



PennState Alumni Association Houston Chapter News

NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 17



INSIDE THIS YEAR'S NEWSLETTER

WELCOME!

Get excited! Your annual Penn State newsletter is here! Look inside for great reports on our activity last year as well as outlooks for the year ahead.
WE ARE!



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- Support the Greater Houston Chapter Greg Kelley Scholarship Fund • Scholarship Profile • Golf Tournament • Barge Party • Call for Events and Volunteers • Outreach and Volunteering • Young Professionals • Alumni Admissions • Penn State • Football Preview • Football Games Schedule

2021-2022 CHAPTER BOARD

President: Matt Smiddy '10

Vice President: Chad Washington '98

Recording Secretary: Ralph Crivello '09

AAC Chair: Gina Gisclair '05

At-Large: Christine Flynn '98, Kevin Weaver '91, Lisa Kasianowitz '10, Maria Lamagna '13, Hannah Pohlmann '18, Jenna Thomas '15'

Monthly board meetings:

The Phoenix, 1915 Westheimer Rd., Houston 77098

2nd Monday of each month

Anyone is welcome to attend!

Email psaahouston@gmail.com if you want to join!



ENGAGE WITH US!

E-mail: psaahouston@gmail.com

Website: www.PSUHouston.org

Facebook: www.Facebook.com/PennStateHouston

Twitter: @PSUHouston Instagram: @pennstatehoustontyp





LETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Houston Penn Staters,

What a year it has been! Despite the unprecedented challenges COVID presented, I am amazed at our Chapter's success, evident by our Chapter receiving the Elm Level Chapter of Distinction in 2020, the highest level available.

With your help, we raised \$5,000 for the Greater Houston Chapter Greg Kelley Scholarship Fund and awarded scholarships to three Houston-area Penn State students. As lock downs occurred, we transitioned to offering virtual events, such as the Virtual Career Panel and Student Send-Off Picnic. When in-person events returned, we followed appropriate COVID protocols for events like the Phoenix Pub Football Watch Parties, Top Golf, and not one, but two, Golf Tournaments at Memorial Hermann Golf Course.

Another significant achievement a decade in the making finally came to fruition over the past year: the Penn State Texas License Plate! I am happy to announce that Texas is the 10th state to offer a Penn State license plate. Pre-orders have wrapped up, and plates should be on the road by the end of July. You can get yours by visiting www.MyPlates.com.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, I am optimistic our Chapter will continue to achieve great things. At this time, we anticipate a full return to in-person events for those who feel comfortable attending, beginning with our Football Watch Parties at the Phoenix Pub. We will continue to follow local health guidelines and modify plans if conditions change, as your health and safety are the top priority. Stay tuned to our email blasts and website for the latest announcements.

Finally, I want to thank the Penn State Houston Chapter Board Members who have done a phenomenal job navigating the Chapter through a challenging year. We could not do it without them! Furthermore, we are always looking for volunteers to join us, so if you are interested in helping us raise scholarship money for students while bringing local Penn State alumni together, please reach out to me at mismiddy5055@gmail.com, and we will get you plugged in.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you in-person at the Phoenix this Fall!

We Are!

Matt Smiddy '10, President

Annual Financial Overview

As of June 30, 2021, our account balance is \$4,719, and our IRS e-postcard will be filed shortly. Of these funds, we have reserved \$735 for the networking panel that was postponed last year due to COVID. For 2020-2021, we had 8 members join the Chapter.

Thank you for supporting your local Chapter over the past year. We were presented with unique challenges, but we navigated them and continued to raise funds for the scholarship. For that, we are very thankful!

Support the Greater Houston Chapter Greg Kelley Scholarship Fund

The scholarship fund, started over 30 years ago, has been a point of pride for the Houston Chapter. During this fiscal year, the board voted to rename the fund in honor of our long-time treasurer and founder, Greg Kelley. The fund has a book value of \$130,917 and a market value of \$214,961.

Scholarship funds were raised through watch party raffles, golf tournaments and donations. Over the past year, we raised \$5,000 for the scholarship thanks to your support. We will be awarding \$7,000 in scholarships to stand-out Houston area students.

Thank you to everyone who supports the scholarship fund. If your company matches such donations, this is even better. Any amount is welcome - donate here!



CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL SCHOLARSHIP PROFILE

We are proud to feature a recipient of our scholarship program. Please read below and get to know Christopher!

Q: Tell us something unique about yourself.

Something unique about myself is my involvement with Martial Arts around campus. I was/am a member of both the Penn State Shotokan Karate Club and the Penn State Kendo Club.

Q: Why did you decide to undertake your major at PSU?

I decided to get my B.S. in Chemical Engineering here at Penn State because our campus has some of the most brilliant minds in the industry, as well as one of the top programs in the United States.

Q: Why did you choose Penn State?

The reason I chose Penn State in particular, along with the ones previously stated, is because my father attended Penn State to earn his degree in Chemical Engineering as well, and I felt that it would be nice to follow in his footsteps.

Q: Where is your favorite place on campus, and why?

My favorite place on campus would be the Arboretum. It's a very peaceful and relaxing place that can help take your mind off of studying and course work, especially in the Spring and Summer.

Q: Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

Ten years from now, I hope to see myself in the Chemicals Industry, hopefully under a position in Chemical Process Safety.

Q: What is your favorite ice cream flavor from the Penn State creamery and what is your favorite restaurant in Happy Valley?

My favorite flavor of ice cream at the Creamery would have to be their Butter Pecan, and there is no better breakfast in Happy Valley than the one served at the Corner Room.

Since the last PSAA Houston newsletter was sent in August 2020, we've been lucky enough to have had two golf tournaments benefitting the Greater Houston Chapter Greg Kelley Scholarship Fund.

First, our 2020 golf tournament was rescheduled from Summer 2020 to Dec. 12, 2020. In attendance were 44 Penn State alumni and friends for the event held at Hermann Park Golf Course. The cool temperatures of December and the central location made for a great shotgun start for the event. The Dhruva family won the overall tournament with the best score of 57, Steve Sock and J Wolken each won the closest to hole #14 and hole #3, respectively, and Greg Cameron and Luis Leon each won the longest drive on hole #4 and hole #16 respectively.

Second, our 2021 golf tournament was held on May 15, 2021, again at Hermann Park Golf Course, held earlier than past years to beat the Texas summer heat. With breakfast for the 34 Penn Staters and friends sponsored by Penn State Alum Wesley the Realtor, the team of Rick Conticello, Steve Sock, Matt Isham, and Mr. Adams won the tournament with the best score of 55, while Kenny Brehm won the closest to hole #7.

These two events combined raised a total donation to the scholarship fund of over \$1,700, and all had fun. We hope to see you out on the links for the next tournament in 2022!

Golf Tournament Highlights



December Golf Tournament



May Golf Tournament



Penn State Lake Travis Barge Party

On July 10, 2021, 50 Penn Staters and friends joined together for a barge party on Lake Travis.

This event was in coordination with the Central Texas Penn State Chapter. Thanks to all those who came out to join us!

PSU IN THE COMMUNITY



Buffalo Bayou Park Volunteering

Outreach and Volunteering

Penn State Houston aims to provide a minimum of two volunteer opportunities each year for members and their families and friends. This year proved to be a challenge, but we rose to the occasion!

For the early part of 2020, volunteering in-person was not an option, so Penn State Houston participated in United Way's "Day of Action" on Jun. 26. Penn Staters wrote thank you letters to health care and emergency personnel workers through United Way.

On Oct. 17, Penn Staters were finally able to socially-distance gather with other volunteer groups at Buffalo Bayou Park to remove invasive species from native trees along the bayou. Our volunteer group gathered up nine large bags of vines and worked up a sweat!

Call for Volunteers and Planning Support

Are you interested in giving back to the greater Houston community? Do you have connections with nonprofits or foundations in Houston that need volunteers? Do you have experience with organizing volunteer activities? If so, we want you!

Email At-Large Board Member Lisa Kasianowitz with your ideas and support for the Penn State Houston Alumni Association's volunteer program: liskasianowitz@yahoo.com.



THON 5K at Memorial Park

Young Professionals

The last year was one for the books for all of us. We were slated to host a professional development panel in March, just as things were shutting down. We quickly pivoted to a virtual format (before we realized what zoom fatigue was) where recruiters shared tips and best practices for embarking on a career change or climbing the ladder within your current company.

While we couldn't hold as many events as we usually would, we were pleased to offer several COVID-conscious events throughout the year. We hosted an outdoor dinner at Traveler's Table for Houston Restaurant week and walked our annual virtual THON 5K on Oct. 11, 2020, at Memorial Park, where we raised over \$300 FTK. We also held an outdoor happy hour at The Rustic Downtown (the weekend before the great Texas freeze) and got together for some practice swings at Top Golf before our annual golf tournament.

We look forward to reconnecting with more of you this year!



Young Professionals Happy Hour

Alumni Admissions

This past year was like unlike any other year. From the Houston Chapter Alumni Admissions Committee point of view, recruiting was relatively quiet for us local alumni. Several locations were shut down to visitors, and any gathering was canceled, which meant the Undergraduate Admissions Team, including our new territory manager Kristine Schmidbauer, took the helm with recruiting via virtual visits.

Based on the latest information received from University Park, 733 applications were submitted by Houston area students, with 563 students offered admission to PSU, 68 of which have accepted their offers to attend Penn State this fall. These numbers are phenomenal when compared to previous years! Additionally, Penn State has announced returning to full on-campus learning for Fall 2021.

For those that have helped in the past three years, these numbers are because of your efforts! The majority of students attending the college fairs are freshmen to juniors who are getting started. By their senior year, they are in the final stages of applying to colleges. So, the high numbers aren't solely based on the recruiting from 2020; they are based on the groundwork that was laid in years past.

Moving forward, the Undergraduate Admissions team has confirmed we will be having in-person fairs for 2021! If you are not interested in the fairs, we still have the LionsROAR (Reach Out And Recruit) program in the spring to congratulate incoming first-year students.

Penn State Football Preview

The 2021 season is here, and Penn State looks to bounce back after a tough start to the 2020 season led the Nittany Lions to a 4-5 record.

The good news is that PSU has many offensive weapons back in junior quarterback Sean Clifford and returning junior wide receiver Jahan Dotson.

Houston-area native Parker Washington looks to build on his strong 2020 season, while sophomore Noah Cain returns after missing most of last season with a foot injury.

Redshirt sophomore Brenton Strange looks to replace Pat Freiermuth at tight end, while the offensive line will be anchored by returning starters in junior Mike Miranda and sophomore Rasheed Walker.

The defensive line will be led by returning junior P.J. Mustipher, while the linebackers will have returning starters like junior Jesse Luketa and sophomore Brandon Smith.

The secondary looks to be the most experienced unit returning on defense, with three starters back in senior cornerback Tariq Castro-Fields, freshman Joey Porter Jr. and senior Jaquan Brisker.

Junior Jake Pinegar will return as the kicker, but junior punter Jordan Stout can come in for the long-range kicks.

The Nittany Lions have to start fast this season, with three tough games to open 2021. PSU will start in Madison against the Wisconsin Badgers on Sept. 4, then face defending MAC champion Ball State in the home opener on Sept. 11, and finally a marquee matchup in Auburn on Sept. 18.

Interested in learning more? Email Gina at stormpsu6@yahoo.com

Penn State Football Schedule

Note: All times in CST

Sep 4 @ Wisconsin	11:00 AM
Sep 11 vs Ball State	02:30 PM
Sep 18 vs Auburn	06:30 PM
Sep 25 vs Villanova	TBD
Oct 2 vs Indiana	TBD
Oct 9 @ Iowa	TBD
Oct 23 vs Illinois	11:00 AM
Oct 30 @ Ohio State	TBD
Nov 6 @ Maryland	TBD
Nov 13 vs Michigan	TBD
Nov 20 vs Rutgers	TBD
Nov 27 @ Michigan State	TBD

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022



**PennState
Alumni Association**
Houston Chapter



AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [HTTP://WWW.PSUHOUSTON.ORG/MEMBERSHIP.HTML](http://www.psuhouston.org/membership.html)

NAME: _____ SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

CLASS YEAR & MAJOR: _____ CLASS YEAR & MAJOR: _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

(TO BE ADDED TO CLUB E-MAIL LIST FOR NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS)

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR NEWSLETTER SENT VIA MAIL OR E-MAIL? (E-NEWSLETTERS HELP US SAVE MONEY AND CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND): _____

Please Check Membership Type: _____ Single (\$15) _____ Family (\$25) Total _____ \$
(Please make check payable to Penn State Chapter of Greater Houston)

Endowed Scholarship Fund:

My Donation _____ \$

My Company has a matching program and will contribute _____ \$

(Please enclose signed matching form) TOTAL _____ \$

Make a separate TAX DEDUCTABLE check payable to: *The Pennsylvania State University*

Make note on the memo line: *PSAA Houston Chapter, Endowed Scholarship Fund*

Bring your application to the next chapter event or mail it to:

PENN STATE CHAPTER GREATER HOUSTON,
2847 RUSK ST, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77003

You can also complete this form online at: <http://www.psuhouston.org/membership.html>

EVENT IDEAS

Please list your recommendations for potential chapter events

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?

Email us at psaahouston@gmail.com