

Dear Brothers of Montana Beta,

I've been asked to tell you about an effort that is going on to revive and strengthen the Greek System at the University of Montana in Missoula. Some of you are already aware of this so bear with us (that's a Grizzly thought!).

Last Homecoming, 2004, thanks to the efforts of **John Greener (MTBE '79)**, **Jim Mountain (MTBE '81)** and **Scott Johnson (MTBE '81)**, a number of organized homecoming/reunion activities relating specifically to the Montana Beta Chapter of SAE took place for the first time in several years. At last year's events, initiated by the current Sigma Alpha House Corporation, there was a lot of good conversation, some bad golf, and an unveiling of some architectural plans on the much-needed renovation to the chapter house at 1120 Gerald. This prompted renewed discussions by a number of SAE, and simultaneously several other Greek alumni from many eras of the University of Montana. The discussions have been frank and detailed on the precarious state of the Greek system at UM in Missoula. Over the years, several chapters have closed. Those that remain are struggling from neglect of both the Greek alumni and the University. The group has decided to revive by correcting the situation and is working diligently to save a storied and valuable tradition on the University of Montana campus. Thus, the UM Greek Task Force (GTF) was born. Since last November, we have been communicating via conference calls weekly. At one time or another nearly all the fraternities and sororities past and present have been represented by upwards of 25 passionate and dedicated UM Greek Alumni!

Our initial efforts were directed toward getting the University of Montana Administration's support, which came readily from President Dennison. The University of Montana recognizes a tremendous amount of support financially and overall from many UM Greek alumni. UM does not want that support to suffer in the future in any way! For the past several years, some of the current active chapters at UM have made it hard for the University to embrace the fraternities and sororities. Riffs and issues were allowed to fester as the undergraduates had little support and direction from alumni. But, people have graduated, UM administration staff has had changes that once this problem was recognized, it was dealt with rather swiftly by a couple of alumni groups and the initial groundwork for rebuilding was planted (the birth of GTF). At the same time it was necessary to get the current undergraduates on board. Several houses (SAE included) have a good enough nucleus to work from and they have recognized that a major effort is needed from many fronts to make this effort succeed. In this case, success is measured by the survival of the Greek System!

To this end, an additional group of Greek Alumni was formed in Missoula that meets regularly (separate from the GTF) to tackle various tasks such as marketing and promotion, recruitment (formerly known as Rush), and campus relations, etc. This group is made up of an inclusive cross-section of alumni, undergraduates, representatives from UM Administration Staff, UM Student Affairs, and the UM Alumni Office. Current efforts of the GTF include sponsoring summer recruitment events in Great Falls, Billings, and Kalispell to which incoming UM freshmen and parents will be invited to learn about the new, revitalized UM Greek System and how it benefits students now and in the future. Also, we have had sessions during the summer orientations on the UM campus where the parents and incoming students were and will be informed about the benefits of joining a fraternity or sorority chapter.

During Homecoming this year (September 30–October 2, 2005) the GTF plans a major push to register all Greek Alumni. We will have tables set up at the SAE Chapter House at 1120 Gerald Ave., the Alumni Office on campus, the Holiday Inn, and on the parade route on Saturday where we would like you to stop by and get a button and a t-shirt indicating your support of SAE and the UM Greek System. At the Holiday Inn on Friday night of Homecoming, we plan a major presence of SAEs and UM Greeks! Join the fun and perhaps a little friendly rivalry!

Brothers, we know we are making progress, but the next 18 months are crucial! All of the Greek houses need two good recruitment classes this Fall 2005, and next Fall 2006. If you know of a young person coming to UM this year or next, tell them about the NEW good things going on campus! Go Greek! Go SAE!

If anyone has questions, suggestions, or wants to actively participate in the Greek Task Force (we won't ask you for money, now we just need support and insight ... the money will be later!), contact **Dick Ford (MTBE '64)** richard_ford@sbcglobal.net Tel: (925-933-4940) MTBE SAE website www.umsae.net.

Phi Alpha,
Dick Ford