

University of Rhode Island C234 Iota Sigma Chapter

Submitted by Dr. Susan Trostle Brand, Counselor



History and Heritage

Are there any famous or notable members who were a part of your chapter?

Our first counselor was Grace Stiles, who served our Iota Sigma Chapter of 25 members from 1962-1972. Following Ms. Stiles' retirement, Dr. Theresa Feчек became our next counselor, and served from 1972-1977. Dr. Feчек moved to Austin, Texas in 1977 where she became active in Delta Kappa Gamma, serving for 17 years as its Executive Director and earning International and Lifetime Achievement Awards in 2002. Dr. Marguerite Bumpus served as our

Chapter's third counselor from 1977-1992. Dr. Bumpus achieved national recognition from the publication of her reading series, and earned outstanding teaching awards, literacy awards, and a URI Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1992, Dr. Susan Trostle Brand became Counselor. She is the current KDP Vice-President and Centennial Steering Committee co-chair, receiving the KDP Lucinda Rose Counselor Award in 2007, the Service Award in 2005, and ACE Awards in 2007, 2009, and 2011. The chapter now has over 100 active members.

What accomplishment is your chapter most proud of?

Our chapter is most proud of its service to others; we exemplify well the "Fidelity to Humanity" virtue. We have helped to build a Habitat for Humanity, donate each year to Family and Children's Shelters, held a cruise for Autism Awareness that earned \$2,000, helped an inner city school to build a library, create Books on Tape with Jump Start for urban children, and donate hundreds of Soles for the Sole for safer playgrounds in Central America. We support Special Olympics, the Oceania Project, Hearts for Haiti, and Samaritans Purse, providing relief for victims of overseas disasters. We create and donate home-school literacy bags each year for Family Literacy Night at an inner city partner school, and provide scholarship money for deserving students. Our chapter recently worked with Providence College to completely make-over a Providence teachers' lounge, earning national recognition. We have continued to support this school through book donations and service.

Leadership and Membership

Who has been integral in the success of your chapter?

Our officers have served an integral role in the success of our chapter. Each May, at the end of the spring semester, we hold a dinner and planning meeting at a local Olive Garden restaurant to celebrate the year's accomplishments and plan for the year ahead. Officers report on the current financial status, projects, goals fulfilled, and goals still remaining. New officers are trained, and new goals and projects are delineated. Our officers are diligent about taking all steps necessary in fulfilling our goals and accomplishing the projects we decide to do at the Planning Meeting. Outgoing officers train new officers, and work closely together to ascertain that goals are met. Headquarters has helped our chapter every step of the way, and our regional representatives, along with Faye Snodgrass, Executive

Director of KDP, have provided us with a fantastic support system--sustaining, motivating, and enriching our chapter with enthusiasm and wisdom!

What are some of the unique benefits associated with membership or leadership positions in your chapter (beyond honor cords and letters of recommendation)?

As our KDP seniors graduate, many write to us to inform us that, because of their involvement and leadership in our Iota Sigma KDP chapter, they were able to attain the career of their dreams. As members of KDP, they were afforded opportunities that would otherwise not be available to them, such as attending Convocation, presenting at workshops, earning outstanding student teaching scholarships, or networking with other highly qualified professionals. Moreover, our members and officers find lasting friendships and a support system through their active involvement in Kappa Delta Pi. Our chapter frequently links with other universities and schools, enabling our members to network and even attain teaching jobs at schools in which they have volunteered at Literacy Alive and other KDP chapter functions. Through our chapter, members learn, explore, grow, and show their colors--beginning with violet and green!

Programming

How has your chapter contributed to the community?

Our chapter has contributed to the community by forming a strong bond with an inner city charter elementary school in Providence. Our members have formed a unique pen-pal system with many of the students from this school. We have donated home-school literacy bags, helped this school build a library, donated hundreds of dollars in supplies to the school, provided tutoring to the students, and have received an interdisciplinary grant from URI and KDP, enabling our chapter to bus over 200 children from this school to our University to learn about non-violence, to interact with our URI pen-pals, to participate in group discussions, to enjoy a picnic and tour our campus. Also, professors and classes from URI will visit the school to present on a variety of topics--Math Literacy, Martin Luther King, Peace Music, and Equal Rights. Counselor, Dr. Susan Trostle Brand, co-authored a 2011 article addressing this partnership that was published in Childhood Education.

What is a tradition your chapter carries on?

A tradition that our chapter carries on each year is our Open Forum on Teaching and Learning. We have conducted this Open Forum for the past 16 years, involving local leaders, teachers, and administrators as well as URI professors and graduate students. Each year we select a topic of current interest, such as Response to Intervention, Universal Design for Learning, Multicultural Awareness, or Planning for the Future. Three of four guest speakers each present for 20 minutes, and then guests and KDP members ask questions of the speakers. Often the event is followed by a Career Fair in which mock interviews are held and procedures for attaining substitute or permanent teaching positions are described.