Greek Life Task Force
Final Report: Executive Summary
Center for Student Engagement
The George Washington University
August 2015
Overview of Greek Life at GW

Greek Life has a rich history of more than 150 years at the George Washington University and is one of the institution’s most enduring traditions. Over this time, the community has grown in number of organizations present and size of chapters. In recent years, the community has increased in size considerably, doubling the size of the community between 2005 and 2010. As of the 2014-2015 academic year, GW Greek Life currently has 38 active organizations with over 3,000 members and makes up 32% of the GW student population.

While GW Greek Life has experienced tremendous growth and success in recent years, that growth and success has begun to plateau. This has offered an incredible opportunity to truly examine the fraternity and sorority community at GW in order to determine if our community is providing the best fraternity and sorority experience to its members and the GW community. The GW Greek Life Task Force was convened in February 2015 to conduct this detailed review to make recommendations that will help the GW Greek community to realize its enormous potential.

GW Greek Life Task Force Charge, Membership, and Organization

The Fall 2014 semester was a tumultuous time for fraternities and sororities across the United States. With numerous reports of poor behavior and a lack of accountability, many higher education practitioners were questioning the relevance of fraternities and sororities on campus. GW’s Greek organizations experienced challenges similar to those seen across the country. Rather than reacting to a significant incident within the Greek community, then GW Provost Steven Lerman charged the Greek community to work proactively to address these challenges. This collective opportunity became a chance to build the strongest, healthiest, most positive Greek community in the country. From this opportunity, the Greek Life Task Force was formed during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Between February 2015 and June 2015, The Greek Life Task Force met once per month, with members joining in person or via phone. Members were selected for their experience and expertise and represented various constituencies: GW alumni, Center for Student Engagement Greek Life staff, GW faculty, fraternity and sorority national headquarters staff, GW Interfraternity Council, GW Multicultural Greek Council, GW Order of Omega, GW Panhellenic Association, GW parents, GW staff, GW Student Association, and non-Greek GW students. See the full membership list in Appendix A.

Members were divided into Working Groups in order to dive deeply into specific areas of operations within the fraternity and sorority community. Those Working Groups included Academics and Member Development, Operations and Chapter Excellence, Leadership and Campus Involvement, Philanthropy and Service, and Recruitment/Intake and New Member Processes. The Working Groups were comprised of diverse stakeholders in order to ensure topics were discussed from a variety of perspectives. All Greek Life Task Force members asked questions and provided feedback to the Working Groups to ensure all stakeholders were represented in the recommendations of each group.
The Greek Life Task Force began by defining the ideal Greek community overall. Next, each Working Group developed the ideal Greek experience for its area of focus. Finally, the Working Groups researched the current GW situation and national best practices in each area of focus in order to develop recommendations for the community.

This report presents the Greek Life Task Force’s vision of an ideal GW Greek Community. The description of this vision is followed by each Working Group’s ideals for its area of focus and accompanying recommendations. These recommendations are intended to be implemented between 2016 and 2024. The Center for Student Engagement and Greek Life staff will work with students, alumni, fraternity and sorority national headquarters staff, and other partners to continue to evaluate and develop each of the recommendations. Some recommendations may be limited based on processes and resources available, though all will be thoroughly explored for their potential implementation.

The Ideal GW Greek Community – A Vision for the Future:

The vision developed by the Greek Life Task Force for the ideal GW Greek community includes:

- Membership based on values and pride
- A community centered upon the four pillars of GW Greek Life including scholarship, leadership, service and philanthropy, and sisterhood/brotherhood.
- GW Greeks serve as role models in scholarship and as examples of academic integrity
- GW Greeks will be the most highly recruited graduates
- Membership in GW fraternities and sororities will help a student achieve greater learning inside the classroom when compared to non-members
- All organizations will abide by University policies and will hold other Greek organizations accountable to those policies and expectations
- Greek chapters will have positive relationships with the GW faculty, staff, administrators, and the local DC community and develop partnerships with other student organizations, including other fraternities and sororities.
- Greek students will vigorously pursue leadership positions within fraternities and sororities
- GW fraternities and sororities will be seen as leaders by pushing the boundaries of social change and addressing relevant issues within their membership and the greater GW community
- GW Greeks will serve the community in a meaningful way and help members connect to those experiences
- GW fraternities and sororities will value philanthropy as a way to contribute to society and, as such, work to raise awareness as well as money for philanthropic organizations
- The GW Greek community will engage in positive, values-based recruitment and every qualified GW student who is interested in becoming a member of a fraternity or sorority will find a chapter to which s/he could belong
- Greek chapters will be comprised of quality members that reflect the diversity of the institution
• GW Greek members will understand that fraternal membership is a lifetime commitment and extend their dedication beyond graduation by serving as staff members, national officers, donors, and volunteers within their organizations
• Members of the GW Greek community will also maintain their connection to the institution after graduation by donating their time and treasure
• Greek members will demonstrate pride in themselves and the work they do and GW faculty and staff will be proud to share their Greek affiliations as members and/or faculty advisors.
• GW fraternities and sororities will be well respected on campus and committed to maintaining the Ritual and values of their organizations in their day-to-day lives

Working Group Ideals and Recommendations

Academics and Member Development

Ideals
The GW Greek community will emphasize mental and physical health, academics, and leadership by upholding its values proudly and practicing them with consistency and intentionality. The GW Greek community will lead the efforts to address the critical issues facing the general GW community, including sexual assault, diversity and inclusion, and other student concerns. As a proud Greek community, it is one that cultivates mutual accountability and personal responsibility.

Recommendation 1
The GW Greek Community, including students, faculty, and staff, will come together to develop shared values for the community.

Recommendation 2
Raise the minimum GPA of both sororities and fraternities and making it a mandatory requirement for membership.

Recommendation 3
Organize collaboration between scholarship chairs across Greek Life on monthly basis.

Recommendation 4
Chapter, council, and community websites and calendars of events open to non-members should be kept up-to-date and open to the public.

Leadership and Campus Involvement

Ideals
The ideal Greek community defines its value and benefit to the University and its students and communicates that value broadly and consistently. Students should be joining an organization for its
core values, and should continue to live those values throughout their lives. This community also provides unique opportunities for growth and development as individuals and leaders. Members of Greek life should be leaders and should actively seek to make positive change in both the Greek and GW communities. Greek members must be provided the necessary training to become leaders who can build a stronger and more inclusive GW community.

**Recommendation 1**
Define and better communicate the true value of joining Greek life to students prior to joining.

**Recommendation 2**
Develop trainings regarding intentional leadership, management, service, diversity, sexual assault, hazing, etc. Trainings should be mandatory for all students interested in joining a Greek organization during the semester they choose to affiliate. It is recommended that these trainings take the form of a “Greek 101” course-like structure, spanning throughout the first semester of the year.

**Recommendation 3**
Develop ongoing training in the areas of leadership and management for members in leadership positions within their chapters.

**Recommendation 4**
The chapters should utilize institutional resources and take advantage of programs and experts at the institution in identified areas of focus. For instance, chapters should utilize diversity and cultural sensitivity training offered by staff in GW’s Multicultural Student Services Center.

**Operations and Chapter Excellence**

**Ideals**
The GW Greek community will be committed to the well-being, dignity, respect, and safety of all members. The community will strive to be prevention-focused rather than only reactionary. GW Greek Life will operate in the spirit of self-governance, where student leaders partner with university staff, local advisors, and inter/national organizations to establish clear expectations for members and chapters and consistently uphold those expectations. The community will have well developed governing documents and policies and all key constituents will be educated on those policies and expectations. This community will be supported by appropriate levels of staff, local advisors, and inter/national organization involvement.

**Recommendation 1**
Clearly define the roles of house managers and their responsibilities.

**Recommendation 2**
Reduce or eliminate summer occupancy requirements.

**Recommendation 3**
Develop a clear and sensible plan for upkeep, cleaning, and maintenance of Greek housing.

**Recommendation 4**
Increase security of Greek buildings.
Recommendation 5
Clearly outline the behaviors that could result in the termination of a lease for University housing.

Recommendation 6
Overhaul the Greek Excellence Awards.

Recommendation 7
Increase staffing dedicated to Greek Life.

Recommendation 8
Create an all-Greek judicial board comprised of members from all three governing councils.

Recommendation 9
Develop a peer advocacy program for student organizations, including but not limited to fraternities and sororities, going through a judicial process.

Recommendation 10
Redevelop the reporting forms, such as the online anonymous hazing reporting form, available to students.

Philanthropy and Service

Ideals
Greek affiliation should be epitomized by the members’ philanthropy and service activities, service, spirit, and energy. Individual chapters and GW’s Greek Life office would emphasize service equally with fundraising and encourage chapters to not only achieve their local and national chapter philanthropic/service goals, but unite the Greek community behind a common cause. Greek philanthropic events at GW should be structured and innovative, and teach others about the cause rather than overemphasizing competition and raising money. GW students, parents, alumni, faculty, and the broader community, including citizens of DC and the metro area, should be aware of the strength and impact that GW’s Greek chapters and members have on not only their local community, but other important causes, in terms of service, awareness, and fundraising.

Recommendation 1
Provide more structure in registration and approval of chapter philanthropic events and limit the number of days chapters can host competition-based events. Require approval for events to promote diversity in philanthropic activities and competitions and to promote a level “playing ground” for all chapters to sponsor philanthropic events.

Recommendation 2
Further enhance cooperation and collaboration between all Greek Chapters through philanthropic events that promote all chapters of Greek Life.

Recommendation 3
Work with local service and philanthropic organizations to promote more Greek involvement in giving back to the community. Have an incentive for fraternities and sororities to execute service projects during the school year.
**Recommendation 4**
Establish a Greek-wide philanthropic cause and service event that is deserving of the GW Greek community’s support. This could be a local DC area philanthropic or service organization.

**Recommendation 5**
Prohibit parties with alcohol associated with philanthropic/service events.

**Recruitment/Intake and New Member Processes**

**Ideals**
A strong, vibrant, and contributing GW Greek community is dependent upon a transparent and values-based recruitment paradigm that is well coordinated and cares for the needs of current chapter members, potential new members and their families/loved ones. Although all Greek chapters unite as one GW Greek Community, each council and subsection has unique recruitment needs that cannot and should not be grouped together as one; this includes noting that National Pan-Hellenic Council chapters that are members of the Multicultural Greek Council may have different recruitment needs than their governing association. Our main aim in ensuring the ideal GW Greek community is providing open, marketed, and readily accessible communication related to the recruitment process, benefits of membership, time and financial obligations, and the overall value of fraternal life.

**Recommendation 1**
Increase communication and marketing surrounding Greek Life prior to recruitment.

**Recommendation 2**
Empower a separate task force with the singular charge of exploring the timing of recruitment within each semester and within the academic year for Panhellenic Association and Interfraternity Council organizations.

**Recommendation 3**
Establish an annual All-Greek event hosted by the Greek community and open to the entire GW community during the first three weeks of school – prior to recruitment.

**Recommendation 4**
Establish an annual cultural event(s) in partnership with the Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC) during the first three weeks of school and ensure active involvement by Multicultural Greek Organizations/Chapters.

**Recommendation 5**
Establish a mandatory Recruitment Training Seminar for chapter presidents, recruitment officers, and new member directors prior to recruitment/Intake.

**Recommendation 6**
Empower a separate task force with the charge of exploring new member education programming for each Multicultural Greek Council organizations, National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations, Interfraternity Council organizations, and Panhellenic Association organizations provided by the University.
## Appendix A: Greek Life Task Force Members

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni/Volunteer</td>
<td>Eric Gutierrez</td>
<td>Lambda Upsilon</td>
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<td>Alumni/Volunteer</td>
<td>Laura Taddeucci Downs</td>
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<td>Madeline Bardi</td>
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<td>Susannah Spellman</td>
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<td>Vicktery Sanchez</td>
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<td>Casey Crisp</td>
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<td>Christina Witkowicki</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Andie Dowd</td>
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