

**Tau-Iowa**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: November 9, 1886
* Location: Iowa City, IA
* Region: 5

**History:**

The University of Iowa was founded on February 25, 1847, just 59 days after Iowa was admitted to the Union. The Constitution of the State of Iowa refers to a State University to be established in Iowa City "without branches at any other place." The legal name of the university is the State University of Iowa, but the Board of Regents approved using the "University of Iowa" for everyday usage in October 1964. In September 1855, there were 124 students, of whom forty-one were women. The original campus consisted of the Iowa Old Capitol Building and the 10 acres of land on which it stood. In 1855, Iowa became the first public university in the United States to admit men and women on an equal basis.

In the fall of 1886, Helen Cox Fairchild and Eleanor Startsman Biggs were urged to petition a sorority by fellow Greeks. They decided to petition Delta Gamma for a charter because of Delta Gamma’s “reputation.” Along with Ms. Cox and Ms. Startsman, charter members included: Margaret Bacon, Nan Shepherd, Annie Jewett and Annie Gillis. When Delta Gamma first looked at Iowa, there was less than one thousand students at the university, and less than one hundred women. On November 9, 1886, the Tau charter was gained, and this date is used as the official installation date. Kappa Kappa Gamma and Pi Beta Phi were the only other sororities on campus at the time.

In January 1887, the charter members were initiated by Mabel Dixon, Omega-Wisconsin in Phi Kappa Psi’s room on campus. The chapter was soon known as “Baby Tau.” The same year, Tau sent Helen Cox to the national Convention as its first Convention delegate. Tau hosted its first Province Convention in April 1927.

In 1893, Tau rented rooms to use for meetings on College Street across from the university, and was the first women’s fraternity in Iowa to lease a chapter house. They stayed there until 1903 when they moved to 19 E. Market Street in Iowa City. In 1924, the chapter moved into a newly constructed house at 932 E. College Street. This was the first sorority house built on campus, and the first to be fully paid for by a chapter. The chapter remained there for 44 years. In 1968, a new chapter house was constructed after major fundraising efforts. The house was officially dedicated on April 28, 1968 at 305 E. Summit Street. The house was newly renovated in 2015.

In 1978, Tau chapter held its first Anchor Splash®. Tau was also the first Delta Gamma chapter to host the “Art of the Eye” exhibit.