

## Alpha Epsilon Pi: Investigative Summary

### Initial Complaint:

An email was sent to the University Police Department on February 9, 2017, and afterwards sent to Fraternity and Sorority Life and the Office of Student Conduct.

*"I am a concerned student wanting to report an incident. Through anonymous sources, I was informed that the pledge master of A E Pi blindfolded pledges, made them lay on the floor, and then took out a rifle and racked it to make a noise. One of the blindfolded pledges made a comment about it not being real, and the pledge master put the barrel up to the pledges head and asked him if he thinks it's real now. It was reported to the brothers for the case to be reviewed within our fraternity to see what action to take. I'm sure they won't report this outside of the fraternity. I don't believe that any fraternity on campus should be involved with any kind of firearms and would like this issue to be handled accordingly. I would like to remain anonymous and have taken the proper precautions to do so. This is an anonymous e-mail address being accessed over a non-traceable internet connection and thus I will not receive or respond to any further e-mails.*

A subsequent an incident report was submitted by Master/President Joshua Levine regarding the incident on February 13, 2017.

### Investigation:

Based on this report an investigation took place on March 3, 2017 and the following individuals were interviewed: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The organization and members were notified in writing on March 1, 2017 of this investigation and their requested participation. Provided below is a summary of each interview.

#### I. [REDACTED] (Current Pledge)

On March 3, 2017 Rosemarie Timothy and Timothy Donovan met with [REDACTED] a current pledge of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, [REDACTED] made the following comments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He started the pledge process after rush week, and was learning about the chapter and getting to know the brothers. He stated that they would get to know one another through talking and team building activities. He said one of the team building activities was the 'hole in the wall challenge,' where they would help one another over an obstacle (duct tape, across the hall).

The incident took place during a team building activity, and he stated that none of the pledges felt threatened. He stated that they went to the pledge masters house, and were blind folded, walked around and ended up in the backyard. He stated that he believes the purpose of the blind folded was to feel disoriented. He stated that they were given directions on where to go (when walking around blindfolded), but did not provide specifics on how they were organized to walk or where they went. While outside, he stated he heard the gun, but did not know if it was real or not. The gun was introduced while they were talking, and was there for a minute but then it was gone. He stated that the gun did not play a role in the activity they were doing. They (the pledges) believed they were 'bonding' in the middle of the forest, so they could share more serious things, and the gun would protect them from wild animals. He originally thought the gun was an application on someone's phone, and at the time did not know who introduced the gun. After the gun, they were back talking to one another, about high school, and learning about one

another. He felt that being blindfolded during this activity, demobilized the other senses, so that he could more keenly focus on what his fellow pledges were saying.

Since the incident he has continued to hang out with his pledge brothers, but not in any formal means.

When asked if there was any additional information that he would like to add or if any questions weren't asked that he would like to provide clarity on, he stated that there was not.

II. [REDACTED] (Current Member)

On March 3, 2017 Rosemarie Timothy and Sarah Hunt met with [REDACTED] a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, [REDACTED] made the following comments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] From meeting the members he pledged the organization the in fall of 2016. He stated he was drawn to the organization because of his friends, but enjoys the community service, leadership, and connections from being a member. During his pledge process he would meet at a brother's house to learn about the history and founders of the organization. He stated that it was optional to interview the brothers, but it would be helpful to get to know them for the big brother/little brother selection process. He stated they were provided a 'blue book' regarding the organization and they were given quizzes regarding the information.

For the specific incident, he stated that he arrived 20 minutes before the other brothers. He stated the pledges arrived and went into the living room, and they were blindfolded, and placed in a line, one behind the other. They each placed their hands on the shoulder of the pledge ahead of them. The pledges were then guided by a member around a lake and then led to the backyard of the brother's house. They were then guided to stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, holding hands. The pledges were then instructed to talk with one another. He stated that they talked about high school, family, etc., to 'click' with one another. He stated he left 20 minutes into the event, and did not witness the "incident." He stated that no one knew that the pledge master had a gun. When asked about the purpose of the event, he stated that it was for the pledges to learn to trust their brothers. He stated that the pledges are not informed of the purpose of the event, until after the event is over. This event was the first teambuilding activity of the pledge process, and that the pledges had previously met to begin learning ritual, etc.

[REDACTED] stated that he did not learn of the "incident" until Judicial Board, which is a member of. He stated that the J-Board received a message about the pledge master, and that they would be convening on the following Saturday to review the incident. However, the meeting was cancelled due to the organization begin placed on interim suspension, and the pledge master has also stepped down. He went on to say that most of the members did not know about the event, and the concerns were brought up a week after.

[REDACTED] provided additional information, stating that the current pledge master was not his pledge master, but was the vice pledge master for his process. The pledge master was elected in the fall to serve starting in the spring for 2017. He stated that the pledge master learns from the prior pledge master, and also goes through risk management training.

When asked if there was any additional information that he would like to add or if any questions weren't asked that he would like to provide clarity on, he stated that there was not.

III. [REDACTED] (Current Member)

On March 3, 2017 Rosemarie Timothy and Sarah hunt met with [REDACTED] a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, [REDACTED] made the following comments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He pledged the organization in the fall of 2016. He was drawn to the organization as he connected to the brothers through similar interests. During his pledge process he learned about “ritual stuff,” such as the ‘blue book’ and history of the organization. He was absent for many activities both ritual and team building as he had to work.

As it relates to the specific incident, he arrived when the pledges were in the circle blindfolded. The pledges were told that the current members were walking away from the circle. He stated that they were told to be quiet, and that there was a shotgun. When asked why the pledges were told to be quiet he said it was because they didn’t want anyone yelling. The pledges were asked to quiet down several times by the pledge master/member. He stated that the pledges asked about 10 times if there was really a gun. Originally there was no gun at the event, and after the pledges continually asked if it was real, the pledge master retrieved his gun. He then subsequently racked his gun, to prove that it was real and for the pledges to quiet down. He stated that the gun was unloaded and he did not bring out any shells. A pledge (later identified by [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] [thought it was]) continued to say it wasn’t real, that it was a nerf gun. At that time the pledge master put the middle of the barrel of the gun to his ([REDACTED]’s) neck. [REDACTED] stated that it happened really fast, and he wasn’t paying much attention as he was on his phone. He stated that he left shocked. He said if it (the gun) was brought up ahead of time that the gun would be used, that they would have told him it was a bad idea. He stated that this was not normal, as he asked other pledge classes in the organization if this had happened before and they said no. He also stated he did not have any follow-up conversations with [REDACTED] about what happened.

He stated that he arrived to chapter late when the incident was discussed so he is unsure how it was discussed to the members.

When asked if there was any additional information that he would like to add or if any questions weren’t asked that he would like to provide clarity on, he stated that there was not.

#### IV. [REDACTED] (Current Member)

On March 3, 2017 Timothy Donovan and Germaine Graham met with [REDACTED] a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, [REDACTED] made the following comments. [REDACTED] He was interested because they were predominantly a Jewish fraternity, he felt at home there, and he sees them being a lot nicer to others, than other fraternities. When asked about his chapter involvement, [REDACTED] stated that he held no positions, but does what asked to, such as helping with event set up. He characterized his role like he a learning role. He knows he should learn the things they do well, and learn from, and not continue what they don’t do well.

Currently, he attends new member meetings. He believes there’s value in attending those meetings. Meetings are mainly fun and bonding. When he went through the process, his favorite part was serenading the sorority houses. He also loved the team building exercise called the ‘hole in the wall challenge.’

Pertaining to the night of the incident, [REDACTED] characterized the event as a night where you share personal stories in order to get to know each other. When he went through it, he did not know that current

members were listening, but he enjoyed the bonding he experienced, so he went to attend and hear new members' stories. That night, they showed up at the "Lake House", where a few brothers live, and the pledges are blindfolded, disoriented, meaning they are walked around in circles, then they go single-file holding on to the brothers in front of them, lead to a tarp, asked to sit down. There are leaves thrown onto their feet to reinforce the idea that they are in a forest. ■ mentioned he only watched and he did not lead the members around. He recalled from his experience that they were instructed that they are to sit and bond, which typically means they share stories. He assumed that is what happened on this occasion, but does not know exactly what was conveyed. When asked what the purpose of the blindfold was, he felt that the blindfold was to disorient but the activity is meant to always trust your brother and that you are always safe in their hands.

When asked about the firearm, he stated that he saw no purpose. He explained that when he saw the firearm, and froze up, as he had never held or fired a firearm before. He stated he looked at the person next to him and wondered, "What the hell is going on?" He explained his new member status was his barrier to intervening. He explained Pledge Master ■ had the gun. ■ didn't see much, but the pledge master was holding the gun and walked towards the pledges. ■ said he was shaken by this event. ■ recalled ■ mentioned the firearm's presence and told a pledge to touch it, but he is unsure if he did. The pledge that didn't believe it was real and was vocal about that saying, "Oh, its not fucking real." ■ believed that this challenge lead to the pledge master touching him with the gun. When asked, ■ said he racked it to produce a sound. He mentioned he thought ■'s family is a hunting family with guns but he thought this was out of character. When talking about his pledging experience, ■ said in the past, when his pledge master said something like clean my house, they told him no and that was fine, and that he never felt hazed. When asked if a gun was present during his process he said absolutely not and if so, he would not be sitting here today, meaning he would not have joined. When asked about people's reaction to the gun being pulled out, ■ said from where he was standing, he and the person next to him were uncomfortable. He thinks most people there were uncomfortable.

■ discussed the reactions and conversations after the incident mostly sounding like "the pledge master is an idiot" and "we are idiots for not getting involved." He said the incident was not talked about in a chapter meeting. ■ said within a week of the incident he brought it up to his big brother and they were unaware and that it happened and that they brought it to the attention of the older members. He said one other executive board member was in attendance that night, the rush chair, ■, but does not believe he was there during the gun incident.

■ said he knows this was discussed at an executive board meeting. He said he doesn't know who sent the letter but he said if he had to guess, he would think someone on the executive board sent the letter. When asked, he said he was unsure how the chapter would proceed, but he said he was approached to talk about the incident in front of an internal investigative board, but that never happened because ■ was made not a brother quickly.

When asked about the timeline following the incident, ■ thinks within a couple days, probably 2-3 days but maybe a little longer, he was notified of an internal investigation, and he thinks that within a week he woke up to Woody's email notifying them of the interim suspension.

When asked if there was anything else he wanted to share, Ian mentioned Woody came into the chapter to talk about the investigation and that we would be asking questions about the incident and the chapter culture. ■ believes it was a freak incident and that he would classify the fraternity as "soft" and a "goofy group of Jews" and that is why he joined. He was afraid of being hazed, and when he asked members about hazing, they told him no and he felt this was honest. He said if this happened to him, he

wouldn't have joined and that is why he is here this morning because he is remorseful for not doing anything in the moment and he wanted to do something now.

V. [REDACTED] (Current Member/Former President)

On March 3, 2017 Timothy Donovan and Germaine Graham met with [REDACTED] a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, [REDACTED] made the following comments.

[REDACTED] He tried to rush in fall but his parents told him he had to wait. He pledged with one of his friends who was rushing. He is from [REDACTED] and they have a small Jewish community and he wanted to get back to something like that.

[REDACTED] He had no formal involvement with this pledge class prior to the incident. He currently now plays the role of mentor to the chapter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] found out about the incident from [REDACTED] on the night of February 6<sup>th</sup>. The president was out of town, and he heard about it, and he reported to their judicial process, so they could look into it. He is unsure what happened with the judicial board following his report, but he knows they had set a hearing for the 11<sup>th</sup>, but the national office called Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> and said they were on cease and desist. They were told they would have a call early the next day; they were called at 11:30am and they were told to call everyone together, remove the pledge master and his subordinate and they were to be put through the judicial process and sanctioned, but he thinks the national office removed him completely prior to their process. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were elected and put in charge of the pledge process.

[REDACTED] shared that since this incident, [REDACTED] was dropped, which [REDACTED] believes was between February 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup>. When asked why, [REDACTED]'s removal was a recommendation of the pledge master [REDACTED], and then it is put to a chapter vote, which requires 20% vote for removal. He was dropped for being disrespectful, unprepared, not taking it seriously, etc. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] believes [REDACTED] was the one who had the gun pointed to his head. [REDACTED] yelled when he was first told, but has since had conversations that have been better. [REDACTED] was not there but his understanding is that [REDACTED] couldn't believe he was being removed and older brothers then pulled him aside and talked to him about why.

[REDACTED] and Josh (current president) met with all brothers that were reported to be there at the event on February 11<sup>th</sup>. They asked them their name, how are you doing, were you there, what happened, etc. Most of the brothers in attendance reported they had never seen a gun prior to the incident and didn't know what to do when a gun was presented. After the meetings, [REDACTED] and Josh recommended counseling for 3 of the initiated brothers who were in attendance during the night of the incident.

The next day, [REDACTED] and Josh met with the pledges. They had food and hung out with them to see how they were doing. They then talked to them one on one. They checked in with them about their life, and asked how the event went. The pledges said they bonded at the event. When asked if anything out of the ordinary happened at the event they all said no. And then when asked again, only one of them said yes and proceeded to say he was vaping during the event and had it taken from him. They were then all brought together and told about the firearm being present, and [REDACTED] said they were surprised and hadn't really thought about it. They then talked about it again one on one and [REDACTED] said they were all comfortable knowing the fraternity was handling it. [REDACTED] mentioned that [REDACTED] was talked to by Alpha Epsilon Pi National. Although, from what [REDACTED], said, [REDACTED] had been handling it well and hasn't experienced issues.

█████ was pledge master in the fall and █████ was elected for the spring. █████ and █████ were good friends so he wanted to be able to go the pledge events because he hadn't had a chance previously.

When given the opportunity, █████ did not have anything else he wanted to add.

VI. █████ (Current Member)

On March 3, 2017 Timothy Donovan and Germaine Graham met with █████ a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, █████ made the following comments. █████ joined this past fall, █████ For █████, his joining process was a positive experience. He said the bonding that happened was awesome. He mentioned he liked the skill building and trust building.

When asked about the night of the incident, █████ said the incident was just one of their events. He said up and to the point where the gun was introduced, he thought it was run the same way he recalled from his process. He said he was on his phone and not really paying attention and then he looked up saw the gun and he froze. █████ said the brothers around him all did the same thing. None of them were doing anything. He said the pledges were just sitting there, but they were likely aware of the gun, as it made a sound when cocked.

When asked about the blindfolds, █████ said the purpose of the blindfolds are to build trust. Because it's early-on in the process and he thinks it's to encourage bonding. He said the blindfold is to focus on really listening to each other.

When asked about his role the night of the incident and in the chapter, █████ said his role that night was to observe, and in general, he is just there to get to know the new members. █████ said he was placed on the logistics for rush events.

When asked about a firearm's use in the past, █████ said that he does not believe a gun had been used in the semesters prior to his pledge semester, but it was not used his pledge process.

When asked about his relationship to █████, the pledge master, █████ said he is close with the pledge master.

█████ said his reaction of being concerned was more about the presence of the gun, not who was holding the gun. When asked if he was surprised that there was a gun, he said he definitely surprised at the presence and he doesn't think that this was a smart decision. █████ believes that the brothers present realized that this probably shouldn't have happened and they tried to move the activity along.

When asked about what █████ did that night and the time following the incident, █████ said he didn't do anything about it. █████ said he didn't talk to anyone about it. He said after that night, he didn't talk about it because he wasn't afraid or afraid of him holding it. He said the presence of the gun, when not expecting it, made him nervous.

█████ was asked about what, if any, he knew about how the chapter handled this situation. He said he believes the executive board had a meeting and talked about it. He said he thinks it was briefly discussed at a later chapter meeting because most things that happen in executive board meetings generally make its way there. He was made aware of the investigation via email. Between the incident and the email, he said he hadn't really thought about the incident. He is unaware of others talking about the incident. He said thinking back, he thought he probably could have done something.

When asked if he had anything else he would like to add, he said he did not.

VII. ██████████ (Current Member)

On March 3, 2017 Timothy Donovan and Germaine Graham met with ██████████ a current member of Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi) and during this meeting, ██████████ made the following comments. He is a new initiate and joined in the fall. He knew someone else pledging from where he was from and felt like AEPi was a good fit for him and his Jewish culture.

When asked about his pledge process, ██████████ worked a majority of the time throughout his pledge process, but he felt like what he was there for was a transforming experience. He said that the events like dressing up during the week, doing scavenger hunts, and the conversations brought them closer together.

When asked how the event went last semester, ██████████ said they sat down and talked to each other, were to be honest, and learn about each other; it was to be a learning activity. He said it was one of his favorite activities. This was a way to learn about each other, become one, and then learn about the fraternity. He remembers walking around blindfolding then being sat down.

When asked about his role in the chapter, ██████████ responded he is on the rush and athletics committee. He is also a judicial board member for IFC. When prompted to talk about his relationship with the current pledges, he said he knew them well because of being on the rush committee, and he attended some meetings and the event that night.

When talking about the night of the event, ██████████ said the pledges were walked around outside, and they were sat down. A joke was made about a wild boar in the area and that there would be a gun, by some member present, but ██████████ said it was not the pledge master, ██████████ but doesn't know who exactly. A gun was then brought out by the pledge master and he was shocked because this was not part of AEPi's culture. He said he kind of froze and didn't want to speak up. Other members were in shock. He has experience with guns, as his dad is a police officer. He felt that this didn't need to happen. ██████████ cocked the firearm a few times and it was placed on the back of one of the pledges necks. The pledge had been refuting something, but ██████████ was unsure of what exactly. The event wrapped up 10-15 mins later. He believes the firearm changed the dynamic of the event and it caused it to end more abruptly than it normally would have.

When asked about the setting of the event, he said it was in the backyard of the pledge master's house, they places leaves on the ground, and that it was very dark.

After the event, he was in shock that this was brought out to an event. He believes this was a mistake.

He asked if we had read the report to the police. When asked how he was made aware of the report, he said was made aware of the report by their president, after the president received the email from Conduct.

██████████ was asked about what he knew about how the chapter handled the situation after the event. He said there really wasn't much conversation had about the incident by those who were there, and he is unsure if anyone else was aware. He is unsure if the executive board was aware of the incident prior to being in contact with Student Conduct. ██████████ was removed immediately following the suspension through Student Conduct. He said that they received the report Friday and by Saturday morning everything was changed and he knows ██████████ had been removed.

When asked if there was anything else we should know, ██████████ repeated the sentiment he had expressed on multiple occasions throughout the interview that this incident was not part of AEPi's culture and does not represent them as a chapter.

Investigative Summary:

Based on the investigation completed, it is evident that a gun was introduced and placed on a pledge's neck (██████████) during an Alpha Epsilon Pi pledge event by the pledge master ██████████. Additionally, it is clear that the other members present were not aware of the gun being introduced prior to the incident. A concern noted throughout this investigation that many current members were present during the incident, and made the decision to not intervene, attempt to (or find a means to) remove the gun from the situation or report the incident. Moreover, the incident was not immediately report to the Office of Student Conduct or FSL until after the fraternity organized a means to address the concern internally. It should be further reviewed that the pledge who had the gun placed to his neck, was since removed by the organization by the initial recommendation of the pledge master, ██████████. Lastly, it is the recommendation from this investigation that all members present during the incident (in addition to those already noted in this report) be interviewed regarding their involvement in the incident.

DRAFT