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PHI SIGMA NU
AMERICAN INDIAN FRATERNITY
ESTABLISHED 1996

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For Immediate Release
August 10, 2015

HASKELL HOSTS FRATERNITY CONVENTION

LAWRENCE, KS — Phi Sigma Nu, the oldest and largest American Indian Fraternity in the nation, held its 10th Annual Chief Convention at Haskell Indian Nations University, July 23-25, 2015. Since 2006, members from across the country gather during the last full weekend in July to network, attend workshops, vote on resolutions, elect national officers, and plan for the year ahead - all to strengthen and celebrate the fraternity.

During the opening ceremony, Haskell President Dr. Venida Chenault thanked the fraternity for choosing Haskell as host of the convention and encouraged the men in attendance to keep up their efforts to better themselves and their communities. "The time is now. Indian Country needs your leadership," said Chenault.



Brothers pictured in front of the oldest building on campus, Hiawatha Hall.

The agenda called for team building and leadership development activities, a tour of the Haskell Cultural Center & Museum, workshops focused on membership intake and chapter excellence, a presentation on Haskell's early years by professor Dr. Theresa Milk, and a community service project.

A week prior to the Chief Convention, the Haskell Cemetery was vandalized when headstones were dug up and defaced. The cemetery is the final resting place for some of Haskell's first students, which was during the time of the U.S.'s efforts to assimilate American Indian children. Even with an excessive heat warning and heat indices in upwards of 115°, the Brothers chose to clean up the cemetery. Armed with landscaping tools and their bare hands, the men pulled weeds, cleared vines, and trimmed shrubs. In an interview with the local media, Iota Chapter (Haskell) President Winston Robison said, "Why not give back and fix somebody else's mistake?" Afterward, Iota Chapter decided to make cleaning up the cemetery a regular activity in the future.

2016 marks 20 years since Phi Sigma Nu's founding at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. During the business meeting Brothers approved several initiatives to coincide with the fraternity's anniversary. One resolution created a *20 FOR 20* campaign to raise \$20,000 to help jumpstart projects and programs. Another resolution established the fraternity's membership on a committee with the National Coalition for the Advancement of Natives in Higher Education or NCANHE. They also chose the National Service Project for 2016 to be centered on Native Veterans.



Brothers cleaning up the Haskell Cemetery. Photo by R. Coody

Brothers voted to reelect several members of the Chief Council including: Chief Vice President John Lowery, Chief Secretary Chad Pierce, Chief Historian Tosh Welch, Chief of Communications Joel Hernandez, and newly elected Chief of Membership Development Preston Welch. Their terms run from 2015 to 2017.



Closing out the Chief Convention, the Phi Nu Awards dinner highlighted the achievements of Brothers from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. This year seen more nominations than any other which made it difficult to choose awardees. Those recognized include: Undergraduate Ma'eno of the Year David Jordan Hunt, Graduate Ma'eno of the Year Kevin Melvin, Nu Man of the Year James Rudd, Jr., Chapter of the Year Iota Chapter at Haskell, and the Screaming Eagle Award went to Ian Stroud. Stroud was selected to serve in the newly created expansion coordinator position.



Photos by R. Coody



The 11th Chief Convention will be held at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in 2016.

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