

First I want to thank you for taking the time to read this email about a great organization that is being started at the University of Illinois, with one of the largest Greek systems in the country. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a class of 01' alumni member of \_\_\_\_\_ fraternity here at the university. I found all of your names on Lambda10.org and decided to write you to tell you what a current active member of my undergraduate chapter, named Kevin Hauswirth, is pioneering on campus. If your story of a being a gay frat guy is anything like mine, you will see why an organization like the one being started at the U of I is both extremely necessary and long over due.

I definitely wasn't out for a majority of my stint as an active member in my house. This was partially due with me still fully coming to terms with my own sexuality, but the main reason was the fear I had of my Brothers even having a suspicion I was gay. The images in movies and the media of gays in fraternities are negative and often involve violence. This kept me distant from my Brothers, the same people I had gotten to know during rushing and liked so much that I ended up joining their circle. I tended to keep to myself and very rarely went out with the house because of my fear of letting any hint of my sexuality slip. I even left the University for a brief time for the effect my feelings had on my schoolwork. Shortly after my return to school is when I eventually came out, but this wasn't by choice. When I discovered that members of my house knew I was gay, I was afraid to even show my face. I stayed in my room 24/7 pretty much for about 2 days straight, only venturing out to use the bathroom and grab a quick bite to eat. Though my coming out turned out to be pretty positive, I did notice some surprising changes. Many of the guys in the house went out of their way to be extra nice to me. I don't think they knew how to act around me and maybe were sorry for anything negative they may have said about homosexuals in my earshot. Others just chose not to say much to me. I doubt this was because they disliked me now or were disgusted about me coming out, but because they had never experienced knowing and evening being friends with someone who was gay. This made them very uncomfortable around me so they just chose to avoid the situation. In actuality, me being gay wasn't really talked about with me at all. Even though I was out, most of the guys didn't know how to approach me or talk to me about it. So even though I felt accepted by everyone, I still felt a little isolated.

Motivated by men and women who shared similar experiences as well as physical violence towards one of his friends, Kevin has rallied a group of progressive and opened minded members of the Greek Community to create a group that hopes to help create a more aware and thus accepting and safe environment for GLB members of our chapters. Greek Allies would do much more than just be a support group for GLB students in the Greek community. Our main goal is to educate the community of the vast diversities that lie within the Greek community. Hopefully this will bring a sense of increased acceptance of our GLB brothers and sisters within the community and allow them to exhibit their true selves. As you would probably agree, no brother should have to spend the best years of his college life pretending to be something he's not just for the sake of "brotherhood."

Unfortunately, breaking through the heterosexist mindset of fraternities is not easy. I'd venture to say that even your undergraduate chapters thought they would "never have a gay guy." In our attempt to reach the fraternity community, we seek your help. You are being contact specifically because we at the University of Illinois have a chapter of your fraternity on campus. If you feel as passionately about the cause as we do here, we need your help. As a brother, we ask that you write the Vice President of the Illinois chapter of your fraternity telling him about this group, and more pressingly, about our first workshop which will take place on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. We feel that while we target our chapters externally, a letter from a brother (albeit a brother from another campus) will carry more weight than our words coming from the "outside."

Both Kevin and I are both willing to field any questions you may have regarding our objectives. Attached are a couple documents. The first is "How to Talk about Greek Allies" which is a rough draft of our objectives and goals, and the other is merely a contact list so that you can see how serious we've grown. Additionally, Northwestern University's news network did a short piece on us which we can see on [www.nnntv.org](http://www.nnntv.org) then click on "On the Road" and you'll see a link to our program.

On behalf of the U of I Greek Allies as well as any brother or sister who is living in the closet until graduation, I thank you for your time and hope to hear back from you soon. With our first training less than a month away, time is of the essence in marketing this to the fraternities.

Deepest regards.  
Elliott Anderson