



# ΠΣΑ Pi SIGMA ALPHA

THE NATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE HONOR SOCIETY

## Chapter Annual Report Cover Sheet

*Deadline: June 30 (annually)*

Chapters are required to submit an annual report to the national office which identifies key student officers and chapter advisor, and lists the chapter's activities for the past year. The information in this report is used to select the winners of the Best Chapter Awards, so chapters should take care to make them as complete as possible.

Mu Delta  
CHAPTER GREEK NAME  
Professor Laurel Elder  
CHAPTER FACULTY ADVISOR  
1400  
TOTAL INSTITUTION UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT  
\$3500  
ANNUAL BUDGET

Hartwick College  
INSTITUTION NAME  
September 1999  
CHAPTER ADVISOR START DATE  
15 initiates 4.12.16  
TOTAL INITIATES and INITIATION DATE (2014-15)  
0  
CASH ON HAND

**2015-16 STUDENT OFFICERS (IF APPLICABLE)**

Erica Lillo and Delaney Shepardson, co-presidents

PRESIDENT

Nigel Mease

VICE PRESIDENT

Allison Pinski

SECRETARY

Nicole Finn

TREASURER

**2016-17 STUDENT OFFICERS (IF APPLICABLE)**

Allison Pinski & Nicole Finn, co-presidents

PRESIDENT

Shannon Carter

VICE PRESIDENT

Derek Stoddard

SECRETARY

Laura Downey

TREASURER

**MARK ANY PI SIGMA ALPHA PROGRAMS THAT YOUR CHAPTER OR CHAPTER MEMBERS APPLIED FOR DURING 2015-16**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHAPTER ACTIVITY GRANT          | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT CONFERENCE     | <input type="checkbox"/> UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF POLITICS           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP | <input type="checkbox"/> INTERNSHIP SCHOLARSHIP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEST PAPER OR THESIS COMPETITION |

On a separate piece of paper please describe the activities of your chapter over the course of the past year including:

- Programs sponsored by your chapter (including whether the programs were for members only, for department only, or for the university community or public).
- Any other notable activities during the academic year.
- Be descriptive! We want to learn as much about your activities as possible

PLEASE RETURN FORM AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS TO NATIONAL OFFICE VIA  
EMAIL (OFFICE@PISIGMAALPHA.ORG) OR  
POSTAL SERVICE (1527 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE., NW WASHINGTON, DC 20036)

**Hartwick College  
Mu Delta Chapter  
2015-2016 Annual Report  
Submitted by Chapter Advisor, Laurel Elder**

The students in Hartwick College's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha take their mission to promote informed discussion of issues and engaged citizenship seriously, and they organized a range of notable programming across the 2015-2016 year to achieve this mission.

To start off the academic year, the Mu Delta Chapter sponsored a visit and Q & A session with U.S. Representative Chris Gibson (NY-19, R) who represents our college and surrounding area in the U.S. House of Representatives. I believe that introducing students to elected officials, those engaged in the actual work of government, is a powerful way to generate interest in and learning about our political system. Pi Sigma Alpha members created and distributed promotional materials for the event, greeted all individuals upon entering the theatre where the talk was held, and handed out index cards and pens so that people could write down their questions for U.S. Representative Gibson as his staff had requested. A member of Pi Sigma Alpha, Troy Johnstone, who had volunteered on Gibson's campaign and interned in one of his district offices, prepared and delivered an excellent introduction. This "Conversation with Chris Gibson" was open to the entire Hartwick community and was very well attended, with roughly 100 students, staff and faculty filling the auditorium. Students asked excellent questions about immigration, college costs, and health care among other important topics.

Based on my discussions with students in the days following the event, it appears they took a lot away from this event. Students were particularly impressed with Gibson's record of military service, his decision to term-limit himself to three terms, and his standing as the most liberal Republican in Congress. Students were struck also by the mismatch between Gibson's reasonable approach to problems and genuine interest in helping Americans and the negative way Congress is often portrayed in the news media. All those in the attendance walked away with a clearer understanding of the policy positions of the person that represents them in Congress for at least nine months out of the year. Below is a picture of U.S. Representative Chris Gibson talking with a Hartwick

College student at the reception following his event, which was held in Andersen Theatre on the Hartwick College Campus.



U.S. Representative Chris Gibson, at Hartwick College, on September 14, 2015

Also in the fall semester, our Mu Delta chapter co-sponsored presidential nomination debate viewing parties. Our chapter of pi sigma alpha worked closely with the newly formed (as of spring 2015) Political Science Club on these debate related events as well as others. The partnership between our chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha and the Political Science Club, both officially recognized as student clubs and thus eligible to compete for student senate funding, works very well as it allows students not eligible to join Pi Sigma Alpha due to the membership criteria to get involved in some of the excellent programming and planning initiated by Pi Sigma Alpha. If other colleges and universities have not considered partnering with a Political Science Club I encourage them to consider it.

Pi Sigma Alpha members ordered food, reserved the space and invited the entire campus community to attend these debate watching parties. Student interest in the 2016 presidential nomination contests has been quite high, and it was great that our chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha was able to develop programming to channel that interest. The student leaders of Pi Sigma Alpha share my belief that consuming political events as a

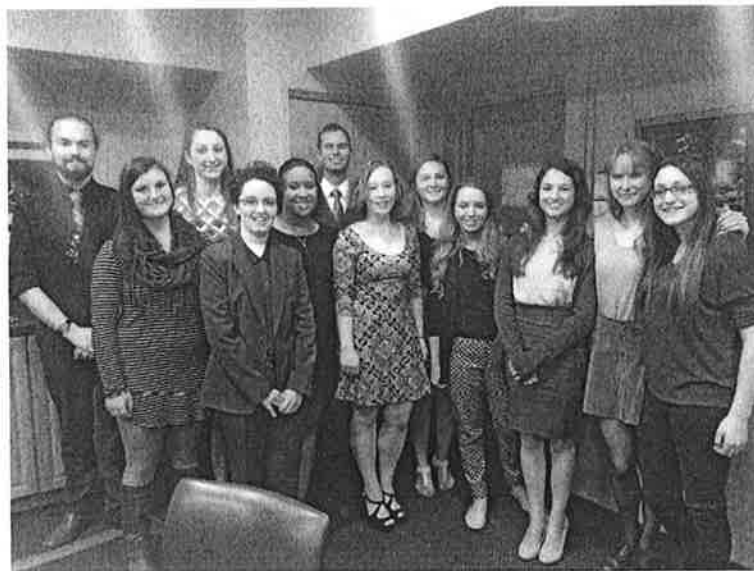
community is a powerful and pleasurable experience, and that it helps create the political culture needed for democracy thrive. Below is a picture of many Pi Sigma Alpha students in attendance at one of the fall debate parties.



Our chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha also worked with the Political Science Club to organize and fund an all-expenses paid trip to Washington DC, which was open to all interested students. On the weekend of April 8<sup>th</sup>, 20 students, mostly political science majors, boarded a coach bus and traveled to Washington DC. For many of the students this was their first time in the nation's capital. They spent the weekend enjoying the cherry blossoms, which were a driving factor in the timing of the trip, as well as visiting the National Portrait Gallery, taking tours of the Capitol (thanks to the helpful staff in the office of Congressman Gibson), and getting to see the institutions they study in their courses up close. Students were particularly excited to see the Supreme Court and the White House, but also enjoyed the National Zoo, the metro, and strolling through the National Mall.

The Mu Delta chapter inducted 15 new members on Tuesday April 12, 2016, and shortly afterwards we inducted the three members of our departmental faculty who were

not members. Every year our chapter organizes a special dinner event to celebrate and honor our current and new members. This year our membership dinner was a formal buffet held on campus. All political science faculty were in attendance as well as most of the current and new members. As shown below the 2015-2016 co-presidents of the Mu Delta chapter, Erica Lillo and Delaney Shepardson, welcomed the new members and conducted the initiation ceremony. The new initiates are pictured below them.



Spring 2016 initiates of the Mu Delta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha

Also in the spring semester, the Mu Delta chapter helped organize, sponsor and promote an informational luncheon with a representative from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office, who led an informational session about internship opportunities in the Senator's office and shared tips from her own career about how to get one's own legislative career started.

The Mu Delta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha has also taken advantage of several of the amazing programs offered by Pi Sigma Alpha at the national level. We had two students compete to be our chapter's nominee for the Howard Penniman Graduate Scholarship. We decided to nominate Amanda Robinson based on her outstanding work on behalf of the Mu Delta chapter, including a leadership role in registering 10 percent of our campus to vote in fall 2014. Also, we nominated the Molly Warrington's thesis for the national best thesis competition. In the spring of her junior year Molly did a semester long internship at the New York State Assembly. Building on that experience, she focused her thesis research on trying to understand why women, especially Republican women, were so significantly underrepresented in the state legislature. She used connections from her internship experience to conduct interviews with more than half of the Republican women in the state legislature and produce an exceptional piece of undergraduate research. We also submitted a paper by an amazing student and recent Pi Sigma Alpha initiate, Brianna McMahan, for the national best paper competition.

Finally, Pi Sigma Alpha co-sponsored the political science department's end of the year celebration, which was open to all political science majors, minors and their friends and supporters. While many years this end of the year event is coordinated by our chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha in conjunction with the political science department, this year the student leaders of Pi Sigma Alpha took complete charge of organizing and executing the event, and as a result, it was our best end of the year celebration in over a decade. Attendance was strong, the food was great, and the decorations were amazing. The officers of Pi Sigma Alpha presented each of the faculty members in the department with hand-written cards expressing their appreciation for all we do for our students.

I will conclude by noting that being the faculty advisor to Pi Sigma Alpha for the past 17 years has been remarkably rewarding and meaningful experience. I am grateful to have had this opportunity and look forward to many more years in this role.