
The Traveler

The Official Newsletter of Cornell Acacia. Published by Acacia Fraternity Headquarters.



Homecoming 2025 Report

Acacia Alumni Return, Big Red Spirit, Summerlike Weather

Dear Brothers,

Acacia Cornell's Homecoming: A Return to Excellence (Oct. 3-5, 2025) was one for the history books! Returning alumni brothers came back in numbers and got to know the Actives, shared stories and experiences, and enjoyed Northcote, our lovingly maintained chapter house.

Couldn't make it back for Homecoming 2025? We got you covered. We've asked the Active Chapter, Acacia International Fraternity, the Corporation Board, and the rank-and-file Alumni for their reflections on the historic weekend, included below. Plus, we've thrown in some photos to highlight the weekend. Please take a look!

Want to keep updated on what's happening at Cornell Acacia and see more pictures from the weekend? Please check out our newly revitalized Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/AcaciaCornell>. And keep an eye out for the Fall 2025 Traveler, coming to a mailbox near you.

Fraternally,

Cornell Acacia Housing Corporation Board, 2025-26

Steve Stein '73 (787) - President and Treasurer

Elie Bilmes '10 (1118) – Director

Tom Ricketts '03 (1051) – Director

Bruce Schneider '78 (842) – Director

Christian Choi '16 (1195) – Secretary

Tom Schultz '15 (1181) – Director



Active Brothers Kevin Rivera and Somesh Singh proudly represent Cornell Acacia.

The Brotherhood is Back!

Venerable Dean Kevin Rivera '26

Homecoming was a resounding success, a testament to our fraternity's strength and unity! We had the honor of hosting the Murali Coryell Trio and welcoming back our alumni for an unforgettable weekend. The celebration began with a scotch whisky tasting, followed by a formal dinner to honor their return. The evening didn't stop there. We hosted a live concert right in the house, where brothers, alums, and guests filled the space with music, laughter, and dancing that lasted late into the night. It was a true reminder of what makes Acacia special: our ability to come together, celebrate, and create memories that last.

Despite smaller numbers, the effort, positivity, and willpower of the current Active members have been extraordinary. What makes this group special is our shared drive to do things together. Whether it's hosting events, improving the house, or simply spending time together as brothers, we approach everything with a sense of unity and shared purpose. We regularly collaborate to strengthen our chapter, but we're also constantly building something more profound: a family within these walls. The trust, support, and care we have for one another have become the foundation on which we're rebuilding Acacia. We could not be more grateful for the opportunity to revitalize and breathe new life into our fraternity through brotherhood, dedication, and a shared vision. This shared vision unites and drives us forward, and it is a source of great pride for all of us.

This Fall, we proudly welcomed two new members and continue to strengthen our connections with younger Cornell students, the future leaders of Acacia. The road to growth may be uncertain, but with the continued support of all Acacians, we are filled with anticipation for the golden age of our fraternity that is right on the horizon.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to Chef Justin Gage, a key figure in our transformation. His culinary skills and unwavering dedication have not only united the house but also elevated Acacia into a five-star dining experience for our alums and brothers alike.





So Live!

Acacia International Leadership Consultant Justin McGrath California '23

Greetings Brothers! For those of you who have not yet heard of me, my name is Justin McGrath. I work for Acacia International Headquarters as a Chapter Growth Specialist, and I am stationed at Cornell for the academic year. I began working with the Chapter back in the Fall of 2024. The Chapter I am working with today is worlds away from the one I encountered back then, where doom and gloom once filled the halls, laughter and smiles now take their place. The sense of brotherhood amongst the current Actives is strong, and they are eager to add more members to our organization.

The evidence of this improved chapter energy was made clear at our recent Alumni homecoming celebration. For all in attendance, the homecoming weekend proved to be a time of great revelry, a renewal of fraternal bonds, and a reconsecration of the values of Human Service. From a great meal created and served by our Live in Advisor (LIA) and house chef Justin Gage, to the bodacious dance moves of Jerry Kreider, and the live tunes from our music act Murali Coryell Trio, our Homecoming weekend was truly a return to excellence.

As we emerge from this weekend, the big question is: how do we build on this momentum? While our current situation with four Actives is undoubtedly scary, I can assure you that it is one I have encountered and overcome before. In fact, when I helped the Texas Chapter climb from 4 members to 20 last Spring, we did not have anywhere near the progress and groundwork we have established this Fall. The work we have done thus far, and that I shall continue to do, to advertise to the freshmen class, is setting us up very well for the Spring. Currently, we have seven freshmen who will join in the Spring.

Additionally, we have a list of PNMs that continues to grow with each event. With our upcoming Reggae band night, Halloween Party, and subsequent parties, I am confident that we can return Cornell Acacia to excellence. Especially so, if you, our honored alumni, are willing to offer your time, talent, or treasure in this time of need.

Please feel free to contact me with questions/or suggestions for the Chapter, or simply to chat. I am honored to be here serving our fraternity and Cornell Chapter in this capacity. So Live!



Acacia International Leadership Consultant Justin McGrath and Brother Alumnus Jerry Kreider enjoying brunch on Sunday morning.



3 Days, 4 Events and a 5 Hour Drive for an Epic Weekend

Brother Alumnus Ilya Cherepakhin '03

Going up to Northcote for Homecoming has eluded me for years. This year the stars aligned for me and several other Brother-Alumni to take the trip down the memory lane and cheer on the Actives as they initiate the fall pledges.

The Homecoming began even before arriving to Northcote. Brother Andrew Hur '04 and I shared the ride from New York City. The 5 hour drive was thus a nice opportunity to catch up. Both with two kids and demanding jobs, we typically see each other only around the holidays when New York City Acacians meet up for the annual dinner.

We arrived right in the middle of the Corp Board meeting, a perfect way to see the Actives, Chapter Advisors, and board members in action. The agenda included some good old topics, like NYSEG, SMC and rent, making me feel as if I have never left the house. The focus though was on recruitment, a topic that dominated the whole weekend.

During the casual pizza dinner we met the other 6 Alumni, got to know the Actives and were introduced to prospective pledges. This was followed by scotch tasting and bar games - the first of the Homecoming events. Needless to say, the evening flew by as we exchanged

stories about living at Northcote and reminisced about Cornell Acacia parties during our years as students.

On Saturday, a few of us participated in university planned Homecoming events. As the morning progressed, we noticed more and more students walking across the campus in the same southeastern direction. Of course, tailgating was about to start ahead of the Cornell vs Colgate football game. Well, we all felt we knew how the game would end. Sadly, we were right. Still, it was an afternoon well spent, enjoying an unseasonably sunning afternoon amidst a big and red crowd of students and fellow alumni.

Back at Northcote, preparations were under way for the pledge induction followed by an exquisite steak dinner and a band performance. Participating in the pledge induction brought back memories of my own ceremony. It was also extra special bringing together several generations of Alumni and Actives. The dinner impressed everyone with Chef Gage preparing a gourmet meal, and the live band was the perfect way to culminate the day.

Sunday brunch capped off the memorable Homecoming events. As we left town, several of us stopped by places we've somehow missed during the student years. On your next visit to Northcote, consider a detour by the Corning glass museum or the Howe Caverns. Besides the area waterfalls and wineries, they are other two great area attractions.



Now is the Time

Corporation Board Director Thomas Schultz '15

This year's Cornell Acacia Homecoming proved to be an extraordinary celebration of brotherhood and renewal. The weekend featured a sophisticated Scotch whisky tasting, a formal dinner honoring returning alumni, and a live concert by the Murali Coryell Trio that transformed the house into an unforgettable venue filled with music, laughter, and dancing late into the night. While I was unable to attend the gathering (home responsibilities with my one-year-old kept me away), reports from the brotherhoods paint a vivid picture of what makes Acacia special: our ability to come together and create lasting memories that strengthen the ties of friendship one with another.

The current state of Cornell Acacia reflects the extraordinary dedication of our Active members and the strategic support of Acacia International Headquarters. Chapter Growth Specialist Justin McGrath, stationed at Northcote for the academic year, has brought about a remarkable transformation since Fall 2024. Despite working with a smaller group of four Active members, the Chapter's unity and shared purpose have been exceptional. Much credit also goes to Live-in Advisor (LIA) and house chef Justin Gage, whose culinary expertise has elevated the dining experience and helped unite the brotherhood. Justin has been recently rewarded for his excellent work and dedication to Northcote by being named an honorary Cornell Acacia brother. On recruitment, the Fall rush period brought two new members, and with seven freshmen already expressing strong interest for Spring recruitment, the momentum is building toward sustainable growth.

The Corporation Board recognizes that we are at a critical juncture and face both challenges and opportunities. With upcoming events including a reggae band night and

Halloween party, Cornell Acacia stands poised for a return to its former strength. However, realizing this vision and building on the Homecoming weekend's success will require the support of our entire alumni network. The foundation has been laid, the energy is palpable, and the brotherhood is stronger than ever—now is the time to ensure that a new golden age becomes reality. We will look to launch more dedicated fundraising efforts in the near term around this initiative.