

# Grand Valley Lanthorn

## GVSU inducts new sorority



GVL Graphic / Brad DiBenedetto

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Phi Sigma Sigma will become installed as the sixth Panhellenic sorority at Grand Valley State University with about 50 women to go through the initiation ritual Saturday.

Phi Sigma Sigma President Melissa Knepshield said the sorority would be a positive addition to the entire university.

“What makes us stand apart from other Greek groups is our values — leadership through service, inclusiveness, and sisterhood,” she said. “We have a very diverse group of ladies who are going to cross this weekend, and I can only hope that we stay as diverse and passionate as we are now.”

The installation process began in October when the sorority was chosen by the GVSU Greek community over other applicants, Knepshield said.

Women from national chapter and Phi Sigma Sigma’s sister chapter at Central Michigan University recruited and interviewed over 120 students before 50 were committed to become permanent members of the sorority.

As the colonization process began in October, the founding women formed a constitution, organized committees, established executive board positions and planned programs.

“This colony has started from the ground up,” Knepshield said. “We started as ladies knowing nothing about Phi Sigma Sigma and now we are a group of powerful women who are ready to be sisters.”

Erin Weber, chapter key advisor and Phi Sigma Sigma alumna member of the Ferris State University chapter, has worked closely with the colony since inception. Greek life is an important component of campus programming and Phi Sigma Sigma will compliment and enhance the values-based programming at GVSU, she said.

“Each sorority woman at GVSU is a campus leader in her own way,” Weber said. “They have worked hard to achieve their goals.”

The sorority is committed to philanthropy, Phi Sigma Sigma member, Rachel Partain, said. The women have teamed up with the Alpha Sigma Tau sorority to raise money for Relay for Life.

“Our fundraising goes toward the Phi Sigma Sigma foundation,” Partain said. “The majority of the proceeds go to the National Kidney Foundation and towards educational scholarships.”

The sorority plans to hold many other fundraising events next year, though no specific plans have been made.

“We will, for sure, be raising as much money for the Phi Sigma Sigma Foundation and our local philanthropy,” Knepschild said.

Events such as a father’s golf outing and mother’s brunch are planned for initiation weekend, each of which will become annual events, Knepschild said. Other events will include a summer sisterhood retreat, socials, multicultural programming and risk-management speakers, she added.

Phi Sigma Sigma was founded in 1913 in New York City. GVSU’s chapter will be the 10th in the state with an additional 165 chapters nationwide.

The sorority became a member of the National Panhellenic Conference, an umbrella organization representing 26 international sororities, in 1951.

Phi Sigma Sigma will follow the rules and practices of the NPC and will continue to recruit women who embody the core values, Weber said.

“Phi Sigma Sigma membership is based on our core values of lifelong learning, inclusiveness, and leadership through service,” she said.

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