode away from permanent expulsion. Take it from a former wild-eyed offender, we need to be careful.

10. **Parking on the lawn.** One of the more absurd things to come along is a new Borough ordinance prohibiting parking on lawns. The “no lawn parking” ordinance is specifically limited to the “Highland Area” of SC, which encompasses our Chapter house. This is despite the fact that we have a fully enclosed, fenced-in property. I’ve researched this online and I’m not convinced this “no lawn parking” restriction is a done deal. If I learn differently, I will report back to you all. For now, it appears that if you park on our DU lawn, you may run the risk of receiving a parking citation (\$50 - \$100 in fines and costs). It would be issued to the owner of the registration plate, not against the DU house. I’ll get back to you if I find out any loopholes. I suppose this means, “Park on our lawn at your own risk.”
11. **Homecoming Weekend of Oct 13, 2018.** As the dust settles on the various issues above, we are still formulating our plans to hold Homecoming festivities. Stay tuned for further information about: Game tickets and tailgating fun at the stadium; activities at the Chapter house; calling an overdue meeting of alumni; voting for open positions on the alumni Board of Directors; and other important matters. If you are planning on coming to town for homecoming, please try to attend these events. You will receive further details on our plans and the itinerary for Homecoming plans. Watch out about parking on the lawn.
12. **For the good of the Order:** As always, your input, questions, suggestions, critiques and updates are welcome and encouraged. Let’s hear from you.

Personally, it is not my plan to preside over the demise of our DU legacy at Penn State. I will do everything that my energy can muster to move us forward successfully. We have a great, experienced and energetic Board of Directors. They are all accomplished businessmen and professionals who devote what time they have to preserving our storied history. We’ve had a rough patch, lately. You wouldn’t believe the amount of time that many of us have put in as we’ve had to deal with one issue after another. All because we are Penn State DUs to the end. That may sound sappy. But, think about it. I know that all these efforts are appreciated by all of you. But, where are we going?

The new cultural shift is away from focusing on beer-fueled events and chasing chicks as an undergrad at blow out parties. There has to be a positive way forward in the current environment, while honoring our founding principles of Friendship, Character, Liberal Culture and Justice. We need new ideas on how to recruit our next generation of Brothers. It is a challenging task. There are several openings on your Board of Directors. Please step up and offer your help and insight. Don’t be bashful. DU needs you. Together, we will plot our future course.

Justice, Our Foundation.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tim Finn".

Tim Finn, President

Class of '75—And Proud of it!