At that time, most of us thought to ourselves or quietly with each other that we would nod, agree with Justin, and be happy if they could get 45 or so. But 65?? What a dream!!

I held my camera over my head and snapped. Why hadn't I brought my wide-angle lens? They just kept on coming into the parking lot. All dressed in shirt, tie--some sport coats, a few book bags over shoulders. This crowd had just "marched" up from Woodburn Hall after a 6:00 pre-ceremony meeting, briefing, and Officer/Executive Council orientation. Last Monday, Bill, Mike Doss (Marshall Pike now a grad student at WVU), and I had met with Dean and Beau in what we used to call Science Hall (now Chitwood) in Woodburn Circle. The "team" was predicting that we would have at least 90 new "founding fathers" on the 22nd--they had interviewed over 300, made about 150 bids, and had 107 acceptances. But (that was MY skeptical "but," not theirs) they had only 45 paid to date. Each new "founding father" had to chuck up $50 as an initiation fee (paid to National) before the ceremony.

Well, that was that (I thought). The money will stop 'em. How many guys will fork out $50 to buy into a dream--a vision of a fraternity that is not based on drinking, partying, being obnoxious as a group in front of the rest of the University, and the OTHER reasons that had kept all 150 guys interviewed/bid from becoming a Greek the month before during campus-wide rush. Less than five interviewees had rushed before. How many would buy into a fraternity based "solidly" on four tenets of the male college student: to be a <u>scholar</u>, a <u>leader</u>, an <u>athlete</u>, and a <u>gentleman</u>? (The current term for this at National is "SLAG.") Oh well, Dean and Beau, you are ambitious, but I'll tell Bill (later) that IF we get 75-80 when it's all said and done, I'll be thrilled.

So here I stand--wishing I had lights and a wide angle lens and my digital camcorder--rather than holding my Olympus Z3040 still camera--so I could capture the moment. It was overwhelming. "Dean, what were those final numbers?" And with his always serious yet friendly look (but not a trace of boastfulness), he replied, "We have 148 founding fathers paid as of today. And we have 25 to 30 sharp referrals scheduled to be interviewed before we leave." Well knock me over and call me Irving! Did I hear him right? There would be two ceremonies--this one for the main body and a 9:30 follow-up for the guys with Monday evening classes.

As we brought them in, we blindfolded each initiate with his tie, and I mused that none of them would get to see the warm atmosphere Bill and the guys had created for the ceremony. But we alumni present--and the Team--saw it. They filed in to the Chapter Room in single file (led by Jason Shepherd, an Alpha Theta initiate from "before the fall" but still on campus). Each had his hand on the shoulder of the initiate in front of him. I counted 122 enthusiastic, "sane" young adult males seriously standing--quietly--to receive the charge and the oath. Most had short hair (like in the '60s). A few had no hair (as in shaved)! They represented all heights and widths (like we did in the '60s). And all appeared to take the ceremony with due seriousness (as we certainly had done). The only difference that I could see was about a third of them sported some metal loops in either or both ears. Hey, styles are styles! The ceremony took well over an hour due to the personal nature of the ceremonial greeting. All 122 were quietly led out (one was brought out early--anyone in the military can expect at least one case of blood pooling when standing at attention), each greeted and welcomed as he removed his blindfold by both of the Expansion/Chapter Consultants (Beau and Dean).

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