

# **A Coalition among Southeastern Conference Universities to Enhance the Health, Safety & Well-being of our Fraternity & Sorority Communities**

## Preamble

Southeastern Conference institutions, collectively and individually, are recognized as leaders in classrooms, research laboratories, and athletic arenas. As a conference, we are most powerful when we join together to address the great challenges facing each of our campuses.

In 2017, there were four deaths related to fraternity hazing in the United States. The national narrative regarding campus-based sexual assault, sexual misconduct, hazing, alcohol and substance use and abuse, and mental health issues is continually linked to the fraternal experience. We note that a significant number of incidences of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and hazing are precipitated by the unrestricted access to alcohol, and more specifically, high proof liquor.

Fraternity and sorority life is at a “tipping point” as these recent and continued tragedies highlight the incongruence between fraternal values and behavior. Without action, we risk losing the many positive impacts fraternity and sorority life provide for our campuses.

The positive aspects of fraternity and sorority life are evident all around our campuses. Our chapters and individual members make significant, constructive impact in our communities. Recent data has identified the substantial impact made in terms of academic performance, retention, philanthropy, campus leadership, and alumni involvement. Of important note, more than 100,000 SEC students are members of fraternities and sororities on our campuses, or 25.3% of SEC undergraduate students. Nationally, approximately one in ten fraternity and sorority members attend SEC institutions. Simply put, fraternity and sorority membership in the SEC... *it just means more!*

Our individual campuses have taken and are taking steps to address issues facing the fraternity and sorority communities on our respective campuses. However, collectively we can be stronger. Because of the large number of students involved in fraternity and sorority life on our campuses, the SEC must take a united leadership role in the national conversation around issues facing our fraternity and sorority communities so that students can have positive and meaningful fraternal experiences. We cannot wait to have others take the lead in solving critical issues associated with student health, safety, and well-being.

The Chief Student Affairs Officers of the Southeastern Conference have been engaged in an ongoing dialogue and recently convened for two days in Orlando discussing issues facing fraternity and sorority life on our campuses with the goal of identifying shared strategies and best practices that will enhance fraternity and sorority life on all our campuses. As a result of these discussions, we make the following recommendations on implementation of strategies and best practices for the SEC.

**We collectively request the SEC Presidents and Chancellors endorse these strategies and support their implementation on our member campuses.**

### Recommended Strategies

*We all unanimously agree the strategies and best practices below will enrich the health, safety, and well-being of students engaged in fraternity and sorority life (FSL), as well as students involved in other affiliated groups. These strategies are not in priority order. Each member institution will implement these strategies, develop common guidelines related to accountability, and develop a system to report implementation. We do recognize some member institutions have already implemented some of the strategies and others have barriers to address in order to implement some of the strategies. Recognizing the history of shared governance and the need for community support, implementation of any strategy should include the input of key stakeholders.*

- 1.) Commit to invest financial resources to support the FSL community. An established best practice is to implement an educational enhancement fee (paid for by those that benefit from the services) directed toward additional personnel costs, educational programming, risk management initiatives, on-going assessment, etc.
- 2.) Commit to maintain a total FTE staff-to-student ratio in the range of 1 staff to 750 to 1000 students. While there is no benchmarked data based on fraternity and sorority advising, this is a range comparable to commonly accepted advising and counseling standards.
- 3.) Commit to simultaneously participate in the Fraternity Sorority Experience Survey or similar instrument. These data will provide helpful benchmarking and climate information about our communities and identify gaps in education and services. The survey is also an educational tool that can facilitate deeper reflection with respect to student behavior and attitudes.
- 4.) Develop and publish an on-line scorecard detailing key chapter and community metrics. Each university-maintained scorecard should, at a minimum, include the following metrics:
  - *Chapter demographics (includes # of new members/aspirants, # of initiated members, # of total membership, diversity, # in residents in chapter houses, advisor to student ratio)*
  - *Academic metrics (includes average chapter GPA, average initiated member GPA, average new member/aspirant GPA)*
  - *Organization-based disciplinary status (includes current status of organization, specific charges applied and related sanctions with respect to hazing, alcohol and other drugs, sexual assault and misconduct, and other violent behavior)*
  - *Retention data (includes first-year retention rate, # of juniors and seniors in chapter leadership roles, chapter graduation rate)*
  - *Community service hours*
  - *Philanthropy dollars raised*
  - *Notable educational programs and programs without alcohol*
  - *Notable awards and recognition*
- 5.) Require on- and off-campus student organization functions (social and philanthropic at a minimum) to be registered and previewed with the university to ensure risks are managed appropriately.

- 6.) Limit registered on-campus social events to beer/wine service only for those of legal drinking age. In addition, require the use of third-party bar service and security vendors to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of those in attendance.
- 7.) Collectively agree alcohol and illegal substances will not be present at recruitment/intake or new member/aspirant events.
- 8.) Implement a campus standard that specifies a member to guest ratio and/or fire code standards for social events, whichever is higher.
- 9.) Require students interested in joining a fraternity and sorority to complete an orientation program that outlines: expectations, no hazing policies, campus resources, and reporting options. At the conclusion of this orientation, potential new members/aspirants will confirm in writing they will not participate in any hazing activities, either by the individual committing the hazing activities, by the individual on whom the hazing activity is committed upon, or by an individual that has knowledge that hazing activity is occurring or has occurred. All initiated members will sign the same statement annually.
- 10.) Require chapters, councils, or FSL community to develop and submit an annual alcohol and drug intervention program for their membership. Member campuses will strongly encourage chapters to utilize existing and qualified campus AOD resources. These efforts should be included in the biennial report of the Drug Free School and Community Act.
- 11.) Require chapters to maintain a minimum of three advisors who have completed all campus-specific advisor training and compliance requirements (reasonable adjustments can be made for small chapters). Additionally, chapters must sustain a functional, local advisory board whose members live within reasonable commuting distance from campus. These advisors and board will ensure immediate support for chapters and provide continuity in the implementation of safety, health, and well-being initiatives.
- 12.) Require chapters to annually develop and submit a new member/aspirant education plan. Each plan will include a timeline for implementation and completion for review and approval with the university.
- 13.) Determine and publish a proportional number of social events (involving alcohol) to educational and service/philanthropic events (not involving alcohol) sponsored by student organizations. Member universities discussed one social event to every two educational and service/philanthropic events as a common guide.
- 14.) Ensure that chapters, councils, and/or the FSL community implement a sexual assault education and prevention initiative that all members participate in on an annual basis and that new members/aspirants complete prior to initiation. At a minimum this will include education on consent, the antecedents to sexual assault, and bystander intervention.
- 15.) Limit new member/aspirant education period to no more than 6 weeks for fraternities and sororities. This will allow institutions to be more deliberate in terms of assisting these groups to as they complete the new member/aspirant education requirements. Additionally, the less time students spend engaging in new member/aspirant education efforts, the more time they will have to focus on their academic requirements.

- 16.) Implement campus tailgating standards/safe practices that are specific to campus culture and will enhance the health, safety and well-being of tailgate participants. This should include the required use of third party vendors for alcohol (beer/wine only) distribution and security. Each campus will offer a designated area or areas for chapters in which tailgating will occur (for example, chapter houses and/or other designated locations).
- 17.) Develop a plan that prescribes the process by which new or returning fraternity and sorority organizations will be permitted to join the academic community. These processes will incorporate practical campus considerations (e.g., student demand, staffing ratios, housing availability). Chapters that do not abide with the outlined process shall be precluded from consideration for council membership.
- 18.) Restrict alcohol consumption to common areas of the chapter house during social events involving alcohol, recognizing that high-risk behavior is more likely to occur in private spaces and that this initiative will help facilitate positive bystander behavior.
- 19.) Require chapter house managers to have mutually agreed upon (between university and chapter housing corporations) job descriptions with specific credentials and training. These individuals should utilize existing training required of campus hall directors, which prepares them for campus crisis management, policy and implementation, and referral resources.
- 20.) The Southeastern Conference will sponsor an annual SEC student leadership summit. Invitees shall include representative fraternity and sorority student leaders, select campus leaders, and key institutional decision makers. The purpose of the summit shall be to educate next generation fraternity and sorority leadership, assess past practices and current climate, review current conference standards, and renew member institutional commitments to conference standards.

Bobby R. Woodard, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Auburn University

Kurt J. Keppler, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Louisiana State University

Regina Young Hyatt, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Mississippi State University

Daniel J. Pugh, Sr., Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Texas A&M University

David L. Grady, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Life  
University of Alabama

Charles Robinson, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
University of Arkansas

David W. Parrott, Ed.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of Florida

Victor K. Wilson, M. Ed.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of Georgia

Greg Heileman, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost for Student & Academic Life  
University of Kentucky

Brandi Hephner LaBanc, Ed.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
University of Mississippi

Jeffrey R. Zeilenga, Ph.D.  
Dean of Students  
University of Missouri

Dennis A. Pruitt, Ed.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of South Carolina

Vincent Carilli, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Student Life  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mark Bandas, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost and Dean of Students  
Vanderbilt University