

Iota Phi Theta

Chapter Designation: Beta Beta

National Founding: September 19th, 1963

Local Founding: 1983

Chapter History:

The Beta Beta Chapter of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. was the first chapter established by a fraternity of color at the University Of Massachusetts Amherst and is situated within the Atlantic Coast Region of the fraternity. This was a major accomplishment since the fraternity was only twenty years old at the time. The Beta Beta Chapter was founded by the Tau Chapter at American International College located in Springfield, Massachusetts. In turn, Beta Beta established additional chapters at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (Beta Phi) and Fitchburg State College (Gamma Beta). While Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. is dedicated to uplifting people of color, our organization is just as concerned with the establishment of a multicultural community through interaction and understanding. Membership of Brothers initiated at the UMass Amherst campus consist of African Americans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Latinos, Native-Americans, West Indians, and more.

It's the membership and its diversity that makes Iota Phi Theta such a special organization. The Beta Beta Chapter has been involved with the University and surrounding community since its founding in 1983. In fact, Iota Phi Theta was responsible for helping to establish a residential program for students of color at the UMass Amherst campus. The Residential Program, called "Nuance", is named after one of the intake lines of the Beta Beta Chapter and is housed in Gorman Residential Hall in the Central area of the campus. In the beginning, the Nuance program existed on one floor, and has since expanded to encompass the entire residence hall.

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. has been involved with many other aspects that help promote diversity at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The UMOJA talent show is but one of the many events sponsored by the Beta Beta Chapter. Other activities that the chapter has been involved with at UMass Amherst includes the A Better Chance (ABC) Program in Amherst, Big Brothers of America, the Red Cross blood drive, the Amherst Survival Center, the Dunbar Community center in Springfield, the Malcolm X Picnic, UMass Women's Conference, UMass Black Homecoming, and the Latin-American Semi-Formal. A few years ago, the Grand Polaris of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. at the time, Steve Birdine, gave a motivational presentation to First-Year students and Sophomores of color at the University.

Most recently, the Brothers at the Beta Beta Chapter have been involved in other aspects of the university and surrounding communities, including working with the Upward Bound Program, Girls, Inc., the ALANA Caucus, and the newly formed Student Bridges Outreach Pilot Program that looks to help underprivileged and working-class students from the surrounding urban communities receive mentoring and to see college as a possibility.

National Website: <http://www.iotaphitheta.org>.

Local Website: <http://www.umassiotas.com>

