



# AKA

ALPHA KAPPA LAMBDA

## Delta Dispatch University of Kansas Spring 2025





# Chairman's Report

## Mark Mears

### Delta '81

This spring semester has certainly had its fair share of ups and downs within Delta chapter, but all events helped bring the brothers closer together in many ways.

In January at the annual AKL Presidents Academy event in Indianapolis, we learned that Delta chapter was awarded AKL Chapter of the Year for its outstanding performance across all criteria. This is obviously an incredible honor that was earned by our men over the past several years of successive work.

Later that month, a fire suppressor valve burst in the attic causing a tremendous amount of water damage throughout the chapter house. Due to the quick response from the men in the house, we were able to mitigate the damage to the best of our abilities. All repair work has been substantially completed as of this writing; however, the new hardwood floors on the main level and in the House Director suite will be replaced this summer.

In March, we learned that AKL's Delta chapter won awards in several different categories at the annual Sorority & Fraternity Life awards banquet. This suggests the strategic "Team"-centric organizational partnership between the alumni board advisors and the chapter leaders and their teams provides a foundation for our continued success.

During that same month, we mourned the passing of brother AJ McDonald, who suffered fatal injuries as part of a skiing accident while on Spring Break with several of his AKL brothers. As you can imagine, this tragic event was devastating for all involved.

It is not only during our best times that we enjoy the true spirit of fraternal brotherhood; rather it can come from our worst times. I am very proud of the tremendous leadership demonstrated by of our chapter president, Lance Weigel and his Executive Board along with the time, energy and resources provided by our alumni board in working together to navigate our way through this challenging season.



Fraternally,

Mark A. Mears '81

# NEW AKL Delta Chapter Mentoring Program!

In partnership with the KU Alumni Association through its Jayhawk Career Network and related KU Mentoring+ platform, we have created a special affinity group for AKL Delta Chapter—providing alums with an opportunity to donate a portion of their time, talents and experiences for the benefit of active chapter members still in school. Special thanks to Ryan Grimsley, active chapter vice president, for coordinating this effort.

Two Delta alums, Jacob Shamblott '12 (Chicago) and Ryan Reddy '12 (Denver), are now established in their careers and recently expressed a desire to “pay it backward.” They have agreed to leverage their Business/Finance backgrounds for the purpose of mentoring actives who are interested in pursuing careers in similar fields.

“I strongly believe that as we grow and progress in life, it’s essential to help others along the way. When I was a part of AKL, I had an amazing time, made unforgettable memories, and formed lifelong friendships with my brothers. Now, I am in a position to provide guidance, advice, and mentorship to our younger brothers to assist them in navigating the educational and professional landscape.”

- Jacob Shamblott, '12



“It is tough to put into words the impact that both KU and AKL had on my life. I made amazing lifelong friends, lots of memories and learned so much about myself. After graduation, I have continued to learn, grow, and develop personally and professionally. I believe this growth has put me in a position to support the active brothers of AKL in achieving their career goals.”

-Ryan Reddy, '12

In addition, we have alums who are lawyers, doctors, engineers, architects, sales leaders, journalists, marketing and communications professionals who can help broaden our reach to many other disciplines.

Wouldn't you like to play an important role in the lives and careers of our younger AKL brothers to create a virtuous cycle of reciprocity that will strengthen the lifelong bonds of brotherhood for future generations?

Well, now you can—and it's easy to sign-up, fill out your profile and get matched!

# NEW AKL Delta Chapter Mentoring Program!

## KU Mentoring+ Platform Sign-Up Instructions

We are pleased to announce the creation of an AKL group on KU Mentoring+, the University's home for mentoring, networking, community, and opportunity within the Jayhawk Career Network.

The platform and group are free to join and will help our members, students and alumni, connect with and support one another in the career development space.

It is simple to join:

- Visit [mentoring.ku.edu](https://mentoring.ku.edu) and create a free profile using an email address. Current KU students can use their single sign-on to create a profile. Alumni should use a work or personal email account and are usually approved within 24 hours.
- During the sign-up process new users will be asked to answer questions about educational and work history. New users will also be asked to choose from a list of help topics they are willing to discuss with other Jayhawks. Please create a detailed profile (including professional photo), because detailed information helps students and other alumni best identify the Jayhawks with the right expertise and experiences to help them with specific questions and needs that they have.

Once approved, explore the platform.

Visit:

- Career > Jobs to see the job board (please note the majority of positions on this job board are for experienced job seekers. Students looking for work or internships should visit [hirejayhawks.com](https://hirejayhawks.com)).
- Career > Career Paths – for detailed information on the skills, common levels of education, personalities, and work responsibilities associated with specific industry areas. The platform will also suggest individuals you might want to network with and open job positions within the industry you are exploring.
- Connect > Community – to search and filter for the nearly 10,000 KU alumni (and growing) on the platform. You can use location, industry, help topic, and dozens of other filters to search for the right fit for your networking and mentoring needs.

Finally, join the AKL group:

- Go to Connect > Groups and find AKL and request to join. We are right on top!

By joining the AKL group you:

You make it easy for other AKL members, students and alumni, to find you and message you through the platform.

You will receive monthly emails to help keep you up-to-speed with what is happening at AKL.

Gain access to AKL resources posted on the group site.

Participate in group discussions.



# Alumni Spotlight



## John Yorke Delta '62

John Yorke, an accomplished alumnus and proud accounting major, has lived a life defined by service, leadership, and lifelong connections. After graduating, he attended law school at the University of Kansas, but his path took an unexpected turn when he was drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. Following his military service, John began an impressive 34-year career headlined at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, where his legal expertise and dedication led him through a series of key management roles.

Initially working in the trust, consumer law and lending function, John's journey took him to Denver and back to Kansas City, where he rose to the position of senior vice president at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. His work frequently brought him to major cities across the country, including New York, Washington, D.C., Boston, San Francisco and Chicago, reflecting the scope and importance of his responsibilities. Along the way, he participated in various advanced education programs to expand his skills and knowledge (including degrees from Northwestern and Rutgers).

Even after retirement, John continued to make a global impact. He provided valuable expertise to the Philippines Central Bank, and served as the President and CEO of the Economic Club of Kansas City. He remains active through volunteer work, especially his involvement with abused children through CASA (court appointed special advocates), a cause he is still deeply committed to.

John's dedication extends to his fraternity, Alpha Kappa Lambda, where he has served on the board since 1999. During his time in the fraternity, he experienced the importance of diversity and inclusion, as their house became one of the first to welcome an African American brother. The fraternity was also rich in culture, filled with talented musicians, and even had a piano and harp in the house.

Perhaps one of the most enduring aspects of John's story is the lifelong friendships he forged during his time at AKL. Since 1971, a group of friends has reunited every Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, a testament to the strength of their bond.

John Yorke's story is a powerful reminder to be open to new adventures, welcome new people, and never stop learning. His message to current members in the house is to stay curious, and take full advantage of the college and fraternity experience.



# President's Report

## Lance Weigel

### Delta '23

The Alpha Kappa Lambda Delta Chapter at the University of Kansas strives to build upon a tradition of excellence and leadership. This is done by operating our chapter through our Five Ideals: Judeo-Christian Principles, Scholarship, Leadership, Loyalty, and Self-Support. We implement these ideals into all chapter operations through scholarship, philanthropy, community service, brotherhood and social events while providing leadership opportunities for all men.

This semester posed one of the biggest challenges imaginable. Over Spring Break, we had to say goodbye to one of our brothers, AJ McDonald. During his Exec Board role as Chaplain and Brotherhood Team leader, AJ made a tremendous impact on anyone he would come into contact with. He had the ability to lighten up any room and he is greatly missed. Times like this are when brotherhood is needed most. As a chapter, we have been able to lean on each other as well as receive support from parents, and the alumni board.

At the annual AKL Leadership Academy held in January, we were honored to be recognized as the AKL Chapter of the year. This award is given to the chapter that best demonstrates the Five Ideals and is the highest honor an AKL chapter can receive across the nation.

This year, we were able to open up our new finished basement and expand our housing numbers from 60 to 62 men located at 1505 Sigma Nu Place. Our new basement consists of a pickleball court, pool table, table tennis, foosball, and a poker table. You will also find 3 TV's and a finished bar. We are finishing up our exercise room and plan to have that done this summer. Our house director, Sara Russell, and house manager, Evan Bannister do a phenomenal job of upkeeping and decorating the house to make it feel like more of a home.

Led by our newly elected Philanthropy Team Leader, Liam Mitchell, AKL was able to raise a total of \$3,500 for These Hands Don't Hurt, Pancreatic Cancer Research, and the Special Olympics of Kansas. These efforts have come from multiple percentage nights at nearby restaurants, a "Polar Plunge" for the Special Olympics, and our big event, Pancakes for Pancreatic Cancer.

The chapter welcomed 7 new members this Spring thanks to the efforts of our recruitment team. Led by AJ Payton, Ian Coe, Andrew Murray, and Sam Koenen, the Recruitment Team is looking to add 30 new members in the Fall to maximize our live-in capacity at 67 men.

I am honored to announce the success that AKL had during the Sorority and Fraternity Life Awards this semester. The chapter was one of two fraternities that received Excellence in multiple categories. We were the only fraternity to receive the Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Center Partners in prevention awards as well as:

- Academic Achievement - Excellence
- Personal and Professional Development - Excellence
- Holistic Wellness - Distinction
- Belonging - Distinction
- Civic and Community Engagement - Merit

We have had a very successful year and look forward to building upon our momentum when we return this fall.

Fraternally,

Lance Weigel '23





# New Alumni Board Members

On behalf of the AKL Alumni Board, Board Chairman, Mark Mears, is excited to announce the election of two new members! Both are fairly recent graduates of KU, but bring a wealth of experience as strong leaders during their time in the house as well as fresh thinking to our board.

## Joe Hatzfeld '18

Joe served as both Recruitment Chair and Chapter President at AKL, and received a degree in Civil Engineering from KU. Today, Joe works for Kimley-Horn and Associates in Kansas City as a Civil Analyst. When asked about key lessons learned from being in the house, Joe emphasized the importance of brotherhood stating, "The right community will help you through any situation. They will support you in times of need, and celebrate you in times of triumph."

After attending the annual Holiday Luncheon in Kansas City last year and serving as the Guest Speaker for our Scholarship Dinner this spring, Joe came away very impressed by the direction of the fraternity and, specifically, the impressive young men he met. "I see the great potential for the men in the house, and I want to be a resource for them as they navigate school, AKL leadership, and the transition into their professional careers."



## Max Flower '19

Max also served as both Recruitment Chair and Chapter President at AKL, and received degrees from KU in both Strategic Communications and Sports Management. Currently, Max works in Business Development at Netsmart in Kansas City. What Max took away as a key lesson he learned as an AKL is that, "building something that is bigger than yourself takes hard work and dedication. While it's not always easy, if you surround yourself with a good group of guys who can see everything through from start to finish, you end up appreciating the journey along with the destination."

When asked why he joined the Alumni Board, Max stated, "Now that I have graduated and have become more established in my career, I want to be able to give back by providing perspective, guidance, and mentorship to the younger generation of members."





# 2024-2025 Executive Board



President  
Lance Weigel  
Lee's Summit, MO  
Finance



Vice President  
Ben Syrup  
St. Louis, MO  
Supply Chain



Treasurer  
CJ Strout  
Elgin, IL  
Finance



Secretary  
Scott Wyatt  
Overland Park, KS  
Marketing



Co-Recruitment  
Andrew Murray  
Lenexa, KS  
Finance

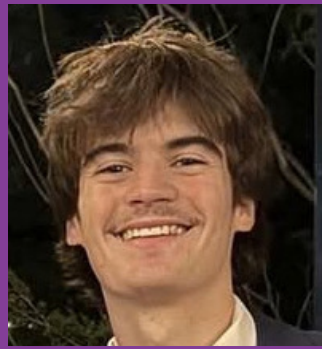


Co-Recruitment  
AJ Payton  
Elgin, IL  
Psychology Pre-Law





Co-Recruitment  
Ian Coe  
St. Louis, MO  
Finance



Co-Recruitment  
Sam Koenen  
St. Charles, IL  
Sports Management



Loyalty  
Sammy Sheshappa  
Overland Park, KS  
Finance



Co-Social  
Logan Burnett  
Olathe, KS  
Accounting



Co-Social  
Walter Blau  
St. Paul, MN  
Finance



Co-Social  
Gavin Engelhart  
Batavia, IL  
Business Administration



Co-New Member Ed  
William Maxey  
Naperville, IL  
Finance



Co-New Member Ed  
Sam Castro  
St. Louis, MO  
Marketing



Philanthropy  
Liam Mitchell  
Aurora, IL  
Physical Education



Chaplin  
Ethan Mowry  
Lenexa, KS  
Exercise Science



Scholarship  
Josh West  
St. Louis, MO  
Business Analytics



Co-Risk Management  
Joshua Ellis  
Omaha, NE  
Exercise Science



Co-Risk Management  
Jack San Filippo  
St. Louis, MO  
Architecture



Community Service  
Sam Ortega  
Lenexa, KS  
Business Administration



House Manager  
Evan Bannister  
Lawrence, KS  
Physical Education



Communications  
Luke Alwin  
Batavia, IL  
Business Administration



Communications  
Brady Bechtel  
Naperville, IL  
Business Analytics

# 2025 Spring Recruitment Update



Recruitment is the “life blood” of a fraternity. Our chapter has found much success in recent years by recruiting a diverse group of high-quality men from across the nation, and this semester was no different. Recruitment Chairs AJ Payton, Ian Coe, Andrew Murray and Sam Koenen did a great job recruiting seven new members to the house, and are working to sign 30 for the fall semester.

If you know anyone interested in AKL for this upcoming fall semester, please have them contact one of our Recruitment chairs:

Andrew Murray: [andrewmurray006@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmurray006@gmail.com) (913) 683-9838

Ian Coe: [iancoe@ku.edu](mailto:iancoe@ku.edu) (314) 686-2049

AJ Payton: [ajpayton@icloud.com](mailto:ajpayton@icloud.com) (630) 715-7613

Sam Koenen: [samuelkoenen320@gmail.com](mailto:samuelkoenen320@gmail.com) (630) 272-9209

## Meet the Spring 2025 New Members







Alex Peterson  
Batavia, IL  
Biology



Charlie Drohan  
Aurora, IL  
Marketing



Emmett Gaskill  
Hugoton, KS  
Business Administration



Cameron Hickert  
St. Louis, MO  
Criminology



Finn Anderson  
Oswego, IL  
Finance



Aidan Schmidt  
Glen Ellyn, IL  
Finance



Jack Kelly  
Shorewood, IL  
Business Administration



# Scholarship Dinner

This semester's Scholarship Dinner meeting saw \$5,000 worth of scholarship money given out to those active members who exercised academic excellence in the past school term. The dinner featured Mike Heck as the President of the Ochino Foundation Board of Directors who spoke on the Foundation and the importance of scholarship.

The dinner also featured a special guest appearance from former AKL president, Joe Hatzfeld. The men of AKL heard from Joe who has been through it all on his personal academic journey and gave a lot of insight on how to navigate through college. The speech touched many members as they realized that it is never too late to turn things around and hard work and perseverance can go a long way in the classroom.



# Scholarship



## The Ochino Foundation

The Ochino Foundation supports our Scholarship Team by inspiring the highest levels of academic excellence among the men of Delta chapter.

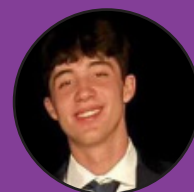
The Ochino Foundation would like to recognize the following scholarship recipients for their outstanding classroom performance in the 2023 Fall semester, including six with a 4.0!

Name	GPA	Scholarship Award
Evan Bannister	4.0	\$600
Ryan Grimsley	4.0	\$600
Andrew Murray	4.0	\$600
Ben Anderson	4.0	\$600
Samuel Ortega	4.0	\$600
Andrew Payton	4.0	\$600
Chase Schieber	4.0	\$600
Hani Ibrahimi	3.90+	\$400
Josh West	3.90+	\$400

## Scholarship Recipients



Evan Bannister



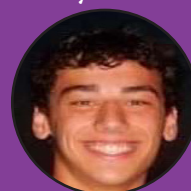
Ryan Grimsley



Andrew Murray



Ben Anderson



Andrew Payton



Chase Schieber



Samuel Ortega



Josh West



Hani Ibrahimi

# Ochino Foundation Contribution Options

## There are 3 tax-deductible ways to support Ochino scholarships:

- For general scholarship purposes, by check to Ochino Foundation, c/o Jeff Bennett, 9414 W. 157th Court, Overland Park, KS 66221
- For general scholarship purposes, by check to KUEA, Gift Processing Department, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, KS 66044-0928 (indicate Ochino Foundation Scholarship Fund, acct. #42859 in the Check Memo)
- For the Jacoby Memorial Scholarship, by check to KUEA, Gift Processing Department, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, KS 66044-0928 (indicate “Dr. Robert E. Jacoby II Memorial Scholarship” in the Check Memo) or online at [Kuendowment.org/Jacoby Scholarship](https://Kuendowment.org/Jacoby%20Scholarship)

The following alumni have contributed to the Ochino Foundation since 2024.

Thanks for your generous support!

**Pete Levy**  
**Ralph Latshaw**  
**James Hamlett**  
**Roger Williams**  
**Bill Taylor**  
**Jim Rumsey**  
**Bob Denzel**  
**Rick Prater**  
**Mark Mears**  
**Mike Heck**  
**Stephen Harmon**

If you have any questions, please reach out to Mike Heck at  
[michael.heck77@outlook.com](mailto:michael.heck77@outlook.com)



# Philanthropy

## A message from our Chairman: Liam Mitchell



Philanthropy is another important part of our Five Ideals that falls within our Judeo-Christian Principles. This Spring, the men of AKL supported three very worthy philanthropic causes.

### **Kansas Special Olympics**

In February, AKL supported the Kansas Special Olympics with 18 members participating in its “Polar Plunge” event at Lawrence High School. As a fraternity, we raised \$1,900 and came in a close second for the most money raised for the event. Overall, this event was a great way to raise money for a good cause, and also a wonderful time to spend with the brothers to start off the semester.

### **These Hands Don't Hurt**

Throughout the spring semester, we held two different percentage nights where all the money raised went to our AKL national philanthropy, “These Hands Don't Hurt.” First, we held a Jefferson's Night in which we raised \$86. Second, we held a Movie Night at a local movie theater in Lawrence. On a Thursday night, 30 members went to see a movie together, raising \$105 to donate to our philanthropy.

### **Pancakes for Pancreatic Cancer**

On May 4th we had a pancake breakfast event for Pancreatic Cancer and These Hands Don't Hurt. The event went great, we had a lot of brothers come out and enjoy a breakfast and also many people from around the KU community. We served pancakes, tacos, cereal, fruit and juice and we have raised around \$1,600 which will be donated to both Pancreatic Cancer Center and These Hands Don't Hurt. Proceeds from all “These Hands Don't Hurt” philanthropy events will be donated to The Willow Domestic Violence Shelter in Lawrence.





# Community Service

A message from our Chairman: Samuel Ortega



Community Service is an important part of our Five Ideals as it falls within Judeo-Christian Principles. This spring, the brothers of AKL participated in various events to give back to our local community.

In February, the brothers wrote cards of support and inspiration in cooperation with the Letters of Love organization, which went directly to kids in children's hospitals.

In early April, we participated in the Big Event, which is the largest semiannual campus-sponsored service event. At the Big Event, we had the opportunity to directly aid the citizens of Lawrence through various tasks such as raking, sticking, and planting.

Later in April, we partnered with Lawrence Parks and Recreation for Lake Restoration Day at Prairie Park Nature Center where we directly removed invasive plant species around the lake and planted various native species of flowers.



# In Memory of AJ McDonald Delta '23



It is with profound sorrow that we announce the passing of our AKL brother, Andrew John "AJ" McDonald, who left us tragically on March 18, 2025, at the age of 20. Born on May 13, 2004, in Merriam, Kansas, AJ was a vibrant soul whose life, though brief, touched many with his kindness, enthusiasm, and love.

AJ passed away while skiing in Winter Park, Colorado, engaging in one of the adventurous activities he adored. He was a planner and an adventurer with an unrivaled zest for life. Known for his generous spirit, AJ's sensitive and kind heart will be remembered by all who had the privilege to know him.

AJ was a junior studying Sports Management at KU and served in the chapter as both Chaplain and Brotherhood Team leader. His academic excellence earned him a spot on the University of Kansas Dean's List, highlighting his dedication and passion for learning.

AJ's presence in the house was more than just another brother; he was a friend, a mentor, and someone who truly embodied the ideals of Alpha Kappa Lambda. The positive impact AJ had on the house and the souls he touched will never be forgotten. While passing into Omega chapter, his absence leaves a void in our heart; however, his legacy of brotherhood will live on forever, may you rest in peace, AJ.

An AJ McDonald Legacy Fund has been created for anyone who would like to financially contribute to the various ways we plan to honor AJ for years to come.

<https://gofund.me/efdcc2fa>



# Brotherhood

Building bonds of brotherhood and enjoying social activities are vitally important parts of college and fraternity life. This spring, the men of AKL enjoyed several such activities.

In April, the brothers took their annual Spring Formal trip down to the Grand Glaze resort in the Lake of the Ozarks. While there, we spent time having fun on the lake and enjoyed a formal dress dinner with our dates in the evening.

During the colder days this semester, we put our newly completed Brotherhood Activity Room located on the lower level of the chapter house to good use. We held various brotherhood events throughout the spring semester including pool and poker tournaments as well as KU Basketball watch parties. Money was donated by the AKL Parents Club to fund equipment for the new Exercise Room that will be named in honor of brother AJ McDonald.

As the weather warmed up outdoors, we held brotherhood events in honor of AJ McDonald including a 3v3 basketball tournament along with a tailgate party before a Kansas City Royals baseball game.

Finally, we created a new AJ McDonald AKL “Brother of the Year” award that will honor his legacy by recognizing an AKL brother each year who best exemplifies AJ’s tremendous spirit of brotherhood. A commemorative plaque will go up in the Executive Conference Room, and the recipient will receive a financial scholarship in AJ’s honor. AJ’s parents -- Ryan and Lindsey McDonald -- were on hand at a special dinner in his honor to speak on AJ’s behalf and present a \$1,000 scholarship to Blake Fries as this year’s “Brother of the Year.”



# Brother Spotlight

## Ryan Grimsley

### Delta '23



This semester's AKL Brother Spotlight shines on outgoing Chapter Vice President, Ryan Grimsley. Ryan is a junior from Dallas, Texas majoring in Computer Science.

Ryan played an instrumental role in furthering the growth of this renewed version of AKL's Delta chapter, including working with the KU Alumni Association to set AKL up to be the first Greek house at KU to have its own affinity group within the Jayhawk Career Network's KU Mentoring+ platform.

If you ask anyone about Ryan, they will tell you how hard of a worker he is, but also how good of a person he is. This was evident during his tenure as Chapter Vice President; however, it has also been present in relation to his academic performance, which is consistently among the highest in the house.

Congratulations, Ryan! It is an honor to feature you in the AKL Brother Spotlight, and thank you for being such a positive role model for everyone to follow. Good luck on your future endeavors and keep up the great work.

We are all very proud of you!



# Gallery



Mom's Weekend



Mom's Weekend



Mom's Weekend



Mom's Weekend



Spring Formal



Spring Formal



# Gallery



Spring Formal



Spring Formal



Spring Formal



Spring Formal



Spring Break



Pancakes for Pancreatic Cancer

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