



The Strategic Plan for Distinction in Fraternity & Sorority Life

ADOPTED MARCH 2019

Introduction

Fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University have been and continue to be an important part of the undergraduate experience for many students. Community members acknowledge the philanthropic and community service activities undertaken by members. Alumni/ae 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 their success and to strengthening their role in the University and Morgantown community.

In the past, membership in fraternities and sororities has afforded various benefits to affiliated members and to the community-at-large. It is, however, common belief that more recently these particular student organizations have demonstrated wavering loyalty, in principle and in practice, to their founding ideals. Divergence from founding principles is not unique to West Virginia University's fraternity and sorority community. Unfortunately, it reflects the current national norm. 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 both fraternal executive offices and host universities. The founding principles of scholarship, leadership, character, service, responsible social engagement, and friendship are ideals no longer universally embraced by undergraduates.

The West Virginia University fraternity and sorority community reflects these national concerns and has responded in a timely manner. On February 14, 2018, President E. Gordon Gee announced the "Reaching the Summit: Plan for Excellence in Fraternity & Sorority Life." After a year of implementation, students, alumni/ae, and staff came together to draft a plan of strategic initiatives that will encourage and promote a consistent stream of operations, leading the West Virginia University fraternity and sorority community to prominence.

As a community of students, alumni/ae, and University officials, we reaffirm our commitment to a return to the inherent values and principles of scholarship, leadership, character, responsible social engagement, and service that will serve as the cornerstones for the renewal 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 an exemplar model for fraternity and sorority life at the University.

A National Model for Excellence in Fraternity and Sorority Engagement

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 serves as the basis of this strategic plan.

This strategic plan incorporates the principles of the “Reaching the Summit: Plan for Excellence in Fraternity & Sorority Life” and extends it into the standard operating procedures for the chapters and councils under the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life.

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.

B. CORNERSTONE VALUES

The community will promote each member’s commitment to the following set of key values:

LEADERSHIP

Collaboration and Self-Governance

- Φ We believe in the student led self-governance of the chapter (recruitment, ritual, and committees), and in direct collaboration with the University and alumni/ae for the management of the fraternity and sorority system;
- Φ We will participate fully in chapter and alumni/ae events;
- Φ We will uphold faithfully the traditions and activities of the University by participating in fraternity and sorority, campus, and community events.
- Φ We will acknowledge that leadership is encouraging in nature, and our ability to influence change should be reinforced by positivity.

CHARACTER

Respect for the Community and for Others

- Φ We will be mutually supportive of other chapters and individual members.
- Φ We will associate with those individuals willing to accept the same principles as outlined in this plan, and those organizations who maintain both University and Headquarters recognition.

SCHOLARSHIP

Academic Relevance

- Φ We believe in learning and scholarship;
- Φ We 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;
- Φ We will assist in the development of scholarship initiatives that promote the highest standards of academic proficiency;

Φ We will promote academic integrity and discourage academic dishonesty;

Φ We support and will uphold our inter/national headquarters standards.

FRIENDSHIP

Unity and Relationships

Φ We believe in cooperation and teamwork;

Φ We will be lifelong members who remain active throughout our university career and participate in alumni/ae activities and events;

Φ We will join other student organizations and will work to become campus leaders;

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

Diversity

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

Φ We will acknowledge, respect, and promote the dignity and worth of all members, inclusive of their individual diversities;

Φ We acknowledge that a commitment to equity and inclusion is both culturally relevant and expected by members of the West Virginia University community

SERVICE & PHILANTHROPY

Service to Others

Φ We will serve as lifelong volunteers in both community and University service;

Φ We will learn and strive to understand the value of participating in community service activities as members of the fraternity and sorority community

RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Responsibility and Safety

Φ We 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;

Φ We will participate in creating and organizing events that provide appropriate social opportunities for all members of the West Virginia University community;

Φ We will take personal responsibility for and will be accountable for our actions;

Φ We will serve as role models by living the ritual every day;

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

- Φ We will safeguard the reputation of the chapter, the fraternity and sorority community, and the University by keeping careful watch over our personal conduct;
- Φ We will bear an appropriate share of the financial burden of our chapter and the fraternity and sorority system;
- Φ We will follow all University, inter/national, Panhellenic Association, National Pan-Hellenic Council, National Multicultural Greek Council, and/or Interfraternity Council risk management policies and procedures;
- Φ We will encourage the safe and responsible use of alcohol;
- Φ We will maintain our chapter's property in a safe and sanitary condition to provide the most positive environment that supports the development of community;
- Φ We will encourage and support chapters who have implemented the substance-free housing initiative in their chapters;
- Φ We will actively condemn the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs/narcotics;
- Φ We will not tolerate being hazed, hazing others, or actively promoting hazing as an acceptable rite of passage;
- Φ We will endlessly educate ourselves and others on the dangers of hazing

II. STRATEGIC GOALS AND INITIATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The following initiatives are organized under strategic goal areas that were identified as priorities by the students, alumni/ae, and University staff. The initiatives reflect the shared values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, responsible social engagement, 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 AREA OF FOCUS ONE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY COMMUNITY

INITIATIVE #1: *The Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Association, the Multicultural Greek Council, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council will formally adopt the Statement of Vision and Values, and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life shall incorporate this document into the Manual of Operations via reference, codifying its contents.*

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 maintain its unique history and heritage, most groups share common values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, responsible social engagement, 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.

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 mostly 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.

We believe 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 at all stages of organizational membership.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS TWO STRONG ALUMNI/AE INVOLVEMENT

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

Chapters benefit from the involvement and supervision of Advisors who are not undergraduates. We believe it is important for each chapter at West Virginia to have an Alumni/ae Advisor 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 Advisor, and the Faculty/Staff Mentor.

Advisory boards will serve some of the same functions as an effective Alumni/ae Advisor 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 Alumni/ae and members of the Advisory Boards.

The University should not assume that members of the faculty and staff who volunteer to serve as Advisors have an understanding of the obligations associated with advising a fraternity and sorority organization. Successful chapters

usually have Advisors who understand their roles and are actively involved in the organization. The University should offer regular training and support for University Advisors 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.**

We believe 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 Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life 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 Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life 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 AREA OF FOCUS THREE SOUND CHAPTER MANAGEMENT

INITIATIVE #9: Chapters will have an active Faculty/Staff Mentor, and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life will lend its support in the recruitment of active faculty and staff to serve in this capacity.

The Faculty/Staff Mentor for fraternities and sororities serves as a contact between the group and the University on academic matters. The Mentor is not empowered to exercise any supervisory or other authority on behalf of the University. The Faculty/Staff Mentor serves as a non-remunerated consultant and acts only in his/her personal capacity and not as a representative of the University.

INITIATIVE #10: The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life will maximum its human resource to best serve chapters and governing Councils.

In order to better serve the community, the Office of Fraternity & Sorority, an office within the Department of Student Enrichment in the Division of Student Life, shall be intentional with its placement of full-time professionals and graduate assistants in assisting the chapters and councils. Full-time professionals shall have primary advising responsibilities aimed towards chapter success. Graduate Assistants may work more directly with the Councils on programming and governance.

INITIATIVE #11: *The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life will offer training in budget planning and management in the interest of assuring the financial health of fraternities and sororities.*

The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life 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 #12: *The Office of the University Registrar will continue to provide the Office of Fraternity & Sorority 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 Fraternity & Sorority Life. We believe 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 AREA OF FOCUS FOUR
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

INITIATIVE #13: *The Office of Fraternity & Sorority 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. Yet, 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 Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life -- *i.e.*, the Greek Leadership Academy, 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 #14: *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.

INITIATIVE #15: Chapter and Council leaders shall engage in an intentional off-campus retreat focused on community building, program planning, and collaboration annually.

The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life and each governing council shall fund an annual retreat off campus (Westvaco Center, Outdoor Education Center, or other venue) where student leaders will be given the opportunity to assess their community, build a capacity for community engagement, and plan collaborative programs. Investing in programs such as the North American Interfraternity Conference's (NIC) IMPACT program is an example of such an event.

**STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS 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. Underage members of all groups often refrain from alcohol consumption during official chapter social events. In many cases, however, students arrive at these functions intoxicated, having participated in "pre-gaming." A "pre-game" 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 shall partner with student leaders on developing a collaborative social event enforcement procedure. 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 Fraternity & Sorority Life;
2. All registered social functions with alcohol abide by all inter/national risk management guidelines, policies and procedures, and Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Association, Multicultural Greek Council, and National Pan-Hellenic Council risk management policies and procedures;

3. All chapter members be certified using the program, Training for Intervention ProcedureS (TIPS) and/or an approved program coordinated by WellWVU and Greeks Advocating for the Mature Management of Alcohol;
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 Fraternity & Sorority Life their pre-determined invitation lists by 12:00 noon the Thursday prior to the event.
6. Alcohol with a .15 abv or higher shall be strictly prohibited in Chapter facilities and/or events at all times

INITIATIVE #19: *The fraternity and sorority community will build intentional partnerships with local law enforcement.*

Councils and chapters will work to build positive relationships with the West Virginia University Police Department, Morgantown Police Department, Morgantown Fire Department, the City of Morgantown's magistrate court/judicial system, and the Fire Marshal Office. Collaborative educational programs and strict adherence to local laws will aid in the building of this relationship.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS SIX
SOCIAL, COMMUNITY, & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

INITIATIVE #20: *Chapters will demonstrate their commitment to diversity by maintaining a space/environment open to marginalized populations, which includes 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, Multicultural Greek Council, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council also should host and support diversity programming, as well as encourage the establishment and existence of additional culturally-based fraternities and sororities at West Virginia University.

INITIATIVE #21: *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 #22: *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 has established the Hazing Prevention Task Force in November of 2017. 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 #23: *The University will purchase an online training software aimed at educating the fraternity and sorority community about the dangers of hazing and provide instruction on how to report the act.*

PreventZone is an online platform, endorsed by the Hazing Prevention Organization, which can be customized to WVU—providing a comprehensive educational resource for hazing awareness and prevention. All members of the fraternity and sorority community will complete the online training during the semester of their affiliation.

INITIATIVE #24: *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 #25: *Chapters will place high priority on community service/service-learning initiatives within the Morgantown community.*

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 Fraternity & Sorority Life and Center for Service and Learning.

INITIATIVE #26: *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.

INITIATIVE #27: Chapters and Councils will participate in civic engagement opportunities.

Being a member of a community implies civic responsibility. Chapters and Councils will engage in civic engagement opportunities both locally and nationally, such as participating in Voter Registration Drives, serving on Student Government, and engaging in mutually respectful political discourse.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS SEVEN
CONDUCTIVE LIVING FACILITIES

INITIATIVE #28: 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/sorority chapter houses;

INITIATIVE #29: The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life 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 AREA OF FOCUS EIGHT
**COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY
AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

INITIATIVE #30: 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) **Encouraging members to attend University-sponsored events hosted by the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, University Police, Well WVU, etc.;**
- 3) **Encouraging 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. We believe 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 #31: 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 Director/Assistant Director of Fraternity & Sorority 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, we believe 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 #32: 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 provides 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 AREA OF FOCUS NINE

COLLABORATION, GOVERNANCE AND ASSESSMENT

INITIATIVE #33: *Chapters will develop and implement a Chapter Standards/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 ensure that all accountability measures are compliant with the expectations of both West Virginia University's Student Conduct Code and their respective inter/national organization.

INITIATIVE #34: *Chapters will engage fully in both their inter/national organization's and Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life's accreditation programs.*

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. This program will also aid chapters in maintaining continuity with changing membership and leadership.

INITIATIVE #35: *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 Fraternity & Sorority 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 AREA OF FOCUS TEN

PROMOTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

INITIATIVE #36: The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, through its student-led Councils, will honor “365 Recruitment” by educating members on the difference between a formalized recruitment event and an informal engagement opportunity. First semester students will engage in a “Passport to Greek Life” program in the first semester to keep them engaged with the community, though membership is deferred to the second semester.

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. We will maintain our deferred membership policy, while also acknowledging that recruitment is an organic process of interpersonal relationship building.

INITIATIVE #37: The University will maintain its policy requiring a minimum WVU cumulative grade point average of 2.75 and a minimum 12 earned collegiate credits for men and women to affiliate with or remain a member of a fraternity or sorority.

West Virginia University will require at least a 2.75 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 our hope 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 #38: 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 written, comprehensive programs in place that support the essential values of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and friendship. We expect 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 #39: 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 #40: *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 #41: *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, 2020, at least seventy five percent (75%) of fraternity and sorority members will graduate within four years, ninety percent (90%) within five years, and one hundred percent (100%) within six years.
- 2) By May 2021, the first to second year fraternity retention rate will be at ninety percent (90%).

Academic Performance

- 1) By May 2020, the average chapter cumulative grade point average will be 2.9 or higher.
- 2) By December, 2020, 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 #42: *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. 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 #43: *The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life shall provide academic recognition through the Fraternity & Sorority Life Honors Program.*

Chapters and individual active students shall be honored through a systemic recognition process of high academic achievement. Positive reinforcement and special recognition can encourage individual academic success. Chapters will review the Honors Program each semester with their chapter and recognize those individuals who are honored at regularly scheduled chapter meetings, or other academic achievement recognition events.

INITIATIVE #44: All new member education programs will conclude by the end of the semester in which the invitation to join is extended. Chapters will complete the new member education process within four (4) weeks.

Many inter/national organizations, colleges, and universities have thoroughly studied new-member programs and have modified their philosophies and practices. Some organizations eliminated these programs entirely. 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 AREA OF FOCUS ELEVEN OTHER UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

INITIATIVE #45: The Provost should consider expending the definition of service in University promotion and tenure decisions to include service as a Faculty/Staff mentor and/or Alumni/ae Advisor to a fraternity or sorority. Staff member should also receive favorable treatment for their service.

Both research and anecdotal experiences 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 assessed 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 Faculty/Staff Mentor, 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.

Similarly, staff members should not be forced to take Annual Leave for service to a recognized fraternity or sorority.

