

Academy: Past and Present Questionnaire

The Academy is an all-expenses paid fellowship to an intensive, custom-designed leadership retreat to make the best of Alpha Kappa Psi more impactful, values-based leaders. Each year, up to 20 selected Fellows immerse themselves in four days of interactive large group sessions and small group discussions, designed to target the concepts, skills, and values which students need to be effective in their role as principled business leaders.

Present

Nick Bryson (2018 Academy Fellow, Edinboro '17)



What had you heard from others about Academy prior to attending?

The Academy was briefly discussed during one of my PEP sessions as a pledge. At the time of applying, I knew it was an all-inclusive leadership fellowship and that no one in my chapter had done it before, but that was about it.

Which session or lesson stuck out to you the most and why?

It's hard to pick one lesson/session that shined above the others. A few things that have stayed with me since my Academy weekend are the notes written by my 'A Bros,' the session and time spent exploring our core values and personal mission statements, and the day of outdoor activities. The notes revealed strengths in my leadership skills that I had previously failed to see; more importantly, they were a symbol of people's belief in me, which is one aspect of leadership training that often goes unnoticed. Organizations can provide all the skills-based training in the world, but if a candidate fails to see themselves as a leader, fails to believe in their abilities, their performance will remain the same. The session on core values sparked an intensely introspective period in my life and helped me to not only understand who I was, but who I wanted to be, and how to relate my daily actions to a higher philosophy. Lastly, the outdoor sessions were the activities that strengthened the bonds within my cohort, laying the foundation for enduring friendships and future leadership growth.

Who did you connect with the most within your Academy class and what was the relationship built upon?

Again, it's hard to pick one relationship that stands above the others; I connected well with most of my cohort. While each relationship had a different foundation (i.e., sassy banter, empathizing with each other's hardships, similarities in humor, relatable stories), they were all uniquely special. The Academy's unrivaled ability to unite young leaders from across different socioeconomic, cultural, gender, and academic backgrounds is what makes it such an incredible opportunity. I learned as much from brothers that weekend as I did from the facilitators.

How did your Academy experience influence the rest of your time on campus?

I utilized many of the practices and skills I learned during the Academy to accomplish quite a lot during my final few years in college. Fostering meaningful relationships allowed me to achieve one of my earliest AKPsi goals, which was to get our flag posted in Edinboro University's Frank G. Pogue Student Center. That project then evolved into co-founding a gender-inclusive, non-social Greek council for professional and academic fraternities on campus.

What would you say to students considering applying?

Apply, open as many doors for yourself as possible, and keep an open mind. The best way to improve yourself is to get in a room full of great people looking to do the same; the Academy is that room.

What are you up to now?

Currently, I find myself 'across the pond' as a graduate student at University College London, pursuing a master's degree in industrial/organizational and business psychology. I also regularly contribute and assist with The Wellness Movement, a blog I helped co-found to explore health and well-being from a holistic perspective. Feel free to contact me with any questions regarding the Academy experience, AKPsi, or other general inquiries. You can reach me directly at nbryson163510@gmail.com or by connecting with me (Nicholas Bryson) on LinkedIn.

PAST

Victoria Kyes (2004 Academy Fellow, Middle Tennessee State '03)



What did you know about Academy prior to attending?

I didn't really know much about the Academy prior to attending, to be honest. I happened to stumble across the opportunity in The Diary that had a feature, and it sounded interesting. I applied, surprisingly got accepted, and was incredibly grateful for the experience.

Which session or lesson stuck out to you the most and why?

It's been so long now that it's hard to remember. When you get to be my age, the details begin to fall away and the memory that lasts is the experience you had. I would say the lasting memory I have of my time at the Academy is the book I still have that Dan Roselli signed of the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People." In that, it is genuinely about communing with other future business leaders and embracing what it takes to become highly effective, change-driven leaders in your field.

Who did you connect with the most within your Academy class and what was the relationship built upon?

I felt a strong connection to everyone -- albeit, my time at the Academy was pre-social media and thus it was a lot harder to keep in contact with people over time. I would love to reconnect with my former colleagues and see how things were going. I am friends with a few on Facebook today, but being a busy entrepreneur doesn't leave me much time for connection to date.

How did the Academy experience influence your professional career?

It was definitely a part of my journey to wanting to be a business leader, which is what I'm working towards every day. It provided skill sets and ways of thinking about problems that aren't that much different than some of the foundations of my MBA. How can you be an effective communicator? An effective leader? Get buy in and influence people to do things that are of value to you, your company, and society? Those are the things I'm interested in, and the Academy planted the seed.

Would you recommend the Academy?

Absolutely. In fact, I would recommend the Academy at different phases of your career. Perhaps the Fraternity can look into that.

What are you up to now?

I'm the current Chief Creative Officer for a stealth media conglomerate called Gwalla Media.