



Fall 2025
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THE TRAVELER

Acacia Fraternity, Cornell Chapter

The Celebration of Our Elevation



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Actives, PNMs, Sweethearts, and Friends in a highly competitive game of Jenga during a BBQ



A glimpse at the Dining Room setup for Homecoming



Brother McGrath (Cal) '23 and Brother Alumnus Kreider '68 bust out their best moves on the dance floor

Fall 2025 Chapter Roll

Kevin Rivera (1261)
Venerable Dean
Psychology '26
Chicago, Illinois

Ethan DeCamp (1269)
Treasurer
CSE '28
Baltimore, Maryland

Vinamr Jain (1270)
Secretary
Reinforcement Learning '29
Ludhiana, India

Justin Gage
Live-In Advisor & Chef
Healing Arts
Ithaca, New York

Somesh Singh (1271)
Senior Steward
Theoretical Mechanics '29
Delhi, India

Charles Hicks
Social Chair
Anatomy '27
London, England

Justin McGrath (05.1161)
Acacia IHQ Consultant
Rhetoric '23
Loma Linda, California

Daniel Parker
Junior Steward
Computer Science '25
Colts Neck, New Jersey



Message From Our Corporation Board President

At long last, I have mostly good news to share! In March 2025, the Corp Board unanimously voted to keep Cornell Acacia open this year. Our Live-In Advisor, Justin Gage, is in his second year and continues to be a great caretaker of Northcote, an inspirational leader, and an advisor to all the residents. In an emergency cost-cutting move, the Corp Board made the difficult decision not to continue using our former chef, David D'Aprix, and Justin now also assumes the Chef duties at significantly reduced compensation. Additionally, Cornell Acacia managed to get Justin McGrath, Chapter Growth and Development Consultant, to live at Northcote for the 2025- 2026 Academic Year. Having two Justins can be confusing, but we're up to the challenge! We also have an excellent Venerable Dean, Kevin Rivera, in his Senior Year, who is dedicated to seeing the complete resurgence of Cornell Acacia this year. Our other three Actives, two of whom are Cornell Grad Students, are also super enthused, and there is a feeling of safety and positivity within the confines of Northcote. Our shared vision for the future of Acacia is paying dividends. At Homecoming Weekend, two Fall Pledges were inducted, one of whom will be moving in over Winter Break, and the other is a grad student and Auxiliary Member (formerly known as "boarder"). The mindset of all residents, both Actives and Auxiliary Members, is that Rush is constant, not a seasonal event. Acacia has a great pool of Potential New Members (PNMs), both freshmen and upperclassmen.

The Dining Experience has attracted additional income, as almost all the Auxiliary Members are participating, and we even have some female students who live across the street, occasionally dining with us. Although our goal was to rent all 8 Wing Rooms to non-members, six rooms are currently rented to Auxiliary Members. They are encouraged to, and do, help with Rush.

Speaking of Dining, in another cost-saving decision, Cornell Acacia is no longer using Student Management Corporation (SMC) to purchase food and supplies. Justin Gage has negotiated the same discounts we were getting from two vendors, but we don't have to pay the 10% Administrative Fee assessed by SMC. It had been 5% since SMC's inception (back when I was Kitchen Steward, I believe), but doubled at the beginning of 2025. Justin G. also shops at Tops, Wegmans, and other local stores to take advantage of many great sales, saving even more money. We have also suspended the linen service (which basically provided us with a bag of clean towels each week) and bottled water delivery, saving over \$100/week.

The bad news is that costs continue to rise. Last October, we had to find General Liability coverage on our own after Acacia Headquarters removed it from their offerings. The cost of that insurance (from Omni Insurance) is over \$14,000/year. There are very few underwriters/carriers willing to insure a fraternity's property for GL. However, one of our Directors, Bruce Schneider '78 (842), is working with another insurer, and we hope to achieve a significant cost reduction.

Part of Justin Gage's vision is that Homecoming is essential to a successful fraternity. He planned what we believe was the first such event at Northcote in more than a dozen years. He prepared a delicious meal on 10/4/2025, booked the Murali Coryell Trio, who played in the Living Room for several hours after, and cooked brunch on Sunday morning. We had a relatively small group of Alumni, but Northcote was rocking the entire weekend. Our goal is for 30 guests in 2026. Please plan on joining us then!

I've been Acacia Corp Board President since 1982. The past few years have been highly stressful for Acacia, and last year was the most so. However, all of the pieces are falling into place (probably due to divine intervention), and I am convinced that Cornell Acacia will be around for another 120 years.

Acacia still relies on Alumni financial support, which has been quite strong lately. However, I am constantly perplexed and bothered by the fact that the majority of our 600+ alumni choose NOT even to pay their annual dues (we are actively researching methods of payment which are not subject to fees (PayPal and Venmo do charge almost 3%). Also, please check out the Cornell Acacia website (<https://www.cornellacacia.org/>) for the most current information. ***We need your financial assistance, and we need it now.*** Some percentage of you might have economic, personal, or health issues, but not most of you! To the alumni who generously support Cornell Acacia financially, our thanks!

Please check your email to learn about the Acacia 120 Capital Campaign, launched in October.

My sincere thanks to the other Cornell Corp Board members, without whom Cornell Acacia would not have survived:

Elie Bilmes '10 (1118) - Director
Tom Ricketts '03 (1051) - Director
Bruce Schneider '78 (842) - Director
Christian Choi '16 (1195) - Director
Tom Schultz '15 (1181) - Director
Jerry W. Kreider '68 (720) - Ex-Officio

Please email or call me if you have comments, concerns, suggestions, want to get involved, or simply want to say hello. It would be wonderful if I heard from some of you so I know you are as concerned, yet encouraged, as I am about the future of our beloved Acacia.

Stay safe.

Fraternally,

Steven L. Stein 1973 (787)

[339 E. Miller Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850-9431; cell 607-351-3901;

sls8@cornell.edu]

The Mailbag Alumni News



M. Douglas McIlroy 1954 (519) [1 Hayfield Rd, Etna, NH 03750-4101; douglas.mcilroy@dartmouth.edu] writes “71 years out of Cornell. I’m still traveling (2 weeks in France & Spain in May) gardening, and rowing, but not figure skating anymore. I got hooked on computing with Cornell’s first computer and still am at it for run. In touch with Jon Symons ‘54 (534); we’re both members of the National Academy of Engineering.”

Raymond J Bracaliello 1967 (698) [Box 20, Main St, Prattsville, NY 12468-0020; rjbracaliello@hotmail.com] retired from insurance – bought first agency in 1973. Retired from Air Force in 1995. In email contact with Little Brother John Brown ‘69 (727) in Bellingham, WA. Also with David DeYoung ‘66 (699), whom he plans to visit on a lake in PA. Ray has been Fire Co. Secretary since 1973.

Richard S Lysle 1969 (732) [711 Shadow Mountain Trail, Cheyenne, WY 82009; lyslelaw@yahoo.com] moved from southern California to Wyoming in 2020.

Steven L Stein 1973 (787) [339 E Miller Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850-9431; sls8@cornell.edu] was delighted to be joined, in person, by Hugh Humphreys ‘64 (666) and Brad Meyer ‘79 (856) at the Acacia Annual Corporation Meeting last May 10. Steve has been busier than ever with Acacia and spent many hours repairing drywall in the Wing corner room (#23) which is now an eye-popping green. In early June, Steve also met with Thomas Balcerski ’05 (1063) and Beatrice Szekely, the village historian of Cayuga Heights. Bea recently published a book on the history of Cayuga Heights, and she makes several references to both Acacia and the Williams Family who owned Northcote before us. And Steve and wife, Mary, attended the fantastic Homecoming extravaganza with a handful of other Alumni and plus-ones.

David R Fischell PhD 1975 (800) [71 Riverlawn Dr, Fair Haven, NJ 07704-3319; drdrf@comcast.net] is happy to announce the birth of 3 rd granddaughter, MJ Cormany to daughter Jennifer ’13 and husband Ed PhD ’13 in December 2024.

David D Nolte 1981 (881) [4155 Eisenhower Rd, Lafayette, IN 47905-8425; nolte@physics.purdue.edu] and wife, Laura, have had active research labs at Purdue University studying new energy sources and cancer therapy... but now are trying to survive Trump’s crazy attack on Universities and Science!

Paul C Herrington 1981 (882) [PO Box 307, 31 Elm St, Niverville, NY 12130-0307; paulherrington1759@icloud.com] has had a couple of phone calls with John Friedlander '81 (877) and wife Lisa Davidson-Friedlander '83 (L15) in the last year. Both are retired and doing OK. Paul is closing in on retirement (12/31/2025) and is looking forward to doing other things with his time! Life is good and he has few complaints. Here's hoping the Active Chapter can come back and return to its former glory!

Daniel R Merrill PhD 1983 (907) [10231 91 st Ave NE, Arlington, WA 98223-9805; danmerrill@gmail.com] recently moved back to Washington state to a home with acreage in the woods. Brother Bill Ward '80 (862) and wife, Cathy, recently visited. Daniel continues to consult in the neural engineering field.

Thomas J Balcerski PhD 2005 (1063) [29 Kathleen Dr, #9C, Willimantic, CT 06226; tjb36@cornell.edu] returned to Cornell in June for his 20-year Reunion. Thomas was promoted to Professor of History this year.

John L Ryan 2009 (1112) [5000 Battery Ln #304, Bethesda, MD 20814; johnryan1025@gmail.com] currently working at the State Department and as Captain in US Army JAG Corps (hopes to be promoted to Major soon). Keeps in close touch with Jason Turer '09 (1106).



Venerably Speaking



Kevin Rivera (1261)
Venerable Dean



Dear Alumni,

When I first assumed the role of Venerable Dean, I was filled with a mix of fear and determination. I was not yet confident in my own abilities, but I was unwavering in my belief in Acacia. I soon realized that leadership is not about having all the answers, but about showing up, learning, and choosing growth every single day. Each challenge became an opportunity for reflection, action, and progress with the brotherhood. This journey of personal growth has shown me that the ripple effect of one person's development can fortify an entire house, inspiring us all to strive for more.

Still, there is no growth without hurdles. The most complex challenge so far has been balancing being Kevin Rivera and Kevin the Venerable Dean. Sometimes it can be challenging to see yourself in a leadership role and feel the weight of responsibility while still wanting to be young, spontaneous, and free. It can be taxing when your role makes you feel like a monolith, as if every decision defines not just you, but the house. But over time, I realized that leadership does not mean I am alone, because this role does not isolate me; it connects me. I built a support system, both inside and outside the house, that allows me to stay grounded and supported when I'm not. There is no better feeling than knowing that your brothers are there for you when you need them most, and that together, you can build solutions to any challenge. That understanding fuels me every morning. It has taught me that each day is an opportunity to grow individually, and to embed that growth within the fabric of our brotherhood.

Life at Northcote has a rhythm of its own, full of small moments that define who we are. One of my favorites is with Brother Somesh Singh. We made a deal that I would wake him up every morning since I'm an early riser. It's become a funny ritual: I knock, he groans, he shrugs at the door, and somehow we both start our day laughing. It's silly, but it represents what makes our chapter special. We look out for one another, in big and small ways. Every day, I try to affirm each brother. They must hear and know that their presence here means something. That sense of care, accountability, and openness has become the heartbeat of our house. Mutual understanding and the willingness to listen and grow are what keep our brotherhood strong.

Homecoming this year was a resounding success—a true testament to our fraternity’s strength and unity. We had the honor of hosting Murali Coryell and welcoming back our alumni for an unforgettable weekend. Music, laughter, and dancing filled every corner of Northcote, reminding us all of what makes Acacia special: our ability to come together and create lasting memories. Despite smaller numbers, the effort, positivity, and willpower of our active members have been extraordinary. What makes this group special is our shared drive to do things together, from hosting events and improving the house to simply spending time as brothers. We’ve rebuilt Acacia not just as a chapter, but as an everlasting family, where every member is valued and contributes to our collective strength.

This semester has also brought exciting change as we proudly welcomed two new members, Danny Parker and Charlie Hicks. Their energy has brought new perspectives and life into the house, further improving our status and the work towards the Spring rush. I do want to shout out our sweethearts, who have stood beside us with unwavering support, and continue to be part of Acacia’s beating heart. A huge thank you to Chef Justin Gage, whose incredible cooking and dedication have transformed our dining experience, and to Coach Justin McGrath for his leadership and mentorship. Together, they have helped shape an environment of excellence and care. Their support and guidance have been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions to our fraternity.

Looking ahead, I hope that Acacia remains a place where every brother — past, present, and future members—feels at home. To our alums: this house will always be yours, no matter how far you go. I hope that one day, we can all gather again in these same halls to celebrate what we’ve built and to give back to the place that shaped us. The journey has not been easy, but it’s been worth every step. And as we continue to climb this mountain together, I’m reminded of a simple truth. When we believe in one another, there is nothing we can’t achieve.





**Brother Rivera serving
food at Homecoming**



**Brother DeCamp
dutifully watching the
stairwells at a party**



**Brother Rivera ready to
defend Northcote, Nerf
or Nothing**



**Brother DeCamp cleans
out the brothers at poker
night**



**Brother Rivera in
spirited debate with
brothers at Homecoming**



**Brother DeCamp with
Brother Jain in his room
under Vin's Galaxy**

A Message From the Brothers



Ethan DeCamp (1269)
Treasurer



My first semester as a brother has far exceeded what I imagined being part of a brotherhood could be. Northcote today has a warm, positive energy which makes me excited to return home each day.

Almost every night, the brothers naturally seem to congregate in either my room or Kevin's. We discuss the day's events, funny stories, personal triumphs, or challenges. This new routine exemplifies the exact type of brotherhood I hoped for. Cornell can be an isolating place for many, making me ever thankful for the familial bond that I've found at Acacia.

Those around us are recognizing our joyful, easygoing spirit, as we've had a growing group of friends coming over for events, dinners, and brunches, or to say hi. I've loved having such positive people around the house. It's impossible to be bored when fun people are around.

We've had a lot of significant events this semester. My favorite (second only to seeing our outstanding alums during homecoming) was a bonfire and barbecue we had early in the semester. That was the first time this school year I saw brothers, PNMs, and friends alike relax, let loose, and come out of their shells. I learned a lot about my brothers around that bonfire, including Somesh's childhood in New Delhi, Charlie's boarding school hijinks, and Vin's capture by monkeys. The community we've built has got to be the most interesting group of people I have found at Cornell, and that makes every event enjoyable and interesting.

Overall, Acacia has been such a blessing for me this semester and for the next three years at Cornell. I can't wait to see what's in store for the rest of this semester and the coming years. It's hard for me to imagine a time when I didn't call Acacia my home.



Vinamr Jain (1270) **Secretary**



Before coming to the US for grad school, I could never have imagined being part of a fraternity or living the fraternal experience. Yet here I am, over a year into my time at Northcote, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to belong to an over-a-hundred-year-old legacy and its traditions.

I joined as an Auxiliary Member and pledged last spring, getting initiated into a community that is a core part of my experience living here as an international student. My preconception about American fraternity culture was shaped by movies and exposure to American media, which revolved around parties and alcohol. It was a pleasant surprise to see that Acacia's culture was more than meets the eye. It's a close-knit brotherhood where everyone deeply cares for each other, helps each other grow as people, and, of course, throws parties and drinks alcohol.

From the beginning, people have been incredibly inclusive and engaging. The active brothers invited me to all the events, and we'd spend evenings playing FIFA and watching TV together. I've interacted with a diverse set of individuals from different backgrounds, engaged in beer pong with caring alums, and savored delicious food made by our excellent chefs, Justin and Dave, who are not just great cooks but also wonderful company. They've added a lot to our fraternity experience with their culinary skills and friendly demeanor.

As a graduate student, the workload can be burdensome sometimes —meetings, deadlines, and working late on weekends. Coming back to the house to hang out with the guys is genuinely refreshing. From stealing the leftovers and showing up at Kevin's room to watch TV to having chill study sessions in the chapter room, I've built strong connections and lifelong friends and, so far, evaded the notorious grad school burnout. Acacia has provided the work-life balance I needed and has been a major contributor to my social fulfillment.

Living here has also helped me grow as a person—by taking on household chores, hosting events, and interacting with new people. Brotherhood events and chapter meetings have not only shaped a strong sense of community and belonging but also fostered personal growth, where you get a say in everything about the house ecosystem and event organization, and get to know the brothers on a deeper level.

Recently, we've even attracted a rotating crew of exchange students from next door who keep coming over—our 'international appeal' apparently extends beyond the house itself.

This international appeal is not just about having students from different countries, but also about embracing and celebrating our cultural differences. They've been a great addition to our little vibrant commune, giving a new spark to the ethos. We've had several memorable events: backyard barbecues and our own reggae/jazz concerts, nights out, themed parties and poker nights, and plain old TV sessions and chilling in the Common room.

I will never forget and cherish this experience as a lifelong member of the fraternity, and I am deeply grateful for the good vibes that keep flowing. I'm excited to welcome new PNMs, do crew and cleaning around the house, and create more fun memories. It's only the beginning of an excellent road ahead!



Somesh P. Singh (1271)
Senior Steward



My first few months at Northcote have been quite fun, meaningful, and happening. From day one, I've really appreciated the warm and welcoming atmosphere at the house. Whether it's hanging out in the common room, grabbing meals together, or running into brothers around campus and Ithaca, there's always something going on and someone to share a laugh or a good conversation with. It's easy to feel at home when you're surrounded by people who genuinely care and look out for one another.

One of the highlights this semester has definitely been the variety of social events hosted at the house. From casual get-togethers to larger formals, each one has been a great opportunity to bond with brothers and connect with alumni and friends of the chapter. These events have shown me how strong our brotherhood really is and how much effort goes into keeping our traditions alive while creating new memories for everyone involved.

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to attend the Acacia Leadership Academy with support from our chapter. It was an incredibly valuable experience that helped me better understand leadership within the fraternity and what it truly means to contribute to a chapter's success. Meeting brothers from chapters across the country gave me new perspectives on how different chapters embody the same shared values. The lessons from ALA have shaped how I approach my responsibilities here at Northcote and have inspired me to think about leadership not just as a position, but as a mindset of service and commitment.

Overall, this semester has been full of learning, growth, and unforgettable moments. I'm grateful for the friendships I've built, the opportunities I've had, and the sense of belonging that comes with being part of this house. I'm looking forward to many more great semesters ahead, filled with laughter, purpose, and continued brotherhood. So Live!



**Brother Jain '29 crossing
the suspension bridge
after a fun night out**

**Brother Singh '29 with
Brother Utic '77 at ALA
this past Summer**



**Brother Singh embraces
Brother Alumnus Yoo
joyfully during a return
visit to Northcote**

**Brother Jain posses with
New Planets at our Band
Night Event**



**Brother Jain enjoying
the festivities of
Homecoming with the
brothers**

**Brother Singh taking a
rest with our Sweetheart
Leo after a long night of
dancing**



Meet our New Members



Charles Hicks '27
London, England



Hello Alumni! My name is Charlie Hicks and I am a Junior on exchange in Cornell. I am from London, England, where I study Anatomy and Developmental Biology at King's College London. I'm an aspiring Anatomist hoping to work in research or medicine in the future. Joining Acacia has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience where I have made lifelong friends and brothers who I know will always support me, and I, too, will always support them. My first impression was that the men who live in this house look after and appreciate the house that they live in, and care for each other. I have been warmly welcomed into the house and brotherhood, and I can't wait to experience full Acacia membership. One of my favorite memories from this semester was Homecoming where I got to see the true values of Acacia and the deep bond the Brothers have with each other, whether active or alumni.



Daniel Parker '25
Colts Neck, New Jersey



Hi! My name is Daniel Parker, and I'm a Computer Science master's student from New Jersey. This fall semester at Acacia has been an incredible experience that's really pushed me outside of my comfort zone in the best ways possible. Before joining, I wasn't someone who usually attended big events or met a ton of new people, but Acacia has completely changed that. From social events to just hanging out with the members, I've found myself trying things I never would have before – and genuinely enjoying every second of it.

Being part of Acacia has helped me grow more confident, form lasting friendships, and truly feel part of something bigger than myself. Whether it's late-night conversations, working together on events, or simply spending time with the brothers, every moment has been meaningful. I'm incredibly grateful for the warm welcome and support I've received and excited to keep making memories with everyone here at Acacia.



Our Sweethearts

Leo is an international student in her final semester of her undergraduate studies. She is majoring in Film Studies and English Literature. Leo originally hails from Norway but has completed the majority of her undergraduate studies at the University of Sydney in Australia. She loves glam rock, the cinema, and wearing sunglasses inside—at night. She aspires to get into a graduate Film Studies program in the States, and we all look forward to seeing her success. Leo has been an incredibly consistent presence at Northcote this Fall, and we shall miss her dearly in the Spring.



Hello! My name is Georgia, I was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and was raised on a nature reserve just outside the city. I'm a student at IE University in Madrid, here at Cornell for just this Semester studying PPLE. On my first week in Ithaca, I was dying to know what goes on inside a frat house. My only reference were from movies which did not paint a very good picture. So you can imagine my surprise when we went up to the Acacia house with a "neighbourly gift" and the Brothers at Acacia not only welcomed us in, but have continued to be some of the most special people showing constant respect and kindness. As you can imagine, Georgia is dearly loved by all of us.

Anaaya is an international student in her Sophomore year here for the Semester studying Psychology. She hails from India and studies at Ashoka University back home. Anaaya is an avid and highly skilled soccer player, having consistently served as a team captain as a goal keeper. Anaaya is truly a kind and caring soul and never fails to light up the room when she walks in. She is magnetically charismatic, the kind of person you just want to be around and hang out with. In other words, she is damn. cool. She will be dearly missed come Spring but will always have a home at Northcote.



Our Sweethearts

TJ is an international student spending the entirety of her Junior year here in Ithaca. She hails from London, England, and attends King's College London back home. She is studying biosciences and healthcare and also has a particular interest in entrepreneurship. A goal of hers is to retire by 35. This Semester, she managed to trade up from a paper clip to a kayak in 3 days. She is also an international competitor in Taekwon-Do and fills the Common Room with music from the grand piano. She is fiercely loyal and a great friend, and we could not be luckier to have her as a Sweetheart.



Nancy is an international student also spending the entirety of her Junior year here in Ithaca. She hails from Manchester, England, and is a student of King's College London back home where she studies biological sciences. Nancy enjoys reading fantasy books and playing the flute. Her two archenemies in Ithaca happen to be her roommates, TJ and Charlie, whom she loves dearly. Nancy is particularly interested in immunology and infectious diseases... watch out, Charlie and TJ. Nancy is incredibly sharp-witted and always keeps us on our toes. She's an absolute delight to have around, and we're glad to have her as a Sweetheart.



Trustee'd Alumnus Hard at Work

Brother Paul Hayre '91 — From the Hill to Harvard and Back Again



Recently, our dear Brother Paul Hayre '91, was elected to the Cornell Board of Trustees! During a brief phone call in between meetings, I had the pleasure of speaking with Paul. Despite being worked harder than an Acusmatici in the Pythagorean Institute, he was full of energy, eager, and honored to take on the responsibilities of a Trustee. Below is a recollection of our conversation, supplemented with an article from Cornell University News regarding his election. Cheers to you, Brother Hayre! Thank you for your continued dedicated service to Cornell, and to Acacia.

When Brother Paul Hayre '91 talks about Cornell, he doesn't just recall memories—he recalls missions. *“Cornell was a defining experience,”* he says. *“It's where I learned to build, to listen, and to serve.”*

On Leadership and Gratitude

“I've been driven by gratitude since the day I left Ithaca,” Paul reflects. *“Every opportunity I've had traces back to something I learned on the Hill.”*

As an undergrad, he helped restructure student government and bring transparency to student activity fees—early examples of the practical leadership that would mark his career. In the decades since, he's built teams and institutions with that same sense of balance between purpose and accountability.

Today, Brother Hayre leads **Harvard Grid**, an entrepreneurship center connecting scientists, engineers, and investors to turn research into real-world impact. *“My job is to marshal brilliant minds toward shared outcomes,”* he explains. *“That's something Cornell taught me early on—how to rally people from all walks toward a common goal.”*

He's also co-founded and guided several health-tech companies, including **Sano Diagnostics** and **Monarch Health**, and sits on multiple boards in healthcare and innovation. His ability to bridge academia, business, and public service has made him one of Cornell Engineering's most active alumni leaders.

On Cornell Today

In an era of changing policies and shifting campus climates, Brother Hayre believes Cornell must continue to stand for openness and equality. *“It’s hard to value truth when you can’t recognize it,”* he says. *“We have to teach students to navigate a world of competing ‘truths’—to listen, challenge, and still find common ground.”*

He points to admissions diversity, campus safety, and financial aid as critical priorities. *“We can’t let access slip backward,”* he warns. *“Cornell should always be a place where excellence meets empathy.”*

On Service Beyond the Hill

For more than three decades, Brother Hayre has woven service into every chapter of his life. He’s led the **Cornell Club of Boston**, chaired **Engineering alumni councils**, served on the **Cornell University Council**, and mentored countless students through programs like *Coaching and Mentoring for Professional and Student Success* (ENGRG 1052).

“I’ve been fortunate to stay close to the university through so many avenues,” he says. *“Acacia taught me that leadership doesn’t end when you graduate—it just changes form.”*

Beyond Cornell, he’s been equally active in Harvard’s innovation ecosystem, mentoring student founders and judging competitions at the **Rock Center for Entrepreneurship and Harvard LifeLabs**.

On Family and Full Circles

Over lunch at Trillium decades ago, Paul met fellow Cornellian **Jeannette Perez-Rossello ’91**—now his wife of more than 30 years. Their three children grew up hearing stories of life on the Hill; one, **Alex ’24, MHA ’26**, continues that legacy today.

“Cornell is where my life truly began,” Paul says. *“It’s where I learned that ideas alone don’t change the world—**people working together do.**”*

And that, he adds, is **the Cornell way**—and **the Acacia way**.

An Inter-National Perspective



Justin McGrath 005.1161
Chapter Growth and
Development Consultant



If you caught my digital *Traveler* article recapping our wonderful Homecoming Weekend, or have seen my name referenced in other articles in this edition of the *Traveler*, you may know me as the Acacia IHQ Chapter Growth and Development Consultant stationed at Northcote for the 2025-2026 academic year. While my role is to support the Chapter to the best of my ability, my commitment to Acacia—and to the success of your Chapter specifically—runs much deeper than that. It is because of the experience afforded to me in my undergraduate years, by and through Acacia, in a tumultuous time for the whole world, that I stand here today in your beautiful home of Northcote—ready and willing to do all that I can to see Cornell Acacia thrive for another 120 years.

My story with Acacia began during my freshman year, in the fall of 2019. Having grown up in the fairly insular Adventist community of Loma Linda, California, joining a fraternity in college was the last thing I ever expected to do. My perception of Greek life came from TV shows, films, and the horror stories circulating in the news. And while UC Berkeley isn't exactly Faber College, some of the things I heard my friends endure in other fraternities didn't exactly scream "brotherhood" to me. By mid-October, though, I found myself feeling alienated, overwhelmed, and at times terrified of this brave new world I had entered. I lacked true community—and I craved it deeply. It was in that state that I found Acacia—or, more truthfully, that Acacia found me.

I was introduced to Acacia by a friend of mine in the dorms—my next-door neighbor, in fact. Here was someone I never would have imagined joining a fraternity, and yet here he was, loving every minute of it. He introduced me to the expansion coordinator, Brother Marshall Farren from the Indiana Chapter, whom Headquarters had sent out to restart the Cal Chapter. He told me of a fraternity that sought balance and excellence among its members, both academically and socially—one whose motto is human service. A fraternity with a beautiful chapter house just waiting for enough members to fill its halls once again. A fraternity beginning anew—one I would have a real opportunity to shape and grow from the very start, helping to turn that vision into reality. From that moment, I was hooked. I already had aspirations of becoming president one day. But before that could happen, real work needed to be done—and my skills needed to be tested.

After being elected recruitment chair following a pledging period of barely a week, I felt ill-prepared but hungry to learn what it would take to bring in more members. Our Corp Board set an ambitious goal: to double the chapter from 15 to 30 brothers in order to secure the chapter house for the next year. Equipped with a crash course in recruitment best practices from the Officer

Summit and a winning mindset, we not only hit that goal—we surpassed it. Riding high into Spring Break with recruitment on my mind, I thought nothing could stop us. But then came the Spring Break that never ended. Despite the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to retain just over 20 members. With few options available, the Corp Board allowed the 10 of us willing to move into the chapter house in the fall of 2020 to do so at a reduced rate. Though we had no idea what each day would bring, we kept the dream alive, relying on one another to make it through.

I'd like to say that belief in the dream kept things running smoothly, but those were incredibly trying times. Trust faltered, faith wavered, and we faced constant challenges—especially as many of us were still getting to know each other. I stepped into the role of Venerable Dean the following year, uncertain of our survival, but as stubborn as ever to succeed. During that time, I learned invaluable lessons about keeping a team united and moving toward a common goal. I faltered, yes—but it was ultimately faith and trust in my brothers, and their faith and trust in me, that kept us alive through to the fall. Despite our nonexistent reputation on campus and our limited experience, we once again managed to double our membership by the end of the school year. I was also elected as an Undergraduate Counselor, a role that ultimately brought me here today. It was through that experience that I truly learned how Acacia is bigger than any one chapter—and that when we support one another, we all rise together.

Wanting to serve in a position where I could more directly support our chapters, I stepped down from the Council and joined the staff. It's a decision I'm profoundly grateful for, as it has led me here—to Cornell, to Northcote, in this moment in time. What I saw on my initial visits last year—while difficult—lit a fire in me to return in earnest and give everything I can to your Chapter. Now, the Brotherhood stands on the brink of renewal, ready to succeed and rise again. I know this because I've seen it. I've lived it.

That's not to say there aren't challenges—nor that more won't come. Cornell is a campus unlike any other, as I've already learned this fall. But with my experience, the dedication of our active members, and your support, we *can* and *will* succeed. Please feel free to contact me anytime with suggestions, questions, or even just to chat. I'm eager to work with each of you so that, together, we can usher in a new era of success for Cornell Acacia.

Lastly, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the great Bill Utic '77—a man for whom we could fill multiple Traveler volumes and still barely scratch the surface of his contributions to Acacia. A man without whom we may never have regained ownership of our historic chapter house at Cal. And a man without whom I may never have had this fine fraternal opportunity.

So Live!

Justin McGrath 2023 (005.1161)

jmcgrath@acacia.org | (951) 543-6451

Homecoming 2025 Report



**Acacia Alumni Return,
Big Red Spirit,
Summerlike Weather**



**Brothers Kevin Rivera
and Somesh Singh
proudly represent
Cornell Acacia**



The Brotherhood is Back!

By 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 is what unites us 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.

**Actives, Alumni, Pledges,
and Sweethearts enjoy a
brunch prepared by LIA
and Chef Justin Gage**



So Live!

By Acacia International Leadership Consultant Justin McGrath California '23

I began working with the Cornell 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.

Once again, 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!

**Brothers and guests
enjoy a gourmet meal in
the Dining Room on
Saturday evening**



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

By 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.



Brother Alumni Elie Bilmes '10 and Ilya Cherepakhin '03 join the Actives and LIA/Chef Justin Gage for a photo on the staircase



Brother Alumni Thomas Balcerski '05 and Andrew Hur '04 enjoying HoCo Fest '25 on Ho Plaza



Alumni and Active Brothers meet on Friday night of Homecoming Weekend

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 sunny afternoon amidst a big and red crowd of students and fellow alumni.

Back at Northcote, preparations were underway 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 our 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

By 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.

Honor Roll

Donor	Roll #	Class	Pledge Year
Lane J Abrams	915	1984	1981
Richard B Ahlfeld *	713	1968	1965
Christopher T Anderson	940	1988	1985
John C Armstrong	914	1984	1981
Kenneth Jay Ayres Jr. \$	1052	2004	2001
Thomas J Balcerski Ph.D. *	1063	2005	2002
Elie Yakov Bilmes	1118	2010	2007
Raymond J Bracaliello	698	1967	1964
Justin William Burden	1140	2012	2009
Stewart L Burger *	738	1970	1967
Brian T Cannon	1128	2010	2008
Martin S Cardinali	918	1984	1981
John W Carpenter III *	959	1990	1987
Ilya Cherepakhin \$	1058	2003	2001
Christian Choi	1195	2016	2014
Robert Joseph Christ	1116	2009	2006
David J De Young *	699	1966	1964
Igor Dolgalev \$	1068	2005	2002
Scott H Dulman \$	899	1983	1980
John Mathias Ertl	1148	2011	2009
David R. Fischell PhD *	800	1975	1972
Nishant Goel \$	1214	2019	2016
Paul B Goldberg *	755	1971	1968
David A Gorelick	717	1968	1965
Matthew S Harris	1042	2002	2000
Paul C Herrington	882	1981	1979

Honor Roll

Donor	Roll #	Class	Pledge Year
Charles S Hong	1043	2001	2000
Steven R Horowitz *	966	1992	1989
Hugh C Humphreys	666	1964	1961
Seth A Jacobson \$	1092	2008	2005
Alan L Jette	895	1982	1979
William L Keltz	632	1961	1958
Thomas E Kocovsky Jr. *	730	1969	1966
John Michael Koltz	1108	2009	2006
Jerry W Kreider *\$	720	1968	1965
Dale A La Shomb	781	1973	1970
Ho Kiu Toby Leung \$	1212	2019	2016
Richard S Lysle	732	1969	1966
Mark F Maltenfort	831	1977	1974
M. Douglas McIlroy	519	1954	1949
Richard K McMurtry \$	701	1967	1964
Harlan M Meinwald	789	1974	1971
Andrew H Mercer	890	1982	1979
Daniel R Merrill PhD	907	1983	1980
Robert C Merritt * \$	807	1979	1976
Bradley J Meyer	856	1979	1976
Paul G Molnar *\$	1014	1998	1995
Stanley R Niman *	783	1973	1970
David D Nolte *	881	1981	1978
Martin E Offenberger *	568	1956	1953
Todd Peskin *	994	1995	1993
Alan J Pue	785	1973	1970

Honor Roll

Donor	Roll #	Class	Pledge Year
Thomas L Ricketts *	1051	2003	2000
David M Rimshnick \$	1062	2005	2002
Peter M Rimshnick * \$	1060	2005	2002
Joshua D Roth	1049	2003	2000
John Lincoln Ryan	1112	2009	2006
William R Salcedo \$	1250	2023	2020
Noah Kenneth Santorello \$	1124	2009	2007
Mark A Schaten MD	923	1984	1982
Bruce G Schneider *\$	842	1978	1975
Philip M Schuler	886	1980	1979
Thomas W Schultz	1181	2015	2012
Brian Sivillo * \$	993	1996	1993
James M Skiff	879	1981	1978
Robertson C Spiesz	835	1977	1974
Earl L Stone III	725	1968	1965
Harold M Teller	814	1976	1973
Daniel E Turinsky \$	1004	1997	1994
William A Utic *	836	1977	1974
Devin T Van Zandt	962	1990	1989
William Jacob Zeligson	1139	2012	2009
Howard S Zwiefel III *	734	1969	1966

73 Donors | 22 Brother Tree Leaf Recognitions | 18 Acacia 120 Donations

*** after name indicates Brother Tree Leaf recognition**

\$ after name indicates Acacia 120 Donation

Acacia

How to Contribute

Through Mail



STEP 1: Make a check out to the **Acacia Fraternity Inc**

STEP 2: Mail the check to: **Cornell Acacia**
318 Highland Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850

STEP 3 (Optional):

Say Hi! Attach a short note about yourself. and tell us what you've been up to lately; we will make sure to add it in the Alumni Mailbag section of the next Traveler!

Online

PayPal:

Step 1: Choose the 'Sending to a friend' option. This saves us the transaction fee that is normally charged when sending money through Paypal.

Step 2: Address the payment to:
AcaciaCorpBoard@cornell.edu

Venmo:

Address the payment to @Acacia-Fraternity-13

Cash App:

Address the payment to \$AcaciaCornell

Chapter Eternal

Let us now honor and acknowledge the lives of the brother alumni who recently passed away into the Chapter Eternal.

Dr. Henry L Hood '43 (407) – 2/18/2012

Gary E Owens '63, BS CALS '64 (657) –
12/24/2024



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