

GREEK LIFE UPDATE

FALL 2018 FAQs

GREEK LIFE:

Background to WVU's commitment to improving Greek culture

Q. What happened in 2014?

A. In the fall of 2014, there was an incident at an unsanctioned fraternity event in which freshman Nolan Burch participated. He later died from alcohol poisoning.

Q. What changes has WVU made to Greek life in light of Nolan's death?

A. WVU has worked hard in the four years since Nolan's death to improve the culture of Greek life on campus. As a first step, Dr. Gee imposed an immediate moratorium on all fraternity and sorority life. All activities were suspended while the University worked with national leadership and student leadership to create change.

In the years following the moratorium, WVU has partnered with students, alumni and national fraternity leaderships to promote a healthier and more vibrant culture. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life has reestablished itself with new operating procedures and initiatives that allow for improved communication and enforcement of higher standards of behavior. One key initiative was the creation of an agreement that requires that all social events are registered and that University Police and staff can check these events to ensure compliance with alcohol management protocols.

Dr. Gee announced the Reaching the Summit: Plan for Excellence in Fraternity and Sorority Life in February 2018 to establish and enforce tougher community standards for fraternities. This strategic plan included deferring rush until the second semester, limiting all new member activities to a four-week period and raising the required grade point average.

Q. Have WVU sororities and fraternities been supportive of these actions?

A. All of our sororities and most of our fraternities understand the importance of moving our Greek culture forward and were supportive and cooperative. Unfortunately, five fraternities (Sigma Chi, Kappa Alpha, Alpha Sigma Phil, Phi Sigma Kappa, Theta Chi) chose to disassociate from WVU in recent weeks. Those chapters disagreed with the actions that would be required following the Reaching the

Summit findings, as well as the raised GPA requirements and deferred rush. These five fraternities have the support of their national headquarters.

Q. How did WVU respond to the fraternities who chose to disassociate?

A. In light of these actions, the University made the difficult but necessary decision not to recognize those fraternities for at least 10 years.

GREEK LIFE:

Where we are today

Q. What risks have the disassociated fraternities posed to University culture?

A. When fraternities sever ties from the University and operate independently, they are engaging in recruitment and membership activities without University guidelines and oversight. WVU cannot enforce transparency in their processes and activities or request the additional safeguards that are critical to ensuring a productive and healthy fraternity experience. It also creates an unhealthy environment of unequal opportunities for IFC organizations that respect the University's commitment to higher standards for Greek organizations.

Q. Have the remaining IFC organizations continued to work productively with WVU?

A. Dr. Gee and Student Life leadership have met numerous times with the remaining IFC organizations to forge a productive path forward for Greek culture on campus. The students in those fraternities brought forward an action plan to Dr. Gee that expressed their disappointment in the disassociated fraternities and underlined their commitment to remain as recognized student organizations of WVU. They voiced their desire to work closely with the University to implement higher standards in their recruitment and membership activities, and asked Dr. Gee to consider a condensed period of second recruitment for the benefit of their chapter growth.

Q. How did the University respond to the action plan?

A. Dr. Gee and Student Life leadership have conditionally agreed to move forward with an exemption process for

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a second recruitment period that will be held under strict guidelines. This will move forward under the condition that member organizations respond as required in writing, agreeing to the parameters outlined by the University and committing to remain recognized by WVU as a member of the Interfraternity Council. The deadline for this response is Tuesday, October 23 at noon.

Q. Why did the University make this decision?

A. This decision was made to support those fraternities who have been supportive and cooperative as part of the University culture. Doing so will allow us to provide oversight to — and mandate transparency in — their recruitment and new member activities.

Q. What are the parameters for this period of second recruitment?

- A.** The University expects — and will hold the fraternities to — the highest standards of behavior during this condensed period of second recruitment. Parameters include:
- Students seeking IFC membership must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 at the time of recruitment. First-semester freshmen will also be required to meet the minimum GPA to be eligible. They will have their midterm grades provided and verified by WVU.
 - All IFC organizations are required to publicize their recruitment schedules. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life must review and approve all scheduled activities related to new member recruitment.
 - Both WVU and IFC national organizations require recruitment events to be alcohol-free.
 - The hours of new member events will be limited; they will not be permitted between the hours of 10 p.m. and 8 a.m.
 - University staff and University Police will be conducting checks of all social events throughout the recruitment and membership process to ensure compliance with alcohol management protocols.
 - If students are extended a bid and accept membership to a chapter, they will be required to participate in weekly education programs surrounding alcohol education, hazing prevention, Title IX and bystander prevention.
 - All new members will be required to sign an anti-hazing agreement form.

In addition to University Police and staff, the consultant from Reaching the Summit: Plan for Excellence in

Fraternity and Sorority Life will be on campus during this period to provide oversight.

Q. What is the timeline for this second period of recruitment?

A. Activities related to the second period of recruitment will be held over a three-week period. These will begin with a chapter meet-and-greet on Wednesday, October 24 and must conclude by the start of Thanksgiving break on Friday, November 16 so that they do not interfere with finals week.

GREEK LIFE: Moving forward

Q. What happens if fraternities do not adhere to University guidelines during this period?

A. The secondary recruitment period is a trial. If the participating chapters break their commitment to promote higher standards in Greek life culture through engaging in behaviors that put themselves or others at risk, these events will be shut down. The police will be notified, and those involved will be subject to University student conduct proceedings. Fraternity members must uphold their end of the agreement that they presented to Dr. Gee if they want a secondary period of recruitment to be considered in subsequent years. The safety and well-being of our students is always the University's paramount concern.

Q. How will the University keep our WVU family informed of issues that may arise with Greek life?

A. We will be providing frequent updates to keep students, parents, faculty, staff and alumni apprised of Greek life developments. We will be providing updates immediately if a fraternity dissociates or any important decision is made regarding Greek life.

We will keep greeklife.wvu.edu updated. A list of chapters that are in good standing can be referenced at greeklife.wvu.edu/chapter-statuses.

Q. Why does WVU continue to support Greek life?

A. There is a lot to be gained from participating in fraternity and sorority life. WVU wants to continue to give those students who are interested and invested in Greek Life the opportunity to benefit from the positive aspects. From

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fundraising for philanthropies to professional development to lifelong connections and friendships, WVU is striving to make sure our students are creating the best environment. WVU will continue to hold member organizations accountable and reinforce the values of the institution.

Q. WVU has been vocal in recent years about our commitment to anti-hazing. How will we reinforce an anti-hazing culture moving forward?

A. Our commitment to hazing prevention remains unchanged. WVU has a zero-tolerance policy for hazing or any behavior that compromises the safety and well-being of our students. There are documents on our website that outline what to do if a hazing incident occurs. Each chapter is trained on the dangers and consequences of hazing. We also encourage individuals to remember our University's core values and report hazing if they are aware of any incidences.

As part of our commitment to anti-hazing practices, we have been working with Nolan Burch's family and creative partners in recent months on a national Hazing Prevention Campaign that will launch soon. The goal of

this campaign is to ensure that we never forget Nolan Burch or the difficult lessons learned from his death. Nolan's story is part of our story as a University — and we want to honor his memory by raising awareness of hazing prevention practices on a national platform.

Q. How are WVU students — including those not involved in Greek life — contributing to efforts to promote a positive and safe University culture?

A. We are proud of the leadership that our students have demonstrated in promoting a vibrant and positive campus culture. We have welcomed our brightest freshman class, tripling enrollment in our Honors College. We have had record numbers of students receive prestigious global awards such as the Fulbright Scholarship. We had no arrests during this year's FallFest, and alcohol-related incidents are down in police reports. From Student Government Association to Mountaineer Maniacs and our nearly 450 student organizations, students are getting engaged in their campus and supporting the community in which they live.