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UVA's Phi Psi Responds to Cleared Rape Allegations

Charlottesville police conclude investigation of sexual assault; clear fraternity

Charlottesville, Va. (March. 23, 2015) – After a four-month-long investigation involving over 70 personal interviews and hundreds of police man hours, the Charlottesville Police Department today formally cleared the Virginia Alpha Chapter of the Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity of all sexual assault allegations stemming from a November 19, 2014 Rolling Stone article erroneously accusing Phi Kappa Psi of crimes its members did not commit. According to the report provided to media by the Department, “Having exhausted all investigative leads ... there is no substantive basis to support the account alleged in the Rolling Stone article.”

In its controversial article, Rolling Stone recklessly and prejudicially thrust the brothers of Phi Kappa Psi into the center of a national debate on the topic of sexual assault on college campuses. When key elements of the story were revealed to be untrue, the magazine backed away from its support of the story, yet to this day the article remains posted on Rolling Stone’s website.

“These false accusations have been extremely damaging to our entire organization, but we can only begin to imagine the setback this must have dealt to survivors of sexual assault,” said Stephen Scipione, President of the Virginia Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi. “We hope that Rolling Stone’s actions do not discourage any survivors from coming forward to seek the justice they deserve.”

Phi Psi has been quietly and actively collaborating with the Charlottesville Police throughout the investigation despite our belief that the story was untrue. Following the publication of the defamatory article, the chapter launched an extensive internal investigation, which quickly confirmed that the horrific events described in the Rolling Stone article did not occur.

Both the Virginia Alpha chapter and Phi Psi’s national organization adhere to a strict zero tolerance policy in regards to sexual assault. Phi Psi is committed to sexual assault prevention through its support for and participation in organizations such as the student-led “One in Four,” and by requiring at initiation all new members take the “It’s on Us” pledge. The chapter was the first on Grounds to sign the updated Fraternal Organization Agreement implementing new, stronger protocols to improve the safety of all students and our members remain committed to setting a positive example for the University and Charlottesville community.

Phi Kappa Psi is now exploring its legal options to address the extensive damage caused by Rolling Stone – damage both to the chapter and its members and to the very cause upon which the magazine was focused. We’d like to thank Chief Longo and his extremely professional staff for all their work and we are encouraged that the Department is continuing to investigate the multiple incidents of vandalism that occurred at our chapter house in the wake of the article’s publication. Finally, the chapter requests that all news media immediately cease the use of images of our fraternity house in conjunction with stories about or relating to the topic of sexual assault.

For more information on the Virginia Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi and the national organization, visit www.phikappapsi.com. ###