

Interview of Brother Alan Buehler, Undergraduate Man of the Year

This past year, Alpha Chi Rho nominated 23 brothers for the highly prestigious R. B. Stewart Award which recognizes one brother as the Undergraduate Man of the Year. This year's award was awarded to Brother Alan Buehler of the new Chartered Chapter of Pi Phi at Robert Morris University (RMU). I had the chance to catch up with Alan to ask him a few questions about his college experience thus far and how great it feels to win such an award. By way of background, Alan is currently a Junior at Robert Morris University studying Communication as his major. Alan's hometown is Ridgway, Pennsylvania which is roughly two hours north of Pittsburgh, PA.

When asked what made him want to join Alpha Chi Rho Alan responded "My friends and I were given the opportunity to revive the chapter of AXP at RMU my freshman year of college." Prior to this revival the chapter had surrendered its charter in 1997 due to the lack of interest in Greek Life at RMU combined with attracting the wrong men to take the reins of the Fraternity Chapter. In the Spring of 2010, Alan and his friends met with alumni of Alpha Chi Rho and Alan had this to say about the meeting. "Once I met with the alumni and found out about the benefits of being in a Fraternity, I figured starting a Fraternity Chapter would be something I would help my friends with... I never thought it would honestly be the best decision I made in my college career."

Since then, Pi Phi received its charter in April 2011 and has been moving strongly forward. I asked Alan what some of his highlights have been as an undergrad and being part of the Fraternity. He answered, "Highlights of being an undergrad would definitely be the AWESOME people I've met in the past two and a half years at school. I came to college more nervous than anyone ever should. I didn't think I'd like college or be able to make friends very easily. Now, as I sit here talking to you, Mike, the few friends I thought I wouldn't be able to make, turned out to be the 55 brothers I'll never lose touch with." Alan went on to add, "other than the friendships, I think winning the Greek Man of the Year my sophomore year as well as the R.B. Stewart Award from National was definitely great. But an even greater highlight was starting the Colony my freshman year and making it the biggest Greek affiliate on campus that same semester. We had, *and still have*, the highest grades on campus two years in a row, won eight intramural championships, raised thousands of dollars for charities, served a thousand hours of community service as a group, and then doubled our size in members after one year of being a chartered chapter. Accomplishing so many goals in so little time shows the strength, commitment, passion, and straight up awesomeness that my brothers and I show for our Fraternity."

I asked Alan to explain how his nomination came about for the R.B. Stewart Undergraduate award, and if he really understood back then how serious of an award it

is. "I was nominated for the R.B. Stewart award by our alumni advisor, Ken Chapel. He came to me with a description of what the award is and explained to me why he thought I was an excellent candidate for the award. He explained that I showed good leadership within the Fraternity as well as outside of the Fraternity." In retrospect, Ken is right; Alan is involved on many things outside the Fraternity like First Year Seminar Program, Residence Hall Association, Student Government Association, multiple community service projects, Interfraternal Council, campus ministry, and even found time to play men's club volleyball. Although nominated, Alan thought the odds were not in his favor of winning. However, when the time came to announce the winner at Convention, Alan thought, "I downplayed my nomination but when Trustee, Robert Mervos began addressing the assembly about the winner, it sounded like me and I remember my heart pounding extremely fast and my legs were shaking. I looked at Ken, and he gave me a smirk, because he knew I had won the whole time."

It has to be an amazing feeling winning such an award from the Brotherhood, so I asked Alan specifically how he felt when his name was announced. Alan responded, "I couldn't believe that I had been privileged to win the most prestigious undergraduate award within Alpha Chi Rho! For me to say I'm a part of an elite group of men who have been awarded this honor is simply amazing in my eyes! It is a moment that I'll never forget!"

Curious to know, I asked Alan what his plans are for himself after graduation. It turns he is as undecided as his plans were for when he came to college. He said "My plans post-graduation are pretty open right now. I'm a Communication major with thoughts of working for a company as Public Relations Director or perhaps Product Marketing. Also, my family has owned a logging company for many generations back home in Ridgway, Pennsylvania. So plan "B" would be to follow my past generations into the Logging Industry, but I want to find what is really going to make me happy. In the end, I plan to graduate from RMU in 2013 and do whatever God has planned for me."

After we talked about the future for a bit I asked Alan if there was anything he wanted to say to all of the undergraduates of Alpha Chi Rho. He summed it up simply with this, "Something I suggest to all undergraduate Brothers would be to really get to know every single brother in your Chapter. I can't stress how beneficial and important it was for me to personally know and spend time with all the guys in my Chapter. Sadly, I've already seen Brothers join AXP and just go through the motions of just 'being in a Fraternity' but not really knowing EVERY Brother through and through. I find it deeply important to get on a personal level with every Brother; even the one you can't stand being around because in the end we all share something that only a handful of people will ever be able to understand."

Thanks Alan for taking the time to speak to the Brotherhood. It's easy to see why you won the R.B. Stewart Award! Congratulations again! We look forward to hearing more about you in the future, so good luck in all you do.

Thanks,
Michael Dawson
Chapter Correspondent, Pi Phi



Brother Alan Buehler and Brother Ken Chapel at the 2011 National Convention.