

College Project Award (Alpha Epsilon Kappa Chapter)

College Project Award

Project Topic (include a short project topic heading)

Lincoln Land Community College and Phi Theta Kappa: A Time Capsule Demonstrating 25 Years of Shared Excellence.

Briefly describe your College Project and who from the chapter and the college administration was involved in determining it.

The Alpha Epsilon Kappa chapter of Phi Theta Kappa was fortunate enough to be able mark both the 50th anniversary of Lincoln Land Community College and the 100th anniversary of Phi Theta Kappa by rediscovering the time capsule buried in 1993 during the celebration of Lincoln Land Community College's 25th and Phi Theta Kappa's 75th anniversaries. This project was more than a year in development, starting with the excavation of the original time capsule that was buried on November 19th, 1993. The time capsule was then opened at the college's Founder's Day celebration in February 2017. We were doubly privileged to then be able to rebury a newly-filled time capsule as one of the events at the Illinois Phi Theta Kappa Regional Convention, held on our campus during June 2017. At every step of this Journey, the Alpha Epsilon Kappa chapter has had the unreserved and wholehearted support of Lincoln Land Community College's President Dr. Charlotte Warren. We consulted her on many occasions for her permission to undertake this project and her suggestions to improve its effectiveness in furthering the goals and mission of the college.

Summarize your objectives for the College Project and the process by which the chapter and college administration set these objectives.

We met as a chapter and with President Warren on multiple occasions to establish our goals for the College Project. Ultimately, the projects goals were decided upon democratically, with Dr. Warren having overall approval or rejection authority. During the process of our College Project, we continued to meet to discuss the progress towards meeting the goals set, and to fine tune the goals to best represent Lincoln Land Community College and the Alpha Epsilon Kappa Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. This process of goal review allowed us to ensure that the goals were foremost in our minds at every step of the process, and to alter our strategy swiftly when things veered off course. Maintaining such a level of contact had the added benefit of demonstrating to the college administration that they were integral pieces in this project, which improved support for the project as time went on.

- I. Involve as much as the college as possible in this experience.
- II. Gain participation from those involved in the original capsule.
- III. Gain insight into the world of 1993.
- IV. Share this experience with Phi Theta Kappa members from across the state.
- V. Promote the Alpha Epsilon Kappa chapter of Phi Theta Kappa and Lincoln Land Community College.
- VI. Disseminate information about this project to other chapters and colleges.

Describe the planning process and strategies developed to complete the College Project.

The planning process was begun early in the year with multiple brainstorming sessions and an initial meeting with the college president, Dr. Charlotte Warren. We discussed the ways in which we could incorporate the time capsule project in multiple Lincoln Land Community College and Alpha Epsilon Kappa events, thereby maximizing this project's reach. We followed this up with how to best present our time capsule during the chosen events. Ultimately it was decided that our esteemed advisor, Don Ecklund and former, Chapter president, Josie Smith, would give speeches detailing the time capsule's history, the contents therein, the new contents that would be included when it was reburied in 2017, and the plans for its re-dedication. From there the process was quite straight forward, we would each take on a set of tasks for each engagement, with the advisors and the officers maintaining close contact to safeguard that each step went on without a hitch. Josie gave a speech about the time capsule at the Founders Day event in February, and both Don and Josie presented an educational forum about the time capsule at the Illinois Regional Convention in June 2017. Having the entire team closely involved went far to ensure that when our planning was insufficient or our implementation was off, we had many hands available to right the course. When at last the time capsule had been reburied, we had multiple meetings where we processed the project in detail so that this journey was documented well and accurately.

What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

Through the wonderful presentations of Chapter President Josie Smith and Advisor Don Ecklund, we were able to involve Lincoln Land Community College on multiple levels (e.g. current and former students, faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees) on multiple occasions (e.g. Founder's Day, Illinois Regional Convention). Our chapter was also lucky enough to benefit from the first-hand knowledge of Don Ecklund, who was the advisor to Alpha Epsilon Kappa when the original time capsule was interred in 1993. Mr. Ecklund was also able to assist in contacting Phi Theta Kappa members who were involved in the original project, which resulted in many of them attending the time capsule opening at the Founders Day ceremony. Through the artifacts and questions included, we were offered a vivid depiction of life in the early 90s. Through presenting and reburying the time capsule at the Illinois Regional Convention, we were able to share it and encourage a similar project with more than 150 Phi Theta Kappa members from different areas of Illinois. This project was incredibly effective at promoting both Lincoln Land Community College and Phi Theta Kappa, as it was publicized digitally and in print by both the college and the Alpha Epsilon Kappa chapter. This gave us an opportunity to showcase Phi Theta Kappa and the college working in concert to improve both institutions.

What is left undone or what opportunities remain for the future?

There is a great deal to be done with this project in both the near and distant future. We have all committed to returning in 25 years for the time capsule opening ceremony and the related activities. One of our goals is to spread this idea to other chapters, and it remains to be seen if this project catches on in our affiliated chapters. If we are so blessed as to have been an inspiration, we hope to be able to offer any and all assistance to chapters making this project an aspect of their legacy. Greatest of all, we will likely never be capable of fully expressing our gratitude to Phi Theta Kappa; Dr. Charlotte Warren; the Alpha Epsilon Kappa chapter of 1993; our advisors Dean Tim Humphrey, Dr. Claire Gordon, and Don Ecklund; and Lincoln Land Community College, for providing the chance for us to be involved in so many fantastic opportunities while we build our futures.