



THE PLAN FOR PROMINENCE IN GREEK LIFE AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE
OFFICE OF GREEK LIFE

Introduction

Fraternities and sororities at West Virginia Universities have been and continue to be an important part of the undergraduate experience for many students. Some have acknowledged the philanthropic and community service activities undertaken by members. Alumni recall their lifelong friendships and leadership development opportunities. For the many personal and educational benefits available to students through membership in fraternities and sororities, the University has made a commitment to fraternities and sororities and to strengthening their role in the University and Morgantown community.

In the past, membership in fraternities and sororities have afforded many benefits to its affiliated members and to the community-at-large. It is, however, the belief of the University that more recently, these particular student organizations have demonstrated wavering loyalty, in principle and in practice, to their founding ideals. Divergence from the founding principles is not unique to West Virginia University's fraternity and sorority community. It reflects the current national norm. We know that many colleges and universities are struggling with the issues related to the change in direction taken by these organizations. Significant concern has been expressed by fraternal executive offices and host universities. Inter/national executive officers cite the founding principles of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and friendship and report that these ideals are no longer universally embraced by undergraduates.

The West Virginia University fraternity and sorority community reflects these national concerns. The University, therefore, affirms a return to the inherent values and principles of scholarship, leadership, character, and service that will serve as the cornerstones for the rebuilding of these organizations. The common values shared by all West Virginia University fraternities and sororities should serve as guideposts for programming and practice, pointing the way toward the development of a national model for fraternity and sorority life at the University.

A National Model for Prominence in Fraternity and Sorority Affairs

Because of its historical roots in fraternity and sorority life, West Virginia University is poised to establish a benchmark for prominence in fraternity and sorority programming. Through an institutional commitment to new standards of program and practice, West Virginia University can affirm its' national leadership in fraternity and sorority life, potentially affecting the lives of undergraduate members everywhere. It is with the support of fraternity and sorority leadership at West Virginia University and the belief that West Virginia can become the national model for fraternity and sorority excellence that this Plan has been developed.

I. THE STATEMENT OF VISION AND VALUES

A. THE VISION

The fraternity and sorority community at West Virginia University will be a community that (1) supports and complements the academic mission of the University, (2) believes in and abides by the founding principles of the inter/national organizations and the responsibilities associated with fraternity or sorority membership, and (3) promotes the development of its members intellectually, socially, and ethically. Therefore, the community will promote each member's commitment to the following set of values:

B. THE VALUES

Independence and Self-Governance

I believe in self-governance of the chapter (recruitment, ritual, and committees) and of the fraternity and sorority system;

I will participate fully in chapter and alumni/ae events;

I will uphold faithfully the traditions and activities of the University by participating in fraternity and sorority, campus, and community events.

Respect for the Community and for Others

I will be mutually supportive of other chapters and individual members.

Academic Relevance

I believe in learning and scholarship;

I will strive to attain the highest possible standard of scholarship and will strive to perform at or above the all-men's or all-women's grade point average;

I will assist in the development of scholarship initiatives that promote the highest standards of academic proficiency;

I will promote academic integrity and discourage academic dishonesty.

I support and will uphold my inter/national headquarters standards/

Responsibility and Safety

I will take personal responsibility for and will be accountable for my actions;

I will serve as a role model by living the ritual every day;

I will expect others to live the ritual and will hold them accountable;

I will safeguard the reputation of the chapter and the fraternity and sorority community by keeping careful watch over my personal conduct;

I will bear an appropriate share of the financial burden of my chapter and the fraternity and sorority system;

I will follow all inter/national, Panhellenic Association, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and/or Interfraternity Council risk management policies and procedures;

I will encourage the safe and responsible use of alcohol;

I will maintain my chapter's property in a safe and sanitary condition to provide the most positive environment that supports the development of community;

I will encourage and support chapters who have implemented the substance-free housing initiative in their chapters.

Unity and Relationships

I believe in cooperation and teamwork;

I will be a lifelong member who remains active throughout my university career and participates in alumni activities and events;

I will join other student organizations and will work to become a campus leader;

I will be united in a common goal of contributing to the quality of life on campus.

Diversity

I will promote a fraternity and sorority community that is diverse and representative of the general student body of West Virginia University;

Service to Others

I will serve as a lifelong volunteer in both community and University service;

I will learn and strive to understand the value of participating in community service activities as a member of the fraternity and sorority community.

Fun

I believe in the development of a fraternity and sorority experience for all students that enhances and does not compete with the general social environment of the University;

I will participate in creating and organizing events that provide social opportunities for all members of the West Virginia University community.

II. STRATEGIC GOALS AND INITIATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The following initiatives are organized under strategic goal areas that were identified by the University using the input of the various stakeholders. The initiatives reflect the shared values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and friendship. The continued formal relationship between West Virginia University and the fraternity and sorority community is the foundation upon which the following initiatives are constructed.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA ONE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY COMMUNITY

INITIATIVE #1: *The Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Association, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council will formally adopt the Statement of Vision and Values.*

The espoused values of fraternities and sororities complement the educational mission of the University and provide the opportunity for co-curricular learning experiences that the University can support. Although each fraternity and sorority maintains its unique history and heritage, most groups share common values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and friendship. It is necessary to the articulation and success of such programs that undergraduate members of the organizations participate in the development and implementation of such efforts. (See *Statement of Vision and Values on pages 1-2*)

INITIATIVE #2: *All fraternity and sorority recruitment publications and other descriptive programs will provide information about membership expectations, and furnish accurate details concerning membership expenses, academic requirements, retention rates, and chapter achievements. Chapter publications and recruitment programs will include similar facts.*

Many of the publications produced by affiliated students highlight the "fun" aspects of membership and neglect membership expectations and other information that more clearly describe the benefits and responsibilities of fraternity and sorority life. Devoting publication space to the Statement of Vision and Values, the detailed rights and responsibilities for a responsible and meaningful membership, and financial obligations of membership will demonstrate the importance of these obligations and allow students to make informed choices. If a student cannot adhere to these values and expectations, he or she will not be well suited to fraternity and sorority life.

INITIATIVE #3: *Chapters will focus on continuing education and the development of current members, replacing the current practice that new-member education is the only membership education opportunity.*

The University believes that the core values of fraternal membership require continuing education and membership development. Education begins during the recruitment process when prospective members learn of the values that will guide their participation and identify expectations and responsibilities of their membership. New members are then oriented to the history of the chapter, the chapter's values and principles, and begin to establish fraternal bonds of friendship with the entire membership. The educational goals of the chapter should include strengthening the bonds of friendship, promoting knowledge about the organization, respecting core values and principles, and providing personal and professional learning opportunities.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA TWO STRONG ALUMNI/AE INVOLVEMENT

INITIATIVE #4: *All chapters will have Alumni/ae Adviser(s) who will maintain regular contact with the chapter and serve in an advisory capacity.*

Chapters benefit from the involvement and supervision of advisers who are not undergraduates. The University believes it is important for each chapter at West Virginia to have an Alumni/ae Adviser who interacts with the chapter on a regular basis.

INITIATIVE #5: *All chapters will have a functioning Advisory Board that will serve in an advisory role to officers, individual members, and the executive board of the chapter. Membership on the board will include the President of the Alumni/ae Corporation, the Alumni/ae Adviser, and the University Adviser.*

Advisory boards will serve some of the same functions as an effective chapter or University Adviser but will provide a broader perspective. Regular meetings with chapter leaders will enable the diverse perspectives that are essential to critical thinking and problem solving. Chapters struggling to meet accreditation standards can call upon their advisory boards for advice and counsel. Through the development of advisory boards, more people will have an opportunity to work with fraternity and sorority members and new relationships within and outside of the University structure will be made possible.

INITIATIVE #6: *The University will regularly offer training programs for University Advisers and members of the Advisory Boards.*

The University should not assume that members of the faculty and staff who volunteer to serve as advisers have an understanding of the obligations associated with advising a fraternity and sorority organization. Successful chapters usually have advisers who understand their roles and are actively involved in the organization. The University should offer regular training and support for University Advisers and Advisory Boards in order for them to contribute to the management of the chapter.

INITIATIVE #7: Chapters will work to improve their relationship with alumni/ae and such efforts will be linked to the annual accreditation program.

- 1) Developing and publishing an alumni/ae newsletter on a regular basis;**
- 2) Maintaining communication with the alumni/ae using technology;**
- 3) Respecting the alumni/ae by preparing for their visits to campus, i.e., Homecoming;**
- 4) Maintaining the positive traditions of the organization;**
- 5) Maintaining a chapter website that is linked to the University's web site so that alumni/ae can monitor the activities of the chapter throughout the year.**

The University believes that alumni/ae engagement is vitally important to a chapter's success; therefore, the chapter must develop and maintain a strong relationship with its alumni/ae.

INITIATIVE #8: The University will develop a "best practices" manual and training program that outlines the strategies that have been successfully implemented to develop and maintain strong working relationships with alumni/ae corporations.

The University can facilitate and support chapters in their efforts to build and maintain strong relationships with alumni/ae by providing programs and manuals that train chapter leaders on how to develop and maintain relationships with their alumni/ae. Training should be provided in the following areas: planning and implementation of alumni/ae functions, the use of technology to improve communication, the development of alumni/ae web pages, newsletter design, and knowledge of programs that have been successful at other chapters.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA THREE SOUND CHAPTER MANAGEMENT

INITIATIVE #9: Chapters will have an active University (faculty/staff) Adviser, and the University will lend its support in the recruitment of University Advisers.

INITIATIVE #10: Chapters will have an active Alumni/ae Adviser (see Strategic Goal Area Two).

The importance of devoted and disciplined advisers is a recurring theme nationally. Almost without exception, there is a strong link between exemplary chapters and the dedication of their advisers. Chapters without effective advisers all echoed the desire for University assistance in identifying candidates for these positions. Chapter officers speak, with great frustration, about the absence of a strong, clear, voice of support and counsel. The University can assist chapters in identifying available candidates for chapter advisers. West Virginia University's data resources and knowledge of alumni can help chapters focus on the best "fit" for their particular needs. This assistance will establish better relationships within the University population and eventually carry over into the greater Morgantown community. The effects of good advising will be evident through better academic achievement and community service.

INITIATIVE #11: The University will create a Central Billing Program to permit fraternities and sororities to collect room fees, meal plan charges, and chapter dues and fees.

The University will develop a Central Billing Program that permits chapters to collect room, meal plan fees. This would bring greater financial stability to fraternity and sorority organizations and would bring professional oversight to the fee collection process.

INITIATIVE #12: The University will offer training in budget planning and management in the interest of assuring the financial health of fraternities and sororities.

The University will provide training programs for chapter Treasurers, Kitchen and/or House Managers, and Social Chairs in the areas of budget development and management. The University believes these programs are valuable to sound chapter management and recommends that these programs be provided to all chapter officers.

INITIATIVE #13: *The Office of the University Registrar will continue to provide the Office of Greek Life with specific semester and cumulative grade point average information for the purposes of membership recruitment and assessment.*

Obtaining accurate information about the academic performance of prospective, newly affiliated, and current members is essential. Common practice among fraternal organizations includes obtaining a written release of cumulative grade point information from each prospective member. Currently, the University Registrar provides academic information to fraternity and sorority chapters through the Office of Greek Life. The University believes that this process should continue. This information will permit chapters to be more responsible for monitoring a standard of excellence during the recruitment process and in the development and maintenance of the chapter's scholarship program.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA FOUR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

INITIATIVE #14: *The Office of Greek Life will offer leadership development programs for chapter members and officers.*

Fraternities have historically recruited new members with claims that fraternal affiliation alone would develop leadership skills. Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler (April 1996) point out that the opportunities to develop leadership skills claimed by fraternities may be overstated nationwide. The majority of chapter members are not in positions of leadership, and they do not become competent in the practical and interpersonal skills necessary for civic leadership and responsibility. Programs that are currently sponsored by the University -- *i.e.*, the fraternity and sorority leadership conferences, financial workshops, the risk management and social chair workshops, the philanthropy and community service chair workshops, bystander intervention training, and the TIPS -- Training for Prevention ProcedureS training programs -- should be a component of membership education. These programs give strength and stability to the community and offer important learning opportunities that support the shared values espoused by the fraternity and sorority organizations.

INITIATIVE #15: *New member programs will focus on the transition needs of newly affiliated members and the value of involvement among upperclass members.*

New member programs have averted their focus from core values and principles and rich historical foundations. Instead of serving as opportunities for initiates to become acquainted with their newest members, frivolous exercises that claim to build unity among new members have replaced the central educational goals. As a result, the time demands placed on new members have frequently resulted in unacceptable academic performance. The attempt to meet most or all of the educational goals of the chapter at the outset of membership must be refocused toward a lifelong educational process that begins with the university years. Establishing this philosophy at the chapter level will lessen the tension for the new member during an already stressful time of life. Components of the program should include inter/national and specific chapter history, membership expectations, teaching the shared values of the organization and the larger fraternity and sorority community, team building, and other appropriate chapter-specific topics. Lengthy recitation of meaningless information is not an appropriate measure of worthiness.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA FIVE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ALCOHOL ON AND OFF CAMPUS

INITIATIVE #16: *Chapters will host substance-free social functions on a regular basis for their membership and the campus community, and their doing so will be linked to the annual accreditation program.*

Approximately two-thirds of chapter members are under the legal age to consume or purchase alcohol. If students of any age are present at an activity where alcohol is openly or covertly served to underage students, they are fully liable for inter/national

fraternity and University policies as well as the West Virginia Statute. In some states, recent court cases have named undergraduate fraternity and sorority leaders as responsible parties in legal claims filed against the fraternal organizations these leaders represented. Since chapter officers are legally responsible for the behavior of chapter members, this type of high-risk and illegal activities can lead to serious consequences for them and their families. Women's organizations have historically mandated substance-free living and most have moved to eliminate or dramatically reduce the number of chapter events where alcohol is present. While they should be applauded for these initiatives, implementation is not always successful. Members of women's groups often refrain from alcohol consumption during official chapter social events. In many cases, however, women arrive at these functions intoxicated, having participated in "pre-parties." A "pre-party" is an unofficial social activity held for the purpose of consuming large quantities of alcohol in a short period of time—to "front load" before the official function. This and other obvious gaps between principle and practice should be discussed with each new and initiated chapter member and eliminated as chapter practice.

INITIATIVE #17: *The fraternity and sorority community will develop, implement, and enforce policies and procedures that govern legal, low-risk use of alcohol, and zero-tolerance for underage drinking.*

West Virginia University should challenge fraternity and sorority leadership with developing a self-governing alcohol policy. Although inter/national fraternity and sorority organizations each developed their own policies, common components existed, all chapters should be expected to create local self-monitored alcohol policies and strategies. The irresponsible use of alcohol is present in the fraternity and sorority community at West Virginia University. Violations of local and inter/national fraternity policies, failure to adhere to city and State law, and lack of supervision and accountability both by the chapters and the community-at-large exist.

INITIATIVE #18: *The risk management policies for hosting registered social functions, with alcohol, will include requiring significant risk management policies, procedures, and expectations.*

The risks associated with the irresponsible use of alcohol demand that immediate steps be taken in implementing regulations to govern the legal and low-risk use of alcohol. Therefore, the University recommends that the following policies and procedures be implemented:

1. All registered social functions with alcohol sponsored by fraternities and sororities be registered with the University through the Office of Greek Life;
2. All registered social functions with alcohol abide by all inter/national risk management guidelines, policies and procedures, and Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Association, and National Pan-Hellenic Council risk management policies and procedures;
3. All chapter members be certified using the program, Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS);
4. The use of kegs, common sources, and/or alcohol purchased by or on behalf of the chapter is strictly prohibited;
5. For registered social functions with alcohol, chapters may register social functions only on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday of each week and must submit to the Office of Greek Life their pre-determined invitation lists by 12:00 noon on the day of the event or by Friday at 4:00 p.m. if the event is scheduled for Saturday.

**STRATEGIC GOAL AREA SIX
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

INITIATIVE #19: *Chapters will demonstrate their commitment to diversity by developing goals and action plans that recruit and retain members of under-represented racial and ethnic groups, and that include hosting and/or attending diversity programs sponsored by the University.*

The fraternity and sorority community must work diligently to open its doors to all members of the University community regardless of age, disability status, ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status unless otherwise prohibited by applicable law. All members of the West Virginia University community must feel that the fraternity and sorority system would welcome them should they want to be a part of it. Discrimination must not be a part of the fraternity and sorority system.

Chapters should embrace diversity and appreciate the richness that diversity brings to their fraternity and sorority experience. The Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Association, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council also should host and support

diversity programming, as well as encourage the colonization and existence of additional National Pan-Hellenic Council (traditionally African-American) fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University.

INITIATIVE #20: *Chapters and chapter members will strictly adhere to their inter/national policies, West Virginia University policies, and any local, State of West Virginia or national statutes regarding hazing.*

Eliminating hazing at West Virginia University and in the Morgantown communities will require the commitment to report all violations of policy and state law and the swift and consistent enforcement of the prescribed consequences. There should be a **zero tolerance** policy for any activity that is considered hazing by inter/national fraternal organizations as defined by West Virginia University policies and the State of West Virginia statutes. Tradition does not excuse or justify hazing. Earning membership through meaningless and dangerous "rites of passage" is an act of hazing and is illegal. Hazing undermines the mission of the organization and the University and puts at high risk all those who participate in or have knowledge of such activities. Any chapter failing to comply should be held fully accountable.

INITIATIVE #21: *The University will continue to educate West Virginia University faculty, staff, and students about how to identify hazing practices and how to report such violations to the appropriate administrative offices.*

Since hazing still occurs with regularity outside fraternities and sororities, the University calls for the adoption of a University-sanctioned campaign against hazing by any campus group or organization. The University community should be educated to recognize all forms of hazing in and beyond the fraternity and sorority community, and be vigilant in identifying and reporting all incidents. The practice of a zero tolerance attitude toward hazing depends on a common understanding that anyone who participates in, or has knowledge of, acts of hazing and does not report it, is equally guilty under West Virginia state law and policies of the University. When a faculty or staff person witnesses hazing or its resultant behavior in or around the Morgantown or University communities, he/she is required to report the offense, as is any other person who witnesses such acts.

INITIATIVE #22: *Chapters will establish philanthropic and community service goals and plan and implement events and projects that will assist the chapter in meeting those goals.*

Service is among the core values of fraternities and sororities. Service to the community should occur throughout membership and beyond the years at West Virginia University. Many chapters sponsor community service and philanthropic events that target the participation of new members alone. These practices impose unreasonable time demands on new members and result in minimal understanding and commitment to the philosophy of lifetime volunteer service. Philanthropies and services to the community should seek the participation of all members throughout their undergraduate experience.

INITIATIVE #23: *Chapters will place high priority on community service/service-learning initiatives within the Morgantown community (See Strategic Goal Area Eight).*

Service to local agencies enable strong partnerships and helps students develop a greater sense of belonging to the community-at-large. It has been common practice for chapters to devote most of their energies to events for the benefit of national philanthropic agencies—often more socially motivated than service-oriented. While these philanthropic events can be beneficial to the chapter experience, hands-on service for local citizens, with opportunities for learning and reflection, have greater potential for meaningful interaction. These initiatives will be coordinated through the Office of Greek Life.

INITIATIVE #24: *Chapters will continue to host and attend a variety of educational programming opportunities for their members that include topics in scholarship, critical thinking, diversity, gender, sexual awareness, alcohol education, hazing, health education, and faculty interaction, and the efforts will be linked to the annual accreditation program.*

Educational programming should be an expectation of chapters in the West Virginia University fraternity and sorority community. Chapters should be required and rewarded for hosting and/or attending educational programming. Topics should include anti-hazing, alcohol education, improving faculty relations, diversity and multiculturalism, tolerance, gender issues, sexual assault, and various health education programs.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA SEVEN CONDUCTIVE LIVING FACILITIES

INITIATIVE #25: *The University will develop reasonable “West Virginia University standard” criteria that are comparable to those for other residential facilities and will distribute that information to all Alumni Corporations of all fraternity and sorority chapter houses.*

The University believes that all fraternity and sorority chapter houses should be maintained at “West Virginia University standards” the goal of which is to improve the physical condition of the houses. The rationale for this expectation is:

- 1) chapters would be on an equal level in regard to housing. All houses would be clean, repaired, and furnished at “West Virginia University’s standards” and maintained on a daily basis;
- 2) students would be living in facilities that are safe, clean, and maintained;
- 3) prospective members would not make membership decisions based on chapter house conditions;
- 4) students should be paying the same rental rates to live in fraternity chapter houses;

INITIATIVE #26: *The chapter accreditation program will evaluate the chapter’s progress in meeting all health and safety codes pertaining to chapter house facilities. The process also will evaluate the program developed by the chapter to bring the chapter house to and maintain the chapter house at West Virginia University standards.*

Generally, fraternities have made dramatic improvements in the general maintenance of their chapter houses; however, more improvement is needed. The University should continue to provide direction by outlining clear expectations of all fraternity chapters regarding the daily maintenance of fraternity chapter houses. This issue should be a significant part of the annual accreditation process. All chapter physical plants must meet local, state, and federal codes for health and safety.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA EIGHT COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

INITIATIVE #27: *Fraternities and sororities will make building relationships with various University-related stakeholders a major priority. Chapters will consider the following relationship-building ideas:*

- 1) ***Hosting significant faculty interaction programs that discuss scholarly topics and issues instead of topics related specifically to the fraternity and sorority system;***
- 2) ***Requiring members to attend University-sponsored events hosted by the Office of Greek Life and/or the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership;***
- 3) ***Requiring members to attend intercollegiate athletic events;***
- 4) ***Refraining from hosting social functions on class nights;***
- 5) ***Developing policies that hold members accountable for missing classes or failing to perform academically;***
- 6) ***Implement policies and procedures that address the maintenance of chapter grounds;***
- 7) ***Survey various stakeholder groups periodically throughout the academic year to determine if perceptions are changing and/or how the chapter can better improve relationships.***

Stakeholder groups have traditionally indicated that their relationship with the fraternity and sorority community was not as positive as it should be. Student members of fraternities and sororities have expressed their desire to have more positive relationships with these groups so that they would not feel the need to constantly defend themselves. The University believes

that chapters should make a concerted effort to build cooperative and collaborative relationships with various stakeholder groups as these relationships would prove to be beneficial during times of crisis or criticism.

INITIATIVE #28: *Chapters will develop mechanisms to maintain better communication with their inter/national headquarters by:*

- 1) *Being responsive to requests for information and data, and payment of fees and dues;***
- 2) *Planning for visits by inter/national consultants by (a) arranging for housing accommodations, (b) assuring that officers are prepared to meet with the educational consultant to report on their status, (c) preparing the chapter property for the visit, and (d) scheduling an appointment for the consultant with the Associate Dean of Students and Director of Greek Life;***
- 3) *Sending chapter representatives to all national conferences, conclaves, and leadership training programs;***
- 4) *Hosting regional conferences on campus;***
- 5) *Submitting information regarding that chapter's progress, programs, and events to the national organization's alumni/ae magazine so that the chapter and the University are represented in the publication.***

Fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University have not always maintained a positive and productive relationship with their inter/national headquarters; therefore, the University believes that improvement is warranted. Chapters must do more than simply preparing for a national consultant visit. Chapters must build relationships with their respective inter/national headquarters and strive to be the best chapter in the country.

INITIATIVE #29: *Chapters will develop standards regarding behavior and accountability for members who reside in off-campus apartments and houses and University residence halls to address concerns of off-campus residents and residents of Morgantown.*

The impact of fraternity and sorority life goes beyond the parameters of the University's grounds. Many students live off-campus and engage in activities throughout the greater Morgantown community. Fraternity and sorority programming provide service to the local community and benefit many citizens. To establish a better living and learning environment for all residents, activities and interactions between the chapters and the Morgantown community should be increased. Members who live off-campus and/or in University residence halls should work together to develop and support a "good neighbor" policy to foster communication between and among the various constituencies, implement action plans to improve the aesthetic appearance of the downtown community, develop service-learning projects and other initiatives, and promote the values and contributions of the fraternity and sorority community. It is vital that chapters be held responsible and accountable for the actions and behaviors of their members both on and off campus.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA NINE SELF-GOVERNANCE AND ASSESSMENT

INITIATIVE #30: *Chapters will develop and implement a chapter standards and conduct board that holds members accountable to the Statement of Vision and Values, the membership expectations of each organization, and the chapter accreditation process.*

Standards or conduct boards, within chapters, empower members to hold one another accountable for their actions consistent with the values of the organization and of the fraternity and sorority community. By implementing such boards, chapters may maintain greater control while clearly articulating what is acceptable and appropriate behavior to members. The leadership of each chapter will work with the University to develop criteria for standards boards that truly reflect the values of the organization and meet the requirements of the proposed accreditation process.

INITIATIVE #31: *Chapters will attain the minimum performance standards outlined in the chapter accreditation program as a requirement for receiving official student organization status.*

Fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University lack uniform institutional performance standards. Although some inter/national headquarters have implemented such programs, processes differ dramatically, and their impact on the local campus culture is minimal. Accreditation programs enable students to engage in critical self-reflection on their fraternal purposes and practices, while allowing the University and the chapters to jointly develop action plans to strengthen these organizations and their contributions to the greater campus community. Developing a comprehensive set of standards will require chapters to address the issues West Virginia University deems necessary for creating and maintaining a quality fraternity and sorority system. These standards will be based on the historic shared values of West Virginia University fraternities and sororities, University expectations outlined in this report, existing policies, and common themes found in their inter/national chapter accreditation programs. This program will also aid chapters in maintaining continuity with changing membership and leadership.

INITIATIVE #32: *A chapter accreditation program will be implemented as a system of periodic self-analysis and external review. The accreditation program will assess chapter operations and chapter compliance with stated performance standards, inclusive of chapter, inter/national, University, and Morgantown community goals and objectives.*

The chapter accreditation program will establish standards upon which fraternities and sororities will be evaluated for adherence to commonly shared and accepted values and principles on each of the governing councils established at West Virginia University. The process will provide overview of fraternities and sororities to assess their compliance with the standards set forth in the chapter accreditation review. It will also assist chapters who do not meet specific criteria of accreditation by identifying University resources to help them accomplish their goals. The program will provide recognition to those organizations that surpass the minimum standards for chapter accreditation. A primary responsibility of the Office of Greek Life will be to help chapters meet the minimum chapter accreditation standards. An underlying theme of the chapter accreditation program is to identify excellence and to aid chapters in attaining this level of performance while fulfilling the historic mission of their organizations. Chapters that demonstrate proficiency in attaining these standards will be recognized by the University. Chapters that do not demonstrate proficiency will receive added support to ensure satisfactory performance. Chapters that continually demonstrate non-compliance with these performance standards represent a liability to West Virginia University and the fraternity and sorority community will not be granted recognition by the University, nor receive any/all benefits associated with such recognition.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA TEN
PROMOTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

INITIATIVE #33: *The University will adopt a policy that prohibits first-year men and women to be ineligible for fraternity or sorority membership during their first semester of enrollment at the University.*

Many agree that deferred fall recruitment allows first-year students more time to acclimate and adjust to the campus environment. Research has demonstrated that under a deferred recruitment model, students are more likely to participate in residence life hall activities, engage in the academic experience, and become involved in other organizations. In addition, deferred fall recruitment permits students to fully understand the Greek experience before agreeing to participate in the process, as students who join during the fall semester may not understand or be ready to make the kind of commitment that joining a fraternity or sorority requires.

INITIATIVE #34: *The University will adopt a policy requiring a minimum WVU cumulative grade point average of 2.50 for men and women to affiliate with or remain a member of a fraternity or sorority.*

West Virginia University will require at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average to be eligible for membership in a fraternity or sorority. Raising the minimum for fraternity and sorority affiliation would signal a greater system-wide commitment to academic accomplishment, and it would screen particularly vulnerable students from the possible distraction from their academic focus presented by recruitment and by being new members. The University is concerned that a raised standard may disproportionately constrain eligibility for membership among particular segments of the student body. However, it is hoped that

the higher grade point average requirement will stimulate students to work harder to qualify for affiliation, either in advance of the normal recruitment period or afterward (during the "open bid" period that now occurs during the second semester of the first-year.

INITIATIVE #35: *As part of the annual chapter accreditation program, chapters will develop scholarship programs that challenge members to achieve academically, provide scholastic support, and recognize both improvement and excellence in performance.*

Most chapters do not have comprehensive programs in place that support the essential values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and friendship. The University expects that each chapter will develop a comprehensive scholarship program that is designed to engage chapter members with faculty on a monthly basis, and a program that prevents members from experiencing academic difficulty instead of simply responding after members fall below the minimum academic requirement. This model provides for individual performance recognition at the end of each term and counseling for members not in good standing.

INITIATIVE #36: *Chapter members will share responsibility for the academic performance of initiates and new members and re-examine activities that detract from scholastic success. Chapters will be held accountable for the unacceptable academic performance of new and initiated members as described in the proposed chapter accreditation program.*

Chapter members often behave as if academic performance is an individual responsibility. The high academic performance of initiates and new members will be among the shared goals and responsibilities of all chapter members. Chapters should regularly re-examine any activity that detracts from the academic success of individual members and the chapter's scholastic goals. Excessive chapter requirements have prevented new members from reaching their academic potential. Some of the new member programs now in place in men's organizations have had disastrous effects on academic performance. A new procedure should be implemented to hold chapters accountable for unsatisfactory academic performance that occurs during new-member programs.

INITIATIVE #37: *Chapters will meet or exceed the all-University men's and women's cumulative grade point averages and the University will recognize them for such achievements through the annual chapter accreditation program.*

Excellence is a fundamental value of each fraternity and sorority. While many fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University maintain acceptable academic reputations, it should be the goal of every group to exceed the respective all-men's/women's averages. Academic success by this measurement will enable fraternities and sororities to demonstrate their commitment to a higher standard and visibly represent their contribution to the intellectual climate of the campus. In support of these efforts, West Virginia University will develop a recognition program in the chapter accreditation program for chapters that meet this level of performance.

INITIATIVE #38: *Chapters will provide academic support and resources to ensure academic success and sustainability.*

One of the measures of a fraternity and sorority community that demonstrates the community is making positive contributions to the co-curricular experience is to review graduation, retention, and academic performance data. The following goals are established that will measure these achievements:

Graduation and Retention

- 1) By August, 2018, at least fifty percent (50%) of fraternity and sorority members will graduate within four years, seventy percent (70%) within five years, and 80 percent within six years.
- 2) By May 2019, the first to second year fraternity retention rate will be at eighty-five percent (85%).

Academic Performance

- 1) By May 2018, the average chapter cumulative grade point average will be 2.9 or higher.
- 2) By December, 2018, the fraternity and sorority community cumulative grade point average will consistently be greater than the all-campus undergraduate grade point average by at least .15 points.

INITIATIVE #39: *Chapters will sponsor educational programs that enhance critical thinking and enrich the personal growth of their members.*

Opportunities for co-curricular learning within the chapter setting enhance the overall purposes and objectives of fraternities and sororities and re-establish the educational role missing from today's fraternal experience. Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler (April 1996) have noted that fraternity men, and to a lesser extent women, are well behind their non-member counterparts in cognitive development after the first year of college. The biggest deficit is in the area of critical thinking. As part of the proposed accreditation program, chapters will be expected to sponsor a number of educational programs during the year for all chapter members. Chapters should involve faculty and staff in chapter presentations that foster critical thinking on a wide range of issues and disciplines. These programs could include but not be limited to topics such as: personal health and safety, multiculturalism and diversity, values and ethics, gender communication, career development, financial planning, and low risk use of alcohol and other substances.

INITIATIVE #40: *All new member education programs will conclude by the end of the semester in which the invitation to join is extended. Chapters will be rewarded through the accreditation program for completing the new member education process within eight (8) weeks.*

Many inter/national organizations, colleges, and universities have thoroughly studied new-member programs and have modified their philosophies and practices. Most women's groups have nationally mandated that new-member programs last no longer than six weeks. Some fraternities have made the same shift, while some have eliminated these programs. It has been well documented that becoming a new member in most fraternities at West Virginia University leads to diminished academic performance. Limiting the length of new-member education programs provides students with opportunities to be responsible to their academic requirements. A shorter period may also have the effect of limiting the opportunities for hazing. New member education should focus on meaningful, not lengthy education. Transforming the culture of new-member education with fixed time limits and a philosophy of continuing education will enable all initiated and new members to enjoy a more positive experience.

**STRATEGIC GOAL AREA ELEVEN
OTHER UNIVERSITY SUPPORT**

INITIATIVE #41: *The Provost should consider expending the definition of service in University promotion and tenure decisions to include service as a University adviser to a fraternity or sorority.*

Both research and anecdotal experience indicate that a variety of educational outcomes from attending college result from involvement in activities outside of the classroom. Many outside-of-class experiences, however, are not exploited for their relevance to understanding and applying principles, theories, and insights gained in the classroom. To enhance learning in fraternities and sororities, faculty should be encouraged and rewarded for involvement. The University should include fraternity and sorority advising in its examples of the service component of promotion and tenure review. Given the importance of an effective University adviser, and the high rate of student affiliation with fraternities and sororities, the faculty and staff time devoted to advising chapter members is worthy of consideration.