

Leadership Awards Night Nomination

Outstanding Commitment to Diversity



Beta Alpha Psi

The International Accounting Organization

Lambda Beta Chapter

2009-2010 Academic Year

- Title of Award:** Outstanding Commitment to Diversity
Organization completing submission: Beta Alpha Psi
Faculty/staff/student completing form: Brianna K. Ebanks
Phone #: 813-317-4177
UT Box: 1339
Nominee: Beta Alpha Psi
Number of members in your/nominee's organization: 87
What is your/nominee's annual budget and how do you obtain these funds?
 - ~\$14,000
 - We obtain funds from local firms, fundraisers, alumni donations, Student Government, etc.**Name of your/nominee's faculty/staff advisor:** Dr. Mary Keener and Dr. Teresa Pergola

2. How has your/nominee's organization shown a commitment to diversity throughout the year?

In today's society, diversity is not something one can escape or hide from. It is in the things people say, the way people look, the way people dress, and even the way people cook. Diversity also pervades the way organizations are managed, the way professional businesses operate on a daily basis, and the way our society was created. Therefore, at the University of Tampa, there are many organizations, such as the Diverse Fellowship Organization and the International Students Association, that all strive to embrace the diversity of our student population. Furthermore, the Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi sees how diverse our chapter is, and longs to encourage cultural and religious understanding in our chapter in order to prepare our members for the diversity they will face in the corporate world. Diversity holds a high place in our chapter, as we have members and candidates from many different countries. These members often speak different languages and have different accents and lifestyles, and look quite different from one another. In order to foster respect and understanding for all people everywhere, the Executive Board aims to educate our chapter and foster this respect and understanding, so that when we all enter the workplace environment and encounter diversity, we will welcome it with open arms. The members of Lambda Beta chapter of Beta Alpha Psi at the University of Tampa know that in the professional world, diversity is one of the best characteristics any organization can have. Not only does embracing diversity promote ideas from different viewpoints, it also allows employers and employees to see that every man and woman is capable of doing the same job—regardless of where he/she is from, how he/she speaks, how he/she looks, and even what he/she believes in.

2. Specifically, what activities did your/nominee's organization sponsor that show a commitment to diversity, such as an event during Black History Month or Women's History Month?

The Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi has and will continue to embrace diversity at the chapter level through competitions, events, and education. During this past year, our Best Practices regional and national teams consisted of individuals from five or more countries, who all came together and composed a presentation on Chapter Sustainability from our different points of views and ideas. Furthermore, these diverse groups led our chapter to victory at both the regional and national level, proving that hard work and diversity are important attributes to

have in any organization or business. In addition, just this past semester our chapter has put on or participated in roughly five events that have promoted diversity among the members of our chapter and the UT student population. Also, our chapter decided to make November “Diversity Month” for our chapter and participated in events during the month to promote diversity.

For our first event, we co-hosted an educational forum with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. where we educated members from both of our organizations and the student population at large on the importance of interviews and how to prepare for them adequately. This allowed our members to interact with a social Greek sorority on campus, who also makes it a top priority to educate its members in business topics that will aid them in their career. That very same day, several members of our chapter attended a forum aimed to break the common misconceptions of various parts of the world (Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean Countries, and Asia). This forum was hosted by UT’s Caribbean Student Association, Indian Cultural Association, and the Diversity Fellowship on campus, who all aim to promote diversity and unity on campus. In addition, some of our members also participated in the Indian Cultural Associations’ Festival of Lights event that celebrated traditional Hindu celebrations.

Moreover, the next event that promoted diversity at the chapter level was a presentation during one of our weekly meetings, which focused on Allied Training. A supervisor for a few of UT’s residence halls came to our meeting and conducted a training session on the how to be a friend or ally to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transvestite (GLBT) community. This presentation equipped our members to and relate to our friends who have different sexualities.

In our last event for our first annual Diversity Month, we decided to take one of our chapter meetings and devote it solely to diversity. We had our members complete a survey on Blackboard one week prior, where they gave information about the following: what country/state were they born in, what country/state they currently live in, their cultural background, and what religion (if any) they have. Based on the results, we made a music playlist with songs from the various cultures, grouped our members together by country, and conducted an icebreaker to break the misconceptions we all had of one another’s home countries and cultures. We wrote the names of the countries/cultures/religions on the board, and allowed members and candidates to state what they thought about each country, culture, and religion. We wrote these statements on the board and then allowed the members and candidates to discuss these facts with individuals from the same place and background. Finally, members and candidates addressed the misconceptions or facts about their own country or culture. This allowed our members to break the stereotypes others have about one another’s home countries, and further, to educate our members about countries all around the globe. Although we did not discuss the religion statements from the chapter, we wrote down the statements and plan to have an event next semester with the religious organizations on campus to educate both our chapter and the student population on each religion. Moreover, in this same meeting, we also showed a video on diversity in the workplace and allowed our President, Andrew Argue, to conduct a presentation on Personality Diversity. In his presentation, he had everyone take a survey that helped us to figure out what type of personality each of us have and the good and bad traits about each personality type. This allowed us to realize that we all do different things for different reasons. This activity also helped us to understand why our friends act a certain way, and to accept them for who they are.

Furthermore, our chapter also organized a Diversity Committee that helped our chapter plan the diversity events this semester, and we will continue to promote diversity among our chapter and the student population next semester. As mentioned above, we plan to have a forum with the various religious organizations on campus. We also plan to have faculty and various business employees present information on the importance of diversity in the workplace (including different social classes in the workplace) and have members and candidates take turns bringing in food from their country or culture to each chapter meeting.



ALLIED TRAINER
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER

3. How does your organization define, increase, and demonstrate diversity at UT and/or in the community?

Our chapter sees diversity as differences in individuals' ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical appearance, personal habits, education levels, language, accents, and personal interests. With a chapter representing over 20 countries from all over the globe, our chapter itself is saturated with variances in every aspect listed above. We see diversity as a way to foster growth, respect, knowledge, and understanding about and for all mankind. We aim for our members and candidates to embrace one another's differences and accept everyone for who we are, not who we want each other to be. We at the Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi see that there is no escaping diversity, and we want to prepare our members and candidates to handle differences and diversity effectively, appropriately, knowledgably, and respectfully. Therefore, our areas of focus on diversity have included: personality diversity, sexuality diversity, cultural diversity, religious diversity, and organizational diversity. This semester we have taken each of these areas and worked to educate our members on them. In the future, we hope to also focus more on social class diversity and diversity in the workplace.



4. Has your organization developed any connections beyond the University community to achieve diversity goals?

The Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi has made it a top-priority to inform those in the Southeast region and the entire United States on the importance of embracing diversity. Beta Alpha Psi has regional and national speech competitions every year in which each chapter has a chance to present on the “Best Practices” of its chapter. This year, our chapter competed in the “Chapter Sustainability” section of the competition where we informed the Southeast region’s chapters of Beta Alpha Psi on how we have incorporated diversity into our chapter’s sustainability plan this year. We informed them on the events we did last semester and the events we have planned for this current semester. Furthermore, we won first place in this section of the competition and now have the chance to go to the national competition on August 5th-7th, 2010 in San Jose, California. Our chapter is ecstatic about the opportunity to not only compete against other Beta Alpha Psi chapters all over the nation, but to also inform these chapters on our best practices in ensuring that our chapter, university, local community, and national society know the importance of embracing diverse cultures, religions, and viewpoints.

Our chapter has also applied for Ernst and Young’s Diversity Award to the top 10 Beta Alpha Psi chapters commitment to diversity. The application included an abstract where we portrayed our definition of diversity, what it means to our chapter and the professional world, our past and future events on diversity, and our plan to sustain diversity education in our chapter and university. Many accounting professionals from both Ernst and Young and Beta Alpha Psi’s headquarters will read the abstract and determine 10 winners. This will allow our chapter to build a connection with these judges by informing them on our commitment to diversity, but will also keep us accountable as we are required to send another abstract at the end of the semester, stating the diversity events we planned and completed since the first abstract. If we

win this diversity award from Ernst and Young and the University of Tampa, we hope to use that credibility to further our efforts by expanding our diversity events to include members of the community, such as firms and charitable organizations.



5. Please include any additional activities or information your organization would like to be considered in the selection process.

Diversity is highly valued among the Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi. Next semester, we hope to continue educating our chapter and the student population on the importance of respect for all mankind and the differences among each individual here at UT and around the world. Our strategy is to conduct events on campus and within our chapter meetings through forums focused on diversity in religions, social classes, workplace, genders, and sexuality.

The religious event will be conducted during our regular, chapter meeting and will be called "Step in the Circle." During this event, everyone will sit in a circle formation and statements, relating to what religion a person holds, will be called out. Members and/or candidates will have to step in the circle if they agree/disagree with the statement. For example, if the question is asked on whether or not you are an atheist, everyone who is an atheist must stand step in the circle. After we complete the step in the circle portion, we will discuss the common misconceptions held about various religions. Furthermore, this event will allow the chapter to get a feel for how diverse our members and candidates are not just in looks, personality, cultural backgrounds, or sexualities, but also in what religion(s) each one of us holds.

The social classes' event will take the form of Hunger Banquet and will also take place during a regular chapter meeting. At this Hunger Banquet, there will be three meals served with each meal relating to a particular social class (High class, Middle Class, and the Poor). At the beginning of the event, each member and candidate will receive a card stating what meal they will be eating for that night and where they will be sitting. The High class will have a 3 or 5 course meal and will sit at an extravagant dining room table and place setting. The Middle class will eat a one course meal consisting of one protein, one carbohydrate, and one vegetable/fruit, and they will sit at a regular kitchen table with simple utensils. The Poor will receive a simple meal of just white rice, with only a fork to use while sitting on the ground. Through this Hunger Banquet event, the members and candidates of the Lambda Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi will experience first-hand the diversity among the social classes in both the United States and all around the world.

The workplace and gender diversity event will be held during our regular chapter meeting. A firm will come in to talk about the diversity groups they have at their firm, and the importance of embracing and advocating diversity in the workplace. Also, this firm will focus on how different genders can be treated in the workplace.

For the sexuality diversity event, we aim to co-host the annual Drag Show that our campus' GLBTSA (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transitive Student Association) hosts on campus every year. It is a fun event where various individuals of all sexualities dress up and have a little fashion show. Although it is a fun event, it has a serious meaning behind it. The event's goal is to encourage students to accept each student for who they are, regardless of their sexuality. It also aims to promote respect and understanding amongst all students of at the University of Tampa, regardless of how they dress.

Our objectives and desired outcomes include: educating students on the importance of diversity in this world, promoting respect for all of the students on campus, and breaking the stereotypes that our chapter and the student population have of various countries, religions, races, genders, sexualities, and physical appearance. We hope that through all of our events both this semester and next that our members and candidates will see that diversity is an attribute or characteristic that can actually be the best characteristic any person, organization, or country can have. Our chapter hopes that our members and candidates will see that diverse ideas, personalities, and individuals make this world more exciting and allow us to conduct both social and professional activities more efficiently and productively.

