



February 24, 2022

Dear Members of Alpha Eta Chapter at the University of Minnesota,

What follows is an extremely belated apology from the national council of Sigma Kappa Sorority for our failure to adopt or provide a non-discrimination policy at your urging, causing Alpha Eta Chapter to withdraw from Sigma Kappa in 1961. In 2020, we set a goal for Sigma Kappa to model a diverse, inclusive, equitable and accessible membership experience among the women's fraternal organizations. One fundamental part of achieving that goal is coming to terms with Sigma Kappa's history, which has not always reflected inclusion as a priority.

In 2020, we formed a history task force to research, document and acknowledge organizational discrimination in Sigma Kappa's history. The group's work is detailed in the article *Acknowledging the Past, Looking toward the Future* in the Winter 2022 issue of the *Sigma Kappa Triangle*. We have learned that during the 1960-1961 academic year, in the wake of Sigma Kappa's closure of its chapters at Cornell University and Tufts University after those chapters offered membership to Black women in 1956, Alpha Eta Chapter requested clarification as to Sigma Kappa's stance on race and religion as qualifications for membership. The national council failed to provide any response, even after the chapter president traveled to Indianapolis to ask for assistance. As a result, Alpha Eta Chapter withdrew from the national organization and became a local sorority at the University of Minnesota. We cannot imagine the hurt, harm, and pain which this caused the members of your chapter. Please know that we will strive to make sure that no one else feels this way in Sigma Kappa.

These events are probably not news to you, nor were they unknown to Sigma Kappa over the years. But we had never collected the relevant documents, acknowledged what happened, or apologized for it. We are deeply sorry for our refusal to take a stand against discrimination alongside Alpha Eta Chapter, and we also regret that our apology has lingered for so long.

We recognize that you may have mixed feelings about hearing from Sigma Kappa after all this time. We hope that our letter can bring some closure and validation to your experience. As young college students, you took a stand against discrimination when Sigma Kappa would not. Please know that as we have reflected on the withdrawal of Alpha Eta Chapter from our national organization, we have renewed our commitment to having honest conversations about policies and practices in Sigma Kappa that are inconsistent with what we are trying to achieve: a special place where all members can feel a deep sense of respect, belonging, and support through the lifelong bond of sorority. We also understand with clarity the importance of engaging with our chapters in conversations about inclusion and change when they look to us for guidance or invite us to the table.

We recognize that you may have withdrawn your membership in Sigma Kappa decades ago, which we can certainly understand. If you are ever interested in rejoining our sisterhood, it would be our honor to reinstate your membership. More generally, if you are willing to reflect with us about your Sigma Kappa experience and how it has impacted you, we would welcome a conversation. Please contact Mallory Simmons, director of publications, at [history@sigmakappa.org](mailto:history@sigmakappa.org) or 317-381-5502, and we will reach out.

We cannot change what happened in the past, but we have an unlimited capacity — inspired by you — to spread love and friendship through the power of inclusion. We hope that you will accept our apology on behalf of Sigma Kappa, or at the very least find comfort in knowing that all these years later, your bravery continues to inspire reflection and change.

Loyally in Sigma Kappa,



Ann O'Connell Adams  
National President



Jordan Archer  
National Vice President for Extension



Angie Naniot Ahrens  
National Vice President for Alumnae



Christian Mattingly Gamm  
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Meaghan Miller Thul  
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