

SIGMA GAMMA RHO

Accreditation Report

2016-2017

Leadership & Member Development

- Sigma Gamma Rho's membership declined to only one member and yet this individual viewed the year as an opportunity to highlight her skills and leverage her experiences. In doing so, the organization continued to make positive changes in the community through programming and engagement.
- Sigma Gamma Rho acknowledged that having one member on campus proved difficult to garner interested women for the organization. The sorority did have one woman begin the T.O.R.C.H. new member education program; however, she chose to not complete the process.
- Sigma Gamma Rho will lose its undergraduate membership and presence on campus in the coming academic year, and this is extremely concerning. There is hope that a local graduate chapter will assist in creating a presence on campus and recruit interested women for membership. The committee cannot stress enough how important and timely this effort will be for the organization to carry on at Lehigh.
- The chapter's sole member was active across the campus community. Specifically, she served as Greek Week co-organizer, International Multimedia Resource Center student staffer, Office of Financial Aid office assistant, and Spectrum co-vice president.
- The chapter's member attended various retreats and conferences, including Base Camp and the Northeast Region Midwinter Conference.
- Sigma Gamma Rho hosted multiple events throughout the year. This showcased the full potential of the chapter and the committee recognizes the impact that one person had on the organization. Separately, the committee cannot stress enough the importance of "less is more", and recommends that the chapter intentionally consider high impact quality programming over quantity.
- The committee commends Sigma Gamma Rho for the continuous use of "we" during its presentation even though the chapter currently has one member. The member was clearly committed to the organization, and she is aware that she is a part of something bigger than herself.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How will Sigma Gamma Rho continue to transition knowledge of trials and tribulations to future members to sustain the organization over time?**

In the area of **Leadership & Member Development**, the Committee rated Sigma Gamma Rho to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Organizational Operations

- Sigma Gamma Rho's T.O.R.C.H. new member education program requires 42 uninterrupted days for candidates to complete the process. The sorority did have one woman begin the program; however, she chose not to complete the process citing readiness. The committee

urges the chapter to examine its role in retention of interests to avoid future missteps and secure organizational sustainability.

- Chapter alumnae intend to work with the Lehigh Valley graduate chapter and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs to create a plan for maintaining a campus presence by way of recruitment and membership intake. The committee again cannot stress enough the importance of timeliness and urgency in addressing this issue and ongoing membership woes.
- The chapter hopes to increase its visibility and presence within the next three to five years by way of increased numbers. Specifically, the chapter has a goal of attracting a minimum of ten active members and plans to recruit interests from across the campus community by emphasizing community service, leadership, and campus involvement.
- The chapter keeps in communication with various leadership, including the graduate advisor, Undergraduate Chapter Coordinator, and Regional Syntaktes. The chapter also met biweekly with the Assistant Director for the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs.
- Sigma Gamma Rho members understand the importance of relying on alumnae and others external to the chapter for assistance. Members believe the new Lehigh Valley graduate chapter and local sorority sisters will be able to offer such assistance. The committee recommends that the chapter explore meaningful relationships and how best to cultivate such connections so that they are sustained.
- The committee recommends that the chapter further develop measurable goals, seek feedback, and track progress.
- The committee recommends that the chapter develop an organizational transition plan in order to strengthen future practice and cultivate stability. Such a plan will be invaluable if and when new members are initiated, and will highlight the successes and lessons from chartering members.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can Sigma Gamma Rho develop a sustainable plan to recruit members and ensure strong continuous membership?**

In the area of **Organizational Operations**, the Committee rated Sigma Gamma Rho to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Community Service & Engagement

- Sigma Gamma Rho participates in a monthly Serve with Sigma experience. On or around the 22nd of each month, the chapter participates in community service within the Lehigh Valley and Bethlehem communities. Some events include working with children and teens and supporting the organization's March of Dimes philanthropy.
- Sigma Gamma Rho held a collection drive called Operation Book Bag in support of the organization's national effort to provide young students with the necessary materials they need for school. The chapter donated seven book bags and three large totes filled with school supplies alongside \$150 in monetary donations to Broughal Middle School. The committee commends the chapter for its effort to support a national program while also directly impacting the local community.
- Sigma Gamma Rho participated in Light the Night's Leukemia Lymphoma Walk. The undergraduate and graduate chapter alongside interested women built lanterns and distributed T-shirts to donors and cancer survivors.

- The chapter volunteered at two Parent's Night Out events with the Community Service Office, and volunteers played with local school children. The committee commends the chapter for supporting Community Service Office initiatives that directly impact the local community.
- Sigma Gamma Rho hosted Benefit for Babies in support of March of Dimes. Various student organizations came together and each hosted a baby-themed game or activity with \$300 in proceeds being donated towards the national philanthropy.
- Sigma Gamma Rho recognizes partnerships are important to the continued success of the organization, and the chapter has partnered with the following: Women's Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Council of Cultural Organizations, Community Service Office, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Interfraternity Council, and Men of Color Alliance. The committee commends Sigma Gamma Rho for fostering numerous partnerships across campus and beyond.
- The committee commends Sigma Gamma Rho for their deep and extensive service engagement. As an area of development, the committee recommends adopting a more focused and purposeful approach; considering less is more by leveraging members' service experiences in other organizations; and identifying opportunities to incorporate reflection.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **How can Sigma Gamma Rho narrow involvement efforts to maximize impact on organizations and programs the sorority chooses to invest in?**

In the area of **Community Service & Engagement**, the Committee rated Sigma Gamma Rho to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Academic & Intellectual Advancement

- Sigma Gamma Rho was ranked third out of three Cultural Greek Council sorority chapters in the fall 2016 semester. Grades are not reported for chapters who have only one member per FERPA.
- Sigma Gamma Rho was ranked second out of three Cultural Greek Council sorority chapters in the spring 2017 semester. Grades are not reported for chapters who have only one member per FERPA.
- Sigma Gamma Rho found it critical to utilize outside resources to support academics, and the chapter's sole member followed a study schedule and regularly attended office hours. The committee commends Sigma Gamma Rho for its commitment to academic success while also recognizing the chapter's limitations of building a rich academic program without a robust membership. However, in anticipating membership growth, the chapter should consider opportunities to develop a scholarship plan for future members.
- Sigma Gamma Rho has never had a member fall below the chapter's required 2.5 grade point average since the chapter's chartering. If a member was to fall below the threshold, the member would need to meet with an on campus advisor as well as the graduate chapter advisor to determine where the problem exists and create an action plan to return to good academic standing.
- The chapter member served as the Co Vice-President for Spectrum, the largest LGBTQ+ student ally organization on campus. Her participation in Spectrum allowed her to expand her viewpoint, especially with regard to the experiences of people in other communities. Additionally, she explored power, privilege, and intersectionality.

- The chapter requires women completing new member education to participate in study hours and strengthen time management skills. The goal of these requirements is to assist students in smoothly transitioning into the organization while also learning to balance academic and social commitments once initiated.
- Sigma Gamma Rho set a goal to introduce new programming to the campus community focusing on self-care and self-love. Programming included HIV Testing cosponsored with Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity, Inc.; Pink Hearts and Pretty Smiles supporting breast cancer awareness; and the #LoveYourself campaign encouraging students to take a mental break from classes and prioritize their needs for a moment. The committee commends the chapter for focusing on the importance of self-care and self-love, and spreading that message across the campus community.

Chapter Development Question for 2017-2018:

- **What does a formalized academic plan look like for Sigma Gamma Rho as the chapter approaches a 2018 intake process?**

In the area of **Academic & Intellectual Advancement**, the Committee rated Sigma Gamma Rho to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Overall Rating

Overall, Sigma Gamma Rho has been rated an Accredited chapter by the 2016-2017 Accreditation Committee.

Sigma Gamma Rho provides an incredibly meaningful experience for its members, and the impact the organization has across the Lehigh and Bethlehem communities is undeniable. The women belonging to the organization are passionate and care deeply about the mission and vision of the organization. However, the chapter has had a trying year with membership dwindling to one undergraduate member and this individual assuming full responsibility for the organization. This is certainly no easy task, and the chapter has grown through resiliency and persistence hosting a number of programs, philanthropic events, and community service opportunities. The committee recognizes the impressiveness of such an effort, and acknowledges that the chapter singlehandedly accomplished more than other chapters with larger membership. This aside, the chapter must address critical issues regarding membership as the chapter enters the upcoming academic year with zero undergraduate members. The committee cannot stress enough the sense of urgency and timeliness required to move the chapter forward with regards to recruiting membership, attracting interest, and conducting new member education to ensure the continued success and longevity of the chapter at Lehigh.

The Accreditation committee assigns Sigma Gamma Rho an overall rating of Accredited, which meets expectations set forth by Lehigh University. The chapter is fully successful in all metrics and is an active contributor to the Greek and Lehigh communities.

Chapter Development Questions

- How will Sigma Gamma Rho continue to transition knowledge of trials and tribulations to future members to sustain the organization over time?
- How can Sigma Gamma Rho develop a sustainable plan to recruit members and ensure strong continuous membership?
- How can Sigma Gamma Rho narrow involvement efforts to maximize impact on organizations and programs the sorority chooses to invest in?

- What does a formalized academic plan look like for Sigma Gamma Rho as the chapter approaches a 2018 intake process?