

MU SIGMA UPSILON

Accreditation Report
2017-2018

Leadership & Member Development

- Mu Sigma Upsilon was awarded with Tradition of Excellence – Empowering Others at the 2018 Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Awards. Former president, Djenne Dickens, was also awarded with Tradition of Excellence – Inclusive Leadership.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon practices leadership within the chapter as well as at the council level. Djenne Dickens served as the 2017-2018 president of the Cultural Greek Council and will be succeeded by fellow sister Eliza Dent next academic year.
- The chapter had a sister participate in the Greek Emerging Leader (GEM) program as an emerging leader in the fall 2017 semester. She is continuing her involvement in the program by serving as a mentor for the 2018 year.
- The chapter's new member orientation process is an in-depth education of the history, values, and expectations of Mu Sigma Upsilon. This year, the chapter made efforts to cater their new member orientation process to what their neophytes wanted to learn and hosted workshops on those topics, including body positivity and temperament. The committee considers this a best practice.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon members were able to strongly articulate what they had learned in their respective leadership positions. For example, the chapter president spoke to how she developed skills in communication and teamwork and how that was integral to leading a small organization to keep everyone on the same page and contribute to chapter efforts.
- The committee commends Mu Sigma Upsilon members for taking advantage of a myriad of leadership development opportunities offered to students. Through Lehigh University, members regularly attend the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI), Sophomore Escape, and LeaderShape. Members will also be participating in The Greek Leadership Experience in Israel with brothers of Alpha Epsilon Pi.
- The chapter has a few formal and informal transition processes to prepare their members to be successful leaders. From as early as the new member orientation process, neophytes are educated on chapter operations. Additional pieces include shadowing opportunities and relying on organized historical documents for reference. The committee encourages the chapter to explore additional transition processes by consulting with current members to identify their needs when taking over new positions.
- The committee commends the chapter on their strong culture of mentorship. Not only do the older members of Mu Sigma Upsilon intentionally focus on building up younger members but the organization fosters close relationships with nearby Mu Sigma Upsilon chapters and sisters will often serve as big sisters for women at other schools.

Chapter Development Question for 2018-2019:

- **How can Mu Sigma Upsilon streamline transition processes to provide consistency through leader and member turnover?**

In the area of **Leadership & Member Development**, the committee rated Mu Sigma Upsilon to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Organizational Operations

- The chapter conducted intake in the fall 2017 semester and initiated a line of three neophytes, doubling the size of the chapter. This is the largest membership Mu Sigma Upsilon has seen since their founding line. The committee commends the chapter on this impressive growth.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon hosted at least six Ladies Nights throughout the year in order to provide information to students interested in potentially joining the organization. The chapter has been committed to building interest in order to set themselves up for successful intake and sustain chapter growth.
- The chapter identified three goals for the 2017-2018 academic year: the improvement of chapter management; focusing on intentional collaborative connections; and financial stability conducive to their size. These goals were developed in alignment with the National Governing Council's financial priorities and to account for the growth in membership.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon opened a bank account, separate from their campus account, with the goal of maintaining \$250 in each. They surpassed their goal by achieving balances of \$500 in each account. To continue improving financial stability in the future, the chapter plans to partner with local organizations to fundraise.
- The chapter maintains strong relationships with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs by attending meetings and getting staff involved in their campus programming. Additionally, they have a regular presence at all three governing council meetings. It is important to the chapter that they maintain relationships within their Cultural Greek Council community as well as the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Council communities.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon continues to use the value of multiculturalism to guide all organizational efforts. As the first multicultural sorority, Mu Sigma Upsilon incorporates cultural education into much of their programming and members regularly use the chapter as a platform for protesting injustice across different cultures and identities. On an individual level, members demonstrate a significant understanding of multiculturalism through the research and intentional naming of each member line.
- The chapter routinely exceeds expectations of the National Governing Council (NGC) through the Stride Toward Attainable Results (S.T.A.R.) Development Program. This report is designed to hold chapters accountable to both district and organizational standards.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon put in a lot of work to increase sustainability in this area, following recommendations from last year. The committee commends the chapter on this progress and recommends that the chapter consider implementing a multi-year strategic plan to guide goal setting and maintain momentum.

Chapter Development Question for 2018-2019:

- **How can Mu Sigma Upsilon work to ensure that progress in this area is solid and sustainable?**

In the area of **Organizational Operations**, the committee rated Mu Sigma Upsilon to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Community Service & Engagement

- Mu Sigma Upsilon partnered with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. to host Condom Bingo in order to raise awareness and funds for AIDS research. Participants could purchase bingo cards that also educated them on healthy sexual practices.

- The committee commends the chapter for members authoring blog posts for the National Governing Council (NGC). The committee encourages the chapter to share these with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs so members' efforts can be shared with the campus community on the Lehigh Greeks Blog.
- The chapter has developed a partnership with the Community Service Office in order to target high school students in the local community and educate them on possible areas of study and corresponding career options. The goal is to encourage students to consider higher education and the opportunities available to them.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon continues to support their national philanthropy of To Write Love on Her Arms and bring awareness to mental health issues and suicide prevention. Additionally, they support a philanthropic effort of their chapter's choosing, March of Dimes. Members annually participate in the March of Dimes walk at Steel Stacks in April. The chapter also makes it a priority to participate in the Autism Speaks Walk at Dorney Park based on a sister's personal experience and connection to the cause.
- The chapter re-introduced a past philanthropy event, Greek Seasons, in conjunction with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the African Caribbean Culture Club. The first portion of the event featured Greek-affiliated students from all three councils modeling their organization's colors for each season. The participating chapters were asked to make a small donation. The second portion was a cultural fashion show to educate attendees on the dress belonging to various cultures.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon's landmark, award-winning event, Dining in the Dark, continues to be a success by reaching capacity each year. In partnership with Disability Support Services, this event educates attendees on the daily experiences of living while visually impaired through community resources, personal testimonies, and a blindfolded dining experience.
- The chapter was intentional in working to build collaborative partnerships and focus on quality of programs over quantity, in line with a recommendation from last year. The committee hopes to see the chapter continue to be mindful of balancing their programmatic efforts so as not to burn members out.
- The committee commends the chapter on their ability to make connections between their experiences and utilize service and community engagement opportunities as sisterhood events.

Chapter Development Question for 2018-2019:

- **How can Mu Sigma Upsilon increase alumnae engagement in a more formalized way beyond new member orientation?**

In the area of **Community Service & Engagement**, the committee rated Mu Sigma Upsilon to be an **Accredited with Excellence Chapter**.

Academic & Intellectual Advancement

- Mu Sigma Upsilon was ranked second out of two Cultural Greek Council sorority chapters in the fall 2017 semester with a GPA of 2.75, a decrease of 0.16 from the spring 2017 semester. The 2.75 placed the chapter below the All Sorority and All Greek average.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon was ranked first out of two Cultural Greek Council sorority chapters in the spring 2018 semester with a GPA of 3.0, an increase of 0.25 from the fall 2017 semester. The 3.0 placed the chapter below the All Sorority and All Greek average.

- Mu Sigma Upsilon's fall 2017 new member class GPA was 2.6367 and was the only Cultural Greek Council sorority chapter to conduct new member education.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon implemented an event titled "Study with the Mus" to encourage potential interested students to spend time with the sisters while also providing a space of academic support. Additionally, the chapter's understanding of members' different learning styles allows them to foster effective study habits.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon partnered with Alpha Tau Omega to host a faculty and staff bar-b-que event in order to build relationships beyond the traditional setting of a classroom. The committee commends the chapter for collaborating to increase resources and attendance for a more impactful event.
- The chapter was able to strongly articulate the barriers to academic success for first-generation college students and other students who hold minority identities. For example, four of the six members are studying in male-dominated STEM fields and one is the only black woman in the 2020 graduating class for the Integrated Business and Engineering (IBE) program. The members shared how they are able to motivate and support each other so that they can succeed and persist to graduation.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon asks that prospective members attend recommended library study hours as their schedule permits. The committee recommends that the chapter consider additional ways to incorporate academic support structures into the new member orientation program.
- The chapter holds members to a 2.8 cumulative GPA requirement. Should a member fall below, they are placed on academic probation. While on probation, members are required to attend all classes, visit faculty office hours, and participate in tutoring. The committee recommends that the chapter work to develop a more robust support system for members struggling with academics. This academic plan should be twofold: proactively helping students before they fall below the required GPA and providing resources to help inactive members get back on track. The committee encourages the chapter to use on campus resources, such as the Center for Academic Success, in these efforts. This is a repeated recommendation from last year.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon hosted multiple discussions in the Center for Gender Equity on important topics related to women including breast cancer and representations of solidarity at award shows such as the Golden Globes.
- Mu Sigma Upsilon members regularly engage in using their voices to stand up against injustice and educate the campus community on important political movements. Many of the members played a role in protesting the removal of DACA and coordinating the Black Lives Matter flag demonstration in remembrance of the black lives lost to police brutality.
- The committee believes that professional development still remains an area of growth for the chapter following last year. This could be an opportunity to utilize the Center for Career and Professional Development in partnership with other chapters on campus.

Chapter Development Question for 2018-2019:

- **How can Mu Sigma Upsilon develop a more robust academic support plan that incorporates incentives and proactive measures?**

In the area of **Academic & Intellectual Advancement**, the committee rated Mu Sigma Upsilon to be an **Accredited Chapter**.

Overall Rating

Overall, Mu Sigma Upsilon has been rated an Accredited with Excellence chapter by the 2017-2018 Accreditation committee.

Mu Sigma Upsilon has been through a year of growth: growth in membership, in intentionality, and organizational structures. The organization is the largest it has been since its founding which has allowed the chapter to share responsibility more widely and increase campus presence. While Mu Sigma Upsilon recognizes that they are a small organization, the chapter continues to turn out some of the most impressive student leaders. Members frequently leverage their sorority experience and the privilege and power that comes with it to build bridges across the campus community and advocate for others. The next step for this chapter is to sustain their efforts while focusing on making some improvements in the area of Academic and Intellectual Advancement. The committee is impressed by all Mu Sigma Upsilon has accomplished and looks forward to seeing what the chapter does next.

The Accreditation committee assigns Mu Sigma Upsilon an overall rating of Accredited with Excellence, which exceeds expectations set forth by Lehigh University. The chapter excels in multiple metrics, making valuable contributions to the Greek and Lehigh communities. Congratulations!

Chapter Development Questions

- How can Mu Sigma Upsilon streamline transition processes to provide consistency through leader and member turnover?
- How can Mu Sigma Upsilon work to ensure that progress in this area is solid and sustainable?
- How can Mu Sigma Upsilon increase alumnae engagement in a more formalized way beyond new member orientation?
- How can Mu Sigma Upsilon develop a more robust academic support plan that incorporates incentives and proactive measures?

Best Practices

- The chapter's new member orientation process is an in-depth education of the history, values, and expectations of Mu Sigma Upsilon. This year, the chapter made efforts to cater their new member orientation process to what their neophytes wanted to learn and hosted workshops on those topics, including body positivity and temperament. The committee considers this a best practice.