April 29, 2013

Dear FSL leaders,

The Fraternity & Sorority Life Task Force has provided us an opportunity to gain important information and data from the UTA fraternity/sorority community and best practices from programs around the nation. We are confident that the attached report along with the recommendations provided by your peers, faculty/staff, national headquarters representatives and community stakeholders will aid the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life in supporting your student success and engagement.

To summarize the findings, the Fraternity & Sorority Life Task Force made the following recommendations. You may read the complete report with more detailed explanations:

1. Encourage open recruitment practices that best meets the needs of each governing council (i.e. there will not be an UTA hourly requirement to join a fraternity or sorority).
2. Simplify & re-brand the accreditation process that is more closely aligned with annual reports that most chapters are already submitting.
3. Create a tiered mediation process as part of the All Greek Standards Board.
4. Create an online event registration process.
5. Remove any references related to percentage or number of members to define an event.

These recommendations were made by specifically seeking ways to better improve your fraternity/sorority experience that support your organizational & FSL community values. Feel free to reach out if you have any other constructive feedback that you feel will be helpful. Thank you to each of you that participated in this process.

Fraternally,

Johnny Robinson
FSL Task Force Co-Chair
Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life

Heather Snow
FSL Task Force Co-Chair
Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs
FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE TASK FORCE
SUMMARY REPORT - SPRING 2013

Introduction
The Fraternity & Sorority Life community at University of Texas at Arlington has provided opportunities for student development and engagement since its establishment in 1968. The office of Fraternity & Sorority Life at UTA seeks to provide program and services to the University community to actively engage students on campus by exposing them to activities and events that foster a positive campus and community relationship and instill the values of the founding of Greek-letter organizations. The Fraternity & Sorority Life community at UTA consists of over 800 students, 32 nationally-recognized Greek-letter organizations under 4 governing councils (Interfraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Panhellenic Council).

The Division of Student Affairs at UT-Arlington strives to foster student success and lifelong learning through inclusive programs, services, traditions and events that engage students in the University community and support their academic goals. The Fraternity & Sorority Life Task Force was charged by Dr. Frank Lamas to address specific issues concerning policies and procedures, eligibility standards, and accreditation as well as other issues that will make the FSL community and organization stronger well into the future.

Committee Membership
Heather Snow, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Task Force Co-Chair
Johnny Robinson, Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life, Task Force Co-Chair
Eddie Freeman, Director, EEOC, Accreditation Subcommittee, Co-Chair
Brandi Bowen, Residence Director, Accreditation Subcommittee, Co-Chair
Carl Esposito, Assistant Director, Admissions, Eligibility, Co-Chair
Sara Drischler, Coordinator, Apartments & Residence Life, Eligibility, Co-Chair
Dan Moore, Associate Director, Student Conduct, Policies & Procedures Subcommittee, Co-Chair
Dr. Victoria Farrar-Meyers, Professor, Political Science, Policies & Procedures Subcommittee, Co-Chair
Karen Blair, SAA President
Joel Villarreal, IFC President
Harriet Watkins, Distance Education
Drew Barfield, Campus Recreation
Cathy Pritchett, Honors College
Alaina Cardwell, Student Congress
Julian Russell, EXCEL President
Jill Cason, DZ Advisor
Wayne Huddleston, Beta Theta Pi Regional Director
Roxanna Latifi, University College
Dr. Yolanda Parker, Curriculum Development
Kanisha Brown, NPHC Vice President
Eden Rodriguez, PHC President
Troy Maikowski, Sigma Phi Epsilon
Sarah Williamson, Delta Delta Delta HQ
Mike McCord, UTA Police
Jeff Sorensen, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs
Questions for Consideration

- What are the primary components of a successful Fraternity and Sorority Life program? (benchmarking)
- What is the current status of Fraternity and Sorority Life programs? (SWOT)
- What is the vision for the future of the Fraternity and Sorority Life at UTA?
- How does Fraternity and Sorority Life at UTA get there?

Subcommittee Charges

Eligibility

- What is the eligibility philosophy of national governing bodies? (i.e. NIC, NPC, NPHC, NALFO, NAPA).
- Is there a statistically significant difference of chapter GPA and/or FSL community GPA from 2006-2012? (pre & post)
- Is there a statistically significant difference in the number of students involved in chapters, councils, recruitment processes and community events from 2006-2012? (pre and post)
- What is the FSL community perception of the current eligibility requirements? What are the national trends/best practices related to eligibility requirements?

Accreditation

- What are the minimum standards of a successful Fraternity & Sorority Life Program?
- How many chapters achieved the current minimum FSL standards from 2006-2012? What is the motivation of a chapter to achieve the minimum standards?
- What are the national best practices/trends of accreditation programs?
- What is the FSL community perception of C.E.S.A.R.? What are the national best practices of identifying and recognizing exemplary chapters?

Policies/Procedures

- How do the FSL policies and procedures align with SGO recognized student organization handbook? Should these documents align with one another?
- What policies/procedures are being utilized within successful FSL programs? Which policies/procedures are necessities in a successful FSL program?
- How many cases have been referred to the Standards Board? Standards Hearings? Responsible vs. Non-Responsible? (2009-2012)
- What are the national best practices for handling FSL community infractions? Should there be a separate policy for allegations that involved violations of university policy?
- What constitutes a chapter event that should be registered with FSL? What information is required to approve an event registration? What are national best practices for chapters registering off-campus events?
- What are the best practices for registering and hosting high-risk activities/events?
Methodology

Each of the subcommittees (eligibility, accreditation, policies & procedures) gathered and explored campus data available which included assessments and surveys administered to the FSL community. In addition, committee members also visited Greek council meetings to interview students on their thoughts, concerns and perceptions of the three topics of interest. Furthermore, a town hall meeting was administered to members of the FSL community to conduct thoughtful and deliberate conversation related to the future of Fraternity and Sorority Life at UTA. Finally, numerous institutions with successful components of fraternity and sorority life programs were researched for benchmarking purposes. These FSL programs included: Florida State University, Texas Christian University, University of South Carolina, University of Missouri, University of Mississippi, North Carolina State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas A&M University, University of Iowa, Ohio State University, Colorado State University, Georgia State University, UCLA, San Diego State University, and Ball State University. This comprehensive list of aspirant FSL programs provided various best practices in field that helped inform the recommendations of the task force.

Recommendations (SEE FULL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS IN APPENDIX)

Eligibility

1. Encourage open recruitment practices by allowing individual councils to choose the format that best meets their organizational needs to support growth and the philosophy of national governing bodies. Eliminate institutional policies that prohibit first semester student recruitment.

2. Develop and promote academic standards that support student success, engagement and involvement. Each council should be responsible for setting minimum expectations to join a fraternal organization at UTA that does not hinder involvement as a first-year student.

3. Increased training and development for current FSL students to teach effective recruitment strategies and practices. We recommend contracting Phired Up, Inc. who are the leaders in dynamic recruitment and have had success training students to be more effective in recruiting for their organization and fraternity/sorority communities. Additional funding request: $3000

Accreditation

1. Develop minimum standards that are simplified, easily defined along with consequences for chapters that do not obtain. Included but not limited to: mediation, development of improvement plan with FSL staff, and/or loss of privileges.

2. Develop learning outcomes for each of the areas of CEASR along with re-branding the accreditation process. The current CEASR objectives have assumed a negative connotation with the FSL community with no empirical evidence to support its purpose and achievements since its establishment. It is imperative that the new accreditation process supports student learning and engagement.

3. NOTE: Although the committee recommended a re-branding of the CEASR program, there were a number of vocal alumni and student representatives that were passionate about disbanding the program all together. The various conversations within Greek councils and FSL Town Hall meeting illustrated the student’s lack of understanding on the purpose of the CEASR program. In addition, a member of FSL Task Force provided further recommendations and comments related to CEASR (Appendix).
Policies & Procedures

Overall Recommendations

1. Increase education and training all members of the community through a series of online trainings related to the various FSL and campus policies and procedures. In addition, these policies and procedures should also be reviewed every 3-5 years or when deemed appropriate.

2. Collaborate with Student Organizations to create a better alignment of Student Organization policies. However, due to the nature of fraternal organizations some policies will not be able to align with general student organization policies. Each of these organizations has stringent national risk management policies which are often dictated by the millions upon millions of dollars of insurance coverage provided to the national organization. Thus, these fraternal organizations will often at times be treated differently than said student organization on the college campus. In addition, through our benchmarking study we found that aspirant institutions all required event registration processes for fraternities and sororities while student organizations were not required. This further supports the fact that fraternities and sororities will continue to operate as high-risk organizations with necessary protocols to assure their successful development to support learning and engagement at institutions of higher education.

3. Foster an environment of trust and care that is positively associated with effective student learning and development. Through conversations with student representatives there is still perceived mistrust and misinformation throughout the fraternity and sorority community. Thus, it is imperative that the FSL office work tirelessly to create more transparency and better communication amongst the councils, chapters and individual members.

All Greek Standards

- Develop student learning outcomes that are aligned with student development theory.
- Create a tiered process where the chapter first meets with a trained staff/faculty member to discuss allegations and solutions (Use Ball State as guide).
- Reduce the size of the All Greek hearing board and consider recruitment of members to serve in this leadership role.

Event & Risk Management

- Revise risk management policy and remove any reference to a specific number or percentage to classify a chapter event.
- Create an online registration process to successfully streamline the event registration process.
- Please note revisions already made to the Risk Management Event Policy (Appendix ii).

Expansion Policy

- Simplify the Fraternity and Sorority Life Expansion policy and refer decisions related to chapter expansion to the respective governing council.
Conclusion & Future Considerations

During the critical analysis of the Fraternity & Sorority Life program at UTA, various stakeholders had the opportunity to voice their opinions and recommendations to facilitate the necessary growth needed. The indications from faculty/staff, students and alumni were a motivated desire to grow the community beyond the 3% campus population. However, to obtain such an objective it will be imperative to foster a partnership with students and provide the necessary resources to grow the community. The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life must develop and foster a program which supports student development and engagement. Yet for a community to conceptualize such growth, chapter members must understand their responsibility to facilitate such recruitment efforts. While recommendations to allow first year student participation will aid in this growth, chapter members must also focus their recruitment priorities on a diverse and limitless transfer student population. Both these initiatives can be achieved through a concentrated effort to adopt a 365-day recruitment philosophy by community members.

The first fraternal organizations were created over two hundred years ago to foster community and to provide a peer network to students attending college. While these values are still a function of the fraternal movement on each college campus, there have also been highly publicized incidents related to alcohol/drug abuse, hazing and risk management issues. Due to the nature of such high risk organizations, the task force reviewed multiple institutions of higher education and did not find any evidence that would suggest they were treated the same as other non-Greek affiliated organizations. Furthermore, it was examined that each national organization has risk management policies and procedures that often mirror the stated policies of the campus. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life should develop outcomes that support student development and educate students on effectively managing the risk of their fraternal organization, continued partnerships with chapter headquarters, and fostering a community of care.