

## Raj Patel – Arch Chapter Interview Summary

- **Candidate Information**

- Fraternity Affiliation & Volunteer History
  - I graduated from UCF (Zeta Omicron) in 1999. After a few years, I was asked to support the chapter as the HC Treasurer. I served in this role for several years and was asked to help out the chapter more directly as an assistant chapter advisor, when he moved, I stepped into the advisor role. I stayed as ZO Chapter Advisor until 2012, when I moved out of state. In 2018ish, I was asked to help a colony at College of Charleston as a chapter advisor. I stayed in that role helping the chapter through full chartering. I then served as a DVP and then AC in 2024. In between, I supported in several additional appointed roles; I served as a Phonarch, Division Committee Chair for Nominations, Division Secretary, Member of the Division finance audit committee, and facilitator for Emerge, and Compass.
- Education
  - BS in Electrical Engineering, MBA, and a Boeing Designated Expert in Lean and Agile systems
- Professional Career
  - I started my career as a system engineer on the International Space Station Program, while on the program I worked in various leadership roles supporting building, testing, and launch operations for human space flight programs. The skills I learned from being a delt through my role as chapter president, IFC Vice President and having had opportunities to attend leadership academy and conferences gave me skills to be the youngest lead test engineer for NASA.
  - Over the years, I held multiple leadership roles working in the defense business unit; leading larger groups through changes to the business environment and getting an opportunity to work on cool programs like A-10, AH-64, Ares, CH-47, F-15, F-18, QF-16, Humming Bird, T-7.
  - In 2015, I moved to Charleston to support the 787 Program. Currently, I lead the Engineering Design Center as the functional leader for approximately 1,200 engineers. My team is responsible for attracting, hiring, developing and keeping talent through programming that helps develop soft skills, improve technical understanding, and ensuring our teammates stay with the company.
- Civic & Volunteer Involvement

- Corporate FIRST Robotics Focal for South Carolina: help schools and teams find mentors and volunteers
- Committee/ corporate member of Charleston Regional Development Authority; served on the Innovation Committee on Regional Strategic Plan; Talent Acquisition Committee (focus on changing marketing direction of region and state to attract talent for growth sectors)
- SWE and NSBE Mentor and panelist on career planning for young professionals

- **Interview Questions**

- How could Delt make its programs more effective and reach more people?
  - While I have a few ideas, I would focus on making sure we are taking time to really understand the impact of programs long-term. I went to Leadership Academy and I enjoyed my experience. But it wasn't until I was 2 years into my career that I realized how much that experience on life skills helped me grow professionally and even personally. We have made a good start in getting feedback on the programs; I would work with the central office team on how to gain feedback on impact and adjusting our programs so it serves our membership for life long learning and growth. What that looks like needs voices from all parts of the fraternity and stakeholders.
- As a director, what would be your goal to ensure the advancement of the undergraduate experience?
  - Membership experience will vary for every brother; I want to challenge the idea that our focus should be only on the undergraduate experience. Membership is lifelong. Undergraduate time is a small portion of the experience. Our UG experience should change as they progress towards graduation. We need to keep men engaged through the last few years and into alumnus status. How we create an affinity to the fraternity starts with how we connect our members to each other. The labels around schools, UG, alumnus, are waypoints in the Delt experience. We are all Greek and all delts. That experience is what kept me engaged. Learning about other brothers through conferences, training, and connecting at Karnea are the keys. I want support the efforts on how we engage members beyond the UG experience by making sure the UG experience is the start of something that is impactful to our brotherhood, so when you are ready, you will give back your time, talent and treasures.

- Communication between the Arch Chapter and undergraduates is a rising concern. What would be the most effective way to improve it?
  - Leadership requires engagement at all levels. Professionally when I travel, I make it a goal to connect with chapters or alumni in the area. After Covid, we have so many ways to connect, but at the end of the day, connection needs to start with people seeing people. F2F or via video calls. I personally, think we can leverage our alumnus more to make connections to the UG men.
- What are the top three issues facing undergraduate men today, and how can the fraternity address them?
  - UG men and all brothers face a variety of challenges. So, its hard for me to say what the top three are, but I do believe one thing can help each of us is a focus on how to self-reflect and learn about how we react to our environment. What I learned during my UG experience is how to better respond to things that stress me out and align myself back into behaviors that are healthy. If we focus on helping the UG men be prepared for anything by really teaching and coaching them on life lessons, they can lead themselves through all the issues that come at them. Help them be problem solvers vs. feeding them solutions to what we think are the problems.
- What challenges should the Arch Chapter be most cognizant of as a governing body?
  - Our strategic plan is very well laid out, as we continue to grow, we should be focused sustaining this growth and accelerating parts of the strategic plan. One way to do that is by decentralizing and democratizing how we execute. Our members can be a great asset and if we can engage them differently, we can get more delts engaged in helping execute the plan. This requires all of us to be humble, seek out inputs from stakeholders, communicate more across the organization vs. creating more layers between members and the arch chapter.