

**Beta Beta-Alberta**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: May 9, 1931
* Location: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
* Region: 7

**History:**

The University of Alberta, a single, public provincial university, was chartered in 1906 in Edmonton, Alberta with the University Act in the first session of the new Legislative Assembly, with Premier Alexander C. Rutherford as its sponsor. The university was modelled on the American state university, with an emphasis on extension work and applied research. The governance was modelled on Ontario's University of Toronto Act of 1906: a bicameral system consisting of a senate (faculty) responsible for academic policy, and a board of governors (citizens) controlling financial policy and having formal authority in all other matters. The president, appointed by the board, was to provide a link between the two bodies and perform institutional leadership.

With Henry Marshall Tory as its first president, the University of Alberta started operation in 1908. Forty-five students attended classes in English, mathematics and modern languages, on the top floor of the Queen Alexandra Elementary School in Strathcona, while the first campus building, Athabasca Hall, was under construction. The university awarded its first degrees in 1912. As of 1920, there were 851 male students, 251 female students and 171 academic staff, including 14 women.

Vital to the history of Beta Beta is Edmonton alumnae association, now an alumnae chapter, formed by six women in 1929, the same year the ban on fraternities was lifted at the university. This group, who had dreamed of a chapter at Alberta, chose to sponsor a group called Phi Gamma as it was the very best! Phi Gamma was the first group of women to apply for and obtain a charter from the university.

A successful fundraising dance to earn money for the charter was held in honor of the Delta Gamma Fraternity President, Mary MacHarg Halsted and Florence Bingham who had come (24 hours late due to a blizzard) to inspect Phi Gamma. The dance was another first--the first large social function given by an organized university group. Phi Gamma also impressed the university by giving a scholarship for outstanding work in English--the first award of its kind to be offered by a fraternity at the university.

Beta Beta chapter of Delta Gamma, the first National Panhellenic Conference group to enter the University of Alberta, was chartered on May 9, 1931. There are 14 pages devoted to the installation in the November 1931 *ANCHORA*. That might be a record! Florence Cornell Bingham, Chi-Cornell, Fraternity Vice-President and Expansion Chairman wrote: "There is nothing amateurish about our new Delta Gammas. In fact, they seemed like full-fledged Delta Gammas when we first inspected them. They are all girls with background, brains, and personal charm. They have the interest and support of our local alumnae. A bright and prosperous future is before you, Beta Beta."

There is one amusing story to be told about the first Initiation. The rituals box sent from the United States aroused suspicion in the minds of the custom officials. They let it through when they were told it was for theatricals.

During the first year the women rented a room for meetings. In the second year they met in the homes of members. In 1933, they rented the house of Marjorie Allin who lived a block from campus. The main bedroom was furnished by the mother of Priscilla Hammond, the first president of the chapter who had died the previous summer. This room, and a room in each succeeding chapter house, was called the Priscilla Room.

A chapter house loan from the Fraternity helped Beta Beta purchase a chapter house in 1944. They were the first women’s group to own a house.

Beta Beta held its first Anchor Splash® in March 1984, and later that year, held the second as the timing of the event switched to November.

Beta Beta celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1981. They also held a 75th Anniversary Gala on May 6, 2006 at the Royal Glenora Club.