



THE INITIATIVE FOR NY ALPHA CHAPTER OF SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Brotherhood is for life!

January 2017

HDS

My Last Campaign!

BEAUTY IS SAID TO BE ONLY SKIN DEEP..... we all want to prove that is not true by having the environment of Hillcrest within as beautiful and functional as the outside.



Environment as we define it is not simply the physical Hillcrest. It's about what takes place inside the walls of NY Alpha.

As an alumni board we are striving to achieve excellence in the personal aspects of this environment as well. From where NY Alpha stands today we all know how difficult our task is to do and we certainly need considerable help from our alumni, National and Cornell University to achieve our goals.

The 2018 Initiative needs every alumni brother to join together to make sure that the goals of this momentous and wonderful initiative will be met.

It is not about having dreams but about achieving them!

You can make the difference!

BACKGROUND

Hillcrest is Cornell University owned so donations to this 2018 Initiative Campaign are counted as gifts to both Cornell University and to NY Alpha and are fully Tax deductible.

Since 1981 all gifts to the Hillcrest SAE Development Fund were counted twice and were tax deductible. Nothing has changed. The SAE Campaign is treated the same.

The benefits to the three way relationship between our great Cornell University, New York Alpha alumni, and an active Chapter are spelled out in your alumni website (www.sae-cornell.org) in the various agreements found there. When ownership was transferred to Cornell in the early 1980's those benefits seemed worthwhile but today they are even more important. First and most significant is that there is a three-member partnership involved with Hillcrest. CU, a chapter, and the alumni would share in decisions related to NY Alpha. Each of the partners has certain responsibilities. The workload is therefore not overwhelming for any one partner.

The actives benefit because they have a strong alumni association to help manage and raise funds to maintain and improve Hillcrest. In addition they get to live in and manage Hillcrest as if it is their own home. So long as the actives maintain reasonable conduct, they will be permitted to occupy the house. The long arm of the alumni as well as our pocketbooks, helps insure this provision of the agreement. The University's position on this is not guaranteed, but it has been tested on several occasions including everyday from now until reinstatement and beyond.

The Alumni benefit because gifts to the Cornell Hillcrest SAE Development Fund or the Campaign are tax deductible and credited to both Cornell and to SAE. Without this provision, it is unlikely that SAE would survive. We are to advise the chapter, maintain an active alumni association, oversee the facility maintenance and improvements, and approve other programs that enhance the lives of actives while they are at Cornell University. In addition we have University help in nearly everything we do concerning NY Alpha. The money we do raise to support Hillcrest is managed jointly by Cornell and the NY Alpha Alumni Association.

Cornell benefits by having the alumni as a fund raising arm as well as a cadre of experienced older brothers to support and encourage the actives in their pursuits while they are living in Hillcrest a CU property. Cornell University supports our fund programs, provides programs to enhance cultural development, reports to alumni on finances of the house, provides repairs and maintenance supervision, oversees the actives in the same manner as for any other university housing and is administratively responsible for these students. They also have the house as an asset forever.

By working together, we can achieve much more than we could ever expect if Hillcrest was alumni owned. We simply could not have afforded the maintenance over the years if Cornell did not become our bank and assist in other critical areas.

The alumni gain the advantage of having support from CU in many areas. CU gains the advantage of having a strong active alumni group. The actives gain the advantage of support from both alumni and Cornell University.

The facilities committee of your volunteer NY Alpha Alumni Association Board has spent years carefully developing a plan for the renovation of Hillcrest but there is still a lot to do. This 2018 Initiative is one result of that careful planning process.

With the cooperation of the Cornell Facilities Department we have increased the number of rooms within the four walls with an emphasis on single rooms, which has become the standard in student living. Hillcrest needed these room changes to compete for the best men, optimize occupancy, and increase revenues.

Cornell has also helped with upgrading bathrooms on the second and third floors and are working with us on many other projects to be completed.

Alumni have contributed ideas to improve and modernize our beautiful structure for the new millennium including energy efficient windows.

What follows in this presentation are the results of these efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are more than a hundred years of tradition captured in our Hillcrest home.

With that comes good and bad. The bad is that there are many areas of the house that are worn and tired. There are also areas of the house that while designed well 100 years ago have become outdated.

Things change with the times. Accordingly, it is imperative that Hillcrest be updated to meet the challenges of our new millennium not the one just passed.

We are not trying to change the face of Hillcrest but are trying to modernize to meet today's and tomorrow's needs. Hence, we call it a renovation which comes from the Latin words meaning to make new again.

What will result is a more efficient Hillcrest that meets the needs of modern students while they gain their education. For example moving from many double rooms to single rooms will not only improve our finances but is also the "sine qua non" of post-freshman college life today. A win win situation for all concerned.

Wasting energy with windows that leak and are not otherwise energy efficient is something that can no longer be tolerated so a determination was made to replace all existing windows with high quality energy efficient windows to eliminate the deficiencies with the original windows.

Some urgent projects have already been completed including a new tile floor in the Great Hall because it is easier to maintain than the original wood gone years ago. Bathrooms have been renovated with water saving toilets and with materials that can be easily cleaned.

There are two basic categories of projects. Those that can be easily justified as NEEDS because the ROI (Return on Investment) on the expenditure is good or they are determined to be essential. Others that we feel will enhance the overall experience at Hillcrest we have called WISHES. We plan to complete the first of these wishes as part of another project. The others will need to be delayed. There are also projects that will not be completed by 2018. Those are unplanned projects and a list of those follows in a later section of this document.

The cost for this renovation will be considerable but should provide for an acceptable, comfortable, and competitive experience for actives for years to come. And, for alumni returning to Cornell for visits they will find a Hillcrest that has returned to the level of grace that it once had or in the words of Garrison Keillor, "*More like it used to be than it ever was, only better*".

In short our mission is to raise the funds necessary to renovate and maintain Hillcrest as a jewel of Cornell University, the Ithaca community and the alumni of NY Alpha while providing an appropriate home for the actives while they achieve their educational goals.

Estimates of cost are provided for each project of our vision. The total cost to execute all of the building projects planned before or just after reinstatement is estimated at \$1.2MM which will be funded from alumni donations given to Cornell University Hillcrest SAE Development Fund and the Campaign.

We plan to not use debt to finance anything and will prioritize and sequence the schedule of projects to accomplish that.

There is more to this campaign than upgrading the facility, however. Membership in NY Alpha at Cornell includes the educational learning and the life experience environment for the actives.

The brotherhood/friendship environment and the on-the-job leadership training of a self managed living unit during their formal education and life emergence is critical and is strongly affected by their physical surroundings and their cultural atmosphere (what goes on inside the walls). The quality of those two factors, directly impact the type of new membership that seeks out the best a fraternity has to offer. These factors also impact what comes from the experiences in terms of the quality of the brotherhood and graduating students.

Since the quality of the undergraduate experience improves with the quality of the environment, both physical and life experience, the 2018 Initiative should provide for both enhancements. The better the facility and the culture the better the fraternity will be. Or as is often said....."if you build it, they will come!"

The alumni board feels that this is the opportunity of a lifetime where our philanthropy can have a direct and tangible impact on generations of future NY Alpha actives and provide them with not only a stunning physical structure but also the tools we all enjoyed that made us better citizens.. There can be opportunities for each brother to develop responsibility, accountability, leadership, scholarship, and the social skills necessary to become a fully contributing and successful member of society. Certainly, more than is afforded by dormitories.

This initiative seeks more than just a first class facility. It also requests funding to provide the undergraduates with environmental enhancements with programs to develop life skills from financial management to business ethics to leadership.

There is no better time on the horizon to undertake this effort. The momentum has been established and the opportunity faces us. **The time is now** to do this work.

The new physical plans with a new exciting view exposing the lake, an improved deck and fixed up furnished rooms, enhance kitchen and some downstairs improvement for a lounge recreation area are the starting points for selling the stunning new physical structure.

Other enhancement are important too such as the new weather efficient windows and the room reconfiguration but perhaps not as exciting to some.

Another part of this initiative remains to be completed and depends on you. Alumni and actives should weigh-in with their own enhancements in either the building or the cultural environment. More definition is needed for all of the elements being considered. This is not a done deal.

For instance, some might want to think about a live in alumni or faculty resident, an alumni suite, a maintenance endowment, extended handicapped accessibility, and other undergraduate program development or what ever else might help NY Alpha propel itself beyond its current roots and competitive set.

It is time for the heavy lifting. We need to strategize, prioritize and sequence every element of our planning to achieve the optimum goal in a timely manner.

“...and even if we are occupied with important things, even if we attain honor or fall into misfortune, still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us...better perhaps than we were.”

-Dostoevski

THE JUSTIFICATION FOR GIVING

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“Make no little plans; they have not magic, to stir man's blood and, probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work.”

--Architect & Planner Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912)

Hillcrest has never really been renovated but has had cosmetic improvements and much maintenance as well as some improvements over the last fifty years. Repaired roof, replaced pipes, a fire suppressant system, new furniture, plaster & paint, fire doors, upgraded electrical and a wifi system to mention just a few. Age and use take their tolls on every house, so we must update periodically to make the house competitive with other fraternities for the top-quality pledges we need to set high standards moving forward.

Major projects that have taken place as necessary were funded by alumni donations to Hillcrest SAE Development Fund thru Cornell Giving.

Whether your strongest allegiance is to Cornell University or New York Alpha your tax deductible support for this 2015 Initiative counts for both. This is an opportunity presented because of the agreements between NY Alpha and Cornell established in 1981 when Hillcrest became a Cornell property.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to be around for part of the first hundred years at Hillcrest want to create an enduring legacy for those who follow in the new Millennium. We want to support a niche within the Cornell University community that is uniquely Sigma Alpha Epsilon and even more specifically New York Alpha with its subtle nuances.

Over a hundred years of tradition exists with Hillcrest and its members and that strong tradition of personal excellence needs to be preserved.

A crumbling facility is not excuse enough to give to NY Alpha. But creating a legacy for future generations of actives and alumni current and future is a good reason to give. Our goal outlined in the Strategic Plan for New York Alpha is to create a model for Greek life in the 21st century by seeking out and supporting application of best practices in critical areas.

We want NY Alpha to be recognized as an exemplary chapter based on its academic achievement, discipline, social conduct and community service. The environment will be safe, respectful and supportive, reflecting the ideals of “The True Gentleman”, thereby fostering life-long relationships. (See Strategic Plan on www.sae-cornell.org)

There are, of course, good reasons to bring the physical condition of Hillcrest up to the outstanding standards set by new university housing. Future actives will want it. And, NY Alpha needs it to be competitive with other fraternities and new university housing.

While NY Alpha has a history of awards and honors at National and at Cornell we must start new with a clean slate and not rest on our past. This 2018 Initiative is all about the future not the past.

Some traditions from the past are strong and should be maintained. Tradition means saving all that is of value to give to the next generation. What we want to do is provide a physical facility that better supports the continuation of the tradition of personal excellence that for the most part past actives of NY Alpha demonstrated. We want to help maintain a high level of personal excellence because undergraduate fraternity life is one of the main crucibles that forge young adults for the rest of their lives.

Another key reason to give is gratitude for what we got and achieved while at Hillcrest and Cornell University. Do you think that you would have achieved what you have if you were a member of a lesser fraternity at some lesser college than ours? I am sure that you all hold your heads high when someone asks you where you went to college and what fraternity you joined.

In the case of NY Alpha we can all direct our gratitude to the Chapter as a social institution that played a key role in our development and maturation. If our institution were not there we'd have been unable to achieve much of what we have achieved, and if no one builds and maintains these institutions, then they crumble and those who come after us will not have the advantages in their struggles to become successful adults.

Pride in our beloved Hillcrest is another reason for support. We all like to be associated with excellence, whether it is excellent friends, family, career or organizations we join. Cornell and SAE are part of our heritage and who we are. We are all known by the company we keep. If either Cornell or SAE sinks in reputation, our reputation also sinks by association. So we have an incentive to contribute and help reestablish standards of excellence. A renovation of Hillcrest both physically and culturally will help accomplish that.

Our experiences at SAE helped forge us into the men we are. We moved from being boys to men with friends we will never forget. We learned to be independent. We learned how to be responsible. We learned to be accountable. We learned how to behave and act socially. We got smarter with a great education. And, we did all this both as individuals and as a group of brothers. We were all each other's makers!

So if you are happy with what you have become and how you turned out it is now your time for pay back just like the ones that came before us and provided a great Hillcrest for us.

With all this you can certainly see that we all owe a debt of gratitude to both Hillcrest and Cornell University.

As alumni we are facing a unique opportunity to give back to a younger group of brothers who clearly will need our support.

In addition to a first rate facility we can't leave the actives skill development to chance. Providing the underpinnings for lifelong relationships between actives and alumni as well as opportunities for life skills development is a fundamental of a fraternal organization.

Support can only come from alumni who have lived the SAE experience to its fullest.

The history or traditions and the bonds of fraternity hang in the balance as we strive to preserve the long legacy of Sigma Alpha Epsilon at Cornell University and provide the same experience to others that we had earlier.

It is those who came before you that made the New York Alpha experience what it was when you were an active. So keep that in mind when you can give back to a new generation.

Give back to Cornell and Hillcrest because it's something we can do, and should do....for Brotherhood is for Life!

Leave the beaten track behind occasionally and drive into the woods. Every time you do, you will be certain to find something you have never seen before.

-Alexander Graham Bell

PROJECTS SUMMARY*

OUR NEEDS

Room Reconfiguration

Our highest priority project was the reconfiguration. A study was done to determine exactly how this will be done and the costs to maximize single rooms on the second and third floors.

Walls were moved to increase the number of single rooms in the house to meet student demand for singles. The net increase in rooms that will result is 6 rooms. Also a separate hall to the deck from the second floor hallway.

Added annual income for the house is expected to be approximately \$50,000 so the payout for this project is good.

Window Replacement

All windows in the house were replaced by energy saving window made by Pella based upon a study done by brother Frank McGuire Architects in 2008.

Library

The library is one of the centerpieces of the first floor and had become worn and tired over the years. During the house make over in 2011 some work was done in the library so the needs are less than they had been. The library is a focal point for memorabilia from both actives and alumni. It is also a great place to hold small meetings. It might also become a good first floor location for a TV although the proposed rec room in the basement would be a better location.

The Great Hall

As many of you know a few years ago the floor was replaced with tile in the Great Hall. This upgrade has made this room and the adjacent one on the north end much more attractive but both need some additional upgrades such as refinishing the wood and perhaps better lighting.

In addition some of the common areas near the great hall need some work such as the stairs going up to the second floor.

Chapter Room and Adjacent Rooms alternatives

The old Chapter Room area was used for house parties and social gatherings. Using this area takes the potential for damage away from the other areas in the house because it is a more sturdy environment. The goal here would be to make this entire area into a lounge like setting capable of transforming into the place to party. It would appear to be a logical place for the large screen TV too. Over time it has become worn and tired and is in need of a major makeover or upgrading including possibly heat, lighting, and opening it up somewhat by eliminating some walls and making larger openings from smaller ones from one area to another. The game room area needs to be furnished with only moveable games to remove during parties where they might be in the way. The bedroom formerly at the NW corner is an idea place for the pool table.

Dining Hall

Short cuts in the original plan, nearly fifty years of wear and tear, and service mode changes suggest an upgrade is necessary for this important high traffic area. The foundational elements are strong but some new paneling, electrical fixtures, and appropriate movable serving station(s) would improve the situation considerably.

Kitchen

Left out of the earlier studies was the kitchen and storage that will require work prior to reopening. The condition of equipment will need to be determined and some might need refurbishing. The walls, ceiling and floor will need to be examined and some likely upgraded. The requirement here is hard impervious washable surfaces. More detail is found in the Exhibits of this document. It is not a finished plan but rather the latest iteration from the kitchen team.

Second Floor Deck

Long a source of great appeal the “deck” is in need of a major upgrade and will be completed in time for reunion 2017.

Other Areas

Provide repairs and improvements not covered above but prudent and necessary in the course of modernizing the house. Examples would be repairing or replacing the stairs or runners or both to the second and third floors, refinishing paneling, and more. The pool table is going to require servicing too and probably should be moved to the basement recreation area.

WISHES

NW Corner View-Lakeview Lounge

Opening the NW Corner of the house on the Great Hall level for year round viewing of the lake is an idea that sparked interest. There has always been a small deck on that floor that alumni and actives access but it was too restricted.

Originally, the plan was for a Turret to be constructed to give access to the Lake Cayuga view from the NW Corner of Hillcrest. It would result in a quiet comfortable room at that corner of the house. Our architect referred to this as transformative for the whole house. It was something like a silo from the ground floor to the second floor deck Cost for this major renovation was estimated at \$471,653. Gasp!!!!!!

We came up with an alternative that was to open up the north wall at that corner and install large windows looking out both north and west. Arched openings were constructed to enter the area from the south or the east allowing for easy people flow in and out.

This project was completed in the summer of 2013 along with the reconfiguration project.

The results are stunning. The incremental cost over the cost of reconfiguration was just \$47k.

Gabled Wing Roof

Several alumni have commented over the years that the wing needs a roof similar in appearance to the rest of the house. Cost for this new roof and appropriate repair varies all over the lot. Generally speaking the facilities committee agrees that with the current situation this project should be delayed until the entire house roof needs replacement in about fifteen years. That would be a logical time to do all of it at one time if there is desire at that time to do so.

TOTAL DOLLARS (\$)

Cost for all of the above facilities projects we plan for 2017-2020 is approximately \$1.2MM including contingencies, design fees, or Project Management requirements. Life Development projects are unbudgeted but estimated to be \$500k over 3-5 years.

***Additional details on some projects can be found at the link [SAE Hillcrest Projects](#) just below on this link of the website.**