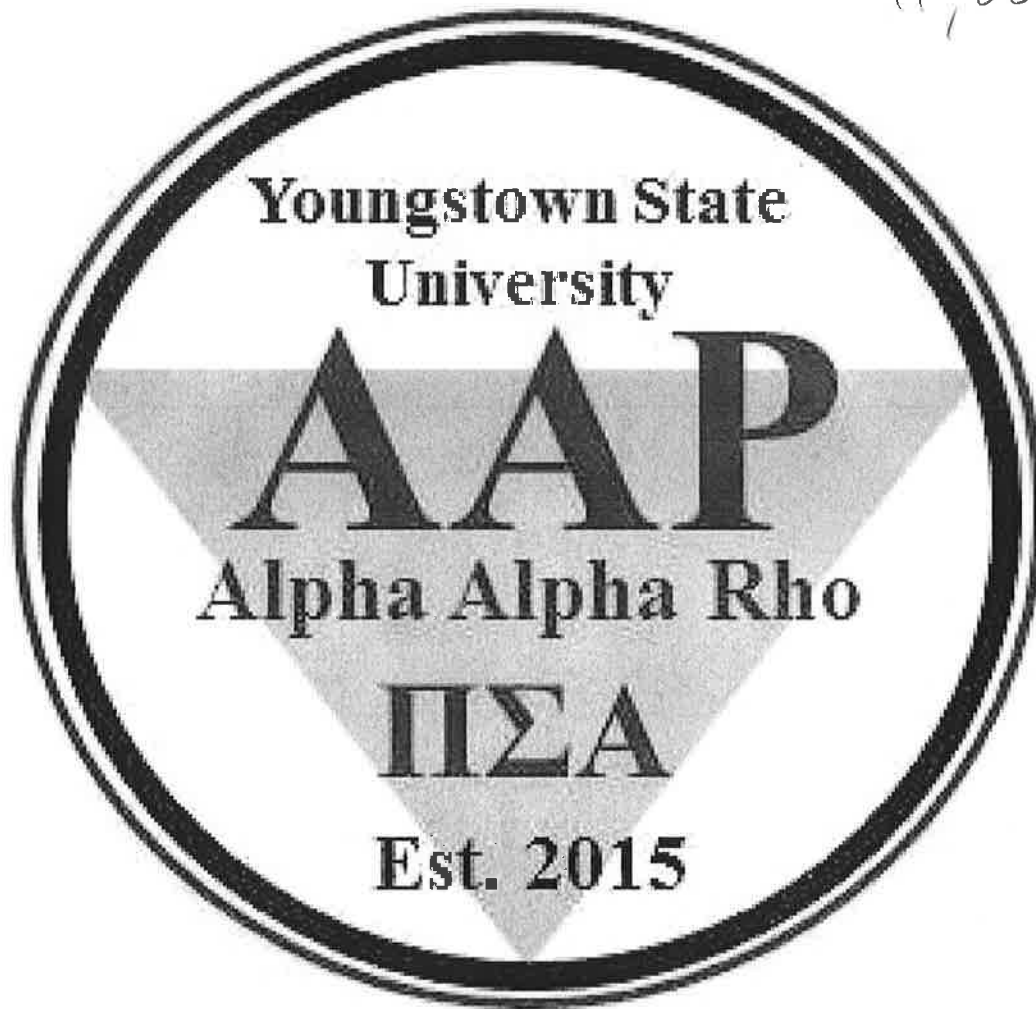


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# Pi Sigma Alpha – Alpha Alpha Rho

ANNUAL REPORT: 2015-2016

Jillian Smith | Youngstown State | June 2, 2016

The Alpha Alpha Rho Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha had an incredibly successful 2015-2016 academic year. Our first major accomplishment was reactivating the chapter, which previously had been “inactive” for over five years. The reinvigoration came with a momentum for action within our organization that carried us throughout the year.

We began the year with a heavy push for recruitment, holding elections, and conducting an initiation ceremony at a local restaurant. In addition to our student members, we inducted four honorary “members” (not of the national chapter) who are graduates of Youngstown State University. These members currently all work for state or local congressional officials, and were able to speak to our students briefly about careers in the field and about their educational experiences. Furthermore, one of the congressional officials, state senator Joe Schiavoni, officially recognized and congratulated our newly inducted members with a state-house sponsored acknowledgement.

In the wake of the tragic November Paris terrorist attacks, our members quickly organized a benefit dinner and GoFundMe page dedicated to providing aid and financial assistance to the families of the victims of the attacks. The dinner raised \$500, which went to the Paris office International Red Cross. Furthermore, our members created an art piece that expressed solidarity and condolences toward the survivors of the attacks, as well as writing a message of sympathy on “the rock,” an informal monument dedicated to free speech on Youngstown State University’s campus.

Additionally, we had two students attend the National Pi Sigma Alpha Conference in Washington D.C. These students were awarded a travel grant by our university’s College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to make the trip. These students were able to present on topics that were relevant to their professional and academic experiences. One student was able to take the presentation she gave at the conference and present it again at Youngstown State University’s Research Conference known as quest. She also utilized the presentation while representing Pi Sigma Alpha at Ohio’s All Politics is Local conference, where the student received runner-up for best paper. Along that same vein,

one of our members received the “best paper award” within the department’s thesis writing competition.

Our body created a Research Committee in order to encourage our students to conduct more research in the field of political science. This committee has set up a loose framework within the department to encourage more undergraduate students to conduct academic research, submit papers to journals, and attend conferences. The committee establishes a mechanism by which opportunities are sought out and then presented to our members. We hope to make strides in this area in the upcoming year.

Another committee was initiated to consolidate all opportunities for local internships relevant to political science majors. This database of internships is currently in its building phase but leverages the shared experiences and networks of our upper-class and graduating members. The database is linked to our website, which was also created by a PSA member, and features our meeting times, links to our social media pages such as Facebook and YouTube. The Internship committee has helped to successfully secure two internships for students, one with our county’s courthouse, and another with our regional Port Authority.

A major accomplishment was our collaboration with the many other political science groups on campus, such as College Conservatives, No Labels, College Democrats, Model United Nations, and Moot Court. We often assisted these groups in their events and helped to promote their activities among our network. Notably, our president served as one of the speakers alongside Senator Capri Cafaro and Senator Frank LaRose at the No Labels “Problem Solvers” conference.

We concluded the year with a fundraiser that brought student engagement and attention to the national elections in the form of “Primary Palooza.” During the event, two of our members dressed as Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton at a local restaurant. The restaurant donated 10% of their proceeds back to PSA, and throughout the night, as results of the election were broadcast on all the news stations, the two students gave a standup routine. Two buckets were placed at the foot of the stage, which had the candidate’s names on them. Guests placed money in the buckets over the course of the

night, and at the end of the night, the candidate with the most money in their bucket was  
picked at the end of the night. This event raised \$120 for PSA. The event was also  
subsidized with award funding from the Student Government Association, which was  
procured from their appropriations process after a successful proposal presentation.

In all, Alpha Alpha Rho had an incredibly successful inaugural year. Our many  
initiatives ensure the longevity and impact of the organization, and the momentum of our  
members shows all signs of continuing into the upcoming year. We will work diligently  
to increase our engagement at the national level, obtaining more grants, sending more  
students to the national conference, and collaborating with other chapters. In tandem, our  
campus involvement, working to increase our value proposition to Youngstown State  
University students, as well as continuing to foster a fraternal and intellectually  
stimulating community, will also be strengthened and expanded in the upcoming year.

Jillian Smith, President

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