Letter from President Ryan Contreras

Dear Pi Alpha Xi Members,

I hope that you all had a wonderful fall term/semester. Like yours, campus here in Corvallis has largely emptied of undergraduate students and I find myself with a bit of breathing room to consider the past year and what awaits in 2019. Of course, there is little time for contemplation before one begins work for the following term, but I hope each of you are able to take stock and remember the important things in life and how lucky we are to get to work in horticulture! Before I move on, I must thank Stephanie Burnett for her outstanding service as President over the past two years. It continues to be a time of change on various fronts for PAX and her guidance has been excellent. I am grateful to get to serve as president for a couple years and plan to fully rely on Stephanie and others!

One of my laments over the last two years is that I have let the Alpha Rho chapter become somewhat neglected and lapse into inactivity. Part of how I think this happened is that, as we all have so many demands on our time, I felt overwhelmed with the Grand Ideas (yes, capital G!) I hoped to implement over various time frames. Becoming overwhelmed thinking about taking on rather large tasks led me to neglect the simple tasks of initiation and small but regular meetings. So, what I am planning for the upcoming year is to return to regularity with my chapter. Things will begin very small and will be very manageable – that will be okay. There always are motivated students that will want to grow activities and create a critical mass of participants. My job is to provide the platform and space for these awesome students to shine.

I share my own struggles to carve out time for Pi Alpha Xi because perhaps some of you can relate. There are so many amazing chapters out there led by amazing advisors who give selflessly of their time. I am grateful to have benefitted from the guidance of Frank Blazich while at Iota Chapter and it is why I established a chapter at Oregon State. But as with other aspects of life, I’m going to try not to let perfection get in the way of very good. So, friends if you are an advisor, I encourage you to plant the seed and give the gift of PAX to your students in whatever way possible, grand or otherwise. If you are a student, I ask you to be that critical mass in your own chapter to help make things happen. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Ryan Contreras, Iota 564