

Chapter Year End Report 2019-2020

Assistant Director Feedback Report

Chapter:

Sigma Phi Epsilon

Assistant Director:

Devore McIntosh

Chapter Response to Greek Pause

What did your chapter accomplish during the pause?

Please list any practices and/or procedures evaluated and any additional action items your chapter accomplished during this time.

Chapter Response:

What was the pause?

The Lehigh Greek Pause was a plan instituted at the beginning of the spring semester to create a new precedent at Lehigh for how chapters must act. The plan required all chapters to stop their events for an indeterminate amount of time, hoping that during the stop they would work internally and externally to better themselves, and the culture as a whole. This is how our chapter interpreted the Greek Pause and throughout the following passage we will explain how, as a chapter, we have accomplished all the pause intended. We will explain this through our chapter's reception of the pause, the ways in which we adapted to the new circumstances, the priorities we focused on, the effect of the lifting of the pause, and how the pause will segway us into the future in a positive way.

Reception of the Pause

Initially many brothers were disappointed, upset, and even angry at the news of the pause being instituted. The plan was a large change to the chapter's normal functioning and would affect everyone's plans for social activities greatly. The people most distraught were the ones who were most hesitant to change. However, as we delved deeper into the pause, the house demeanor began to rise as everyone understood more about the situation, and the purpose behind the pause. The pause could be seen as the start of a new and more refined era of Greek culture, instead of the end of an old and destructive one. Brothers started having positive outlooks and became more active in chapter discussions and chapter activities. No large group of people is without its pessimists or resistors to change, and we weren't without ours, but it is safe to say that throughout the pause our chapter as a whole grew to embrace the new times, and adamantly tried to push the chapter to be a part of the Greek solution, instead of the Greek problem at Lehigh.

Adaptation to new circumstances

When the pause was instituted the chapter had to quickly adapt to the new climate. The first major adaptation we had was the restructuring of our events that were planned during the pause. We quickly

changed events such as our annual philanthropy color run and bench press competition to adhere to the new constraints. We spoke with the advisors for both activities to cancel the initial date and put in place a tentative time it would take place in the future. This was important to us because we wanted to find a way to keep our traditions, and continue to help Lehigh's campus through our community service, without breaking any rules.

Another major adaptation was restructuring social events with sororities. With the new IFC plan underway our chapter knew that social events would look different after the pause was lifted. To ensure that we would act appropriately under these new guidelines we had a representative from our chapter speak with each sorority and have a discussion on what things we would do differently in the future. Some examples of items talked about were guest lists, wrist banding effectively, and the party culture in general. These conversations were very helpful in framing our chapter's mindset for the future of the social scene.

Continuing, a big adaptation we had was with brotherhood activities. The pause required the chapter to find new sources of social activity to maintain our strong brotherhood ties. Some examples of activities we had in small groups was a trip to the ice skating rink, a bowling night, and a laser tag competition. Activities like this brought a lot of happiness to the brothers and allowed us to adapt to the pause in a positive way for our enjoyment, as these three activities most likely wouldn't have occurred before the pause.

Finally, we had to adapt our relationships with our potential new members. The pause mandated that no group contact could be had with new members, a regulation we followed very closely. However, as a chapter we also realized how uncertain it was as a freshman to lose their opportunity to join Greek life on bid day, and to overcome this problem brothers were encouraged to study with and go to the gym with potential new members they were friends with. The freshman applauded this idea since it made them feel more accepted and optimistic. This adaptation was important in shifting our contact from group to individual, and keeping it completely educational and constructive. It proved to be very effective in maintaining friendships during the pause.

Chapter Priorities

Our chapter had to reevaluate our priorities when the pause was instituted. Through conversations with the executive board and the entire chapter we decided that our two biggest priorities were to restructure and remove negative parts of our chapter, and to maintain our friendships.

We accomplished the first task by removing outdated practices such as the unsafe party cultures that each chapter had been practicing. Our risk management policies were updated to align with the new IFC plan, and members against these changes were spoken with separately and told to get in on the movement, or to get out of the chapter. We found this to be a major priority because it related directly to the entire purpose of the pause.

The second task was accomplished through fun events previously mentioned such as bowling and ice skating, but also included a formal dinner at Social Still, and a trip to the nearby escape room in Northern Bethlehem. These events allowed the brothers to have fun while staying within the constraints of the pause, and kept all of our friendships strong. We found this to be a huge priority because it is one of the pedestals our fraternity was founded on, and without friendship there is no reason to even be a part of Greek life.

Lifting of the pause

The pause was lifted the week before Spring Break directly following the large Greek Summit. Our chapter found the Greek Summit to be helpful in strengthening our chapters ties with our national organization. Our relationship with SigEp headquarters has been growing over the past few years, and the conversation we had with the National's representative after the Summit only furthered this relationship. We

had a productive conversation about the Lehigh Greek Climate, our internal issues, and what changes we needed to institute. The conversation also moved into a private meeting between the president, Jacob Saks, and a different national's representative the next day to further discuss. These conversations helped our chapter effectively pivot into the lifting of the pause so we could actually institute all our good changes.

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus pandemic had poor timing and sent everyone home almost immediately after the pause was lifted. The bad timing didn't allow any chapter to showcase any of their changes from the pause. However, our chapter has instead brought our positive changes from the pause directly into the Coronavirus pandemic. We have done this by instituting all our new procedures and exemplifying our chapter priorities virtually. Some examples of our continued progress at home are activities such as each executive member having a one on one meeting with our Nationals representative Jordan Sykes, an executive board meeting with our Nationals alumni advisor for the first time in 2 years, and a donation of money from our chapter to Feeding America.

The Future

Our chapter plans to uphold all the new changes and progress we achieved from the pause when we return to school. Instead of regressing to a pre pause Greek Climate, it is of the utmost certainty that SigEp wants to be part of the solution and not a part of the problem when next semester begins.

OFSA Assistant Director Feedback:

Great explanation of the mood of the chapter brothers when the Greek pause was enacted. Sigma Phi Epsilon has been a leader in showcasing the next steps to embrace that change and move forward with the proposed changes. I can agree that increasing chapter events outside of the party atmosphere will promote greater brotherhood. The chapter's self-awareness is key and it proves to me that you are capable of brotherhood activities outside of "socials". I commend the change that you are prepared to enact, and I look forward to seeing those changes come to fruition.

Chapter SWOT Analysis

In order for OFSA to have a clear understanding of the current celebrations and challenges our chapters face, OFSA is expecting chapters to evaluate their current state by conducting a SWOT analysis. This does not have to be lengthy, but should include a snapshot so that Assistant Directors are able to offer specific and clear feedback and action items moving into the 2020-2021 academic year.

Chapter Response:

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to have year-round recruitment through our 365 recruitment tool • Balanced man scholarship given out every year • Strong and continuously growing relationship 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinner alumni relations compared to other chapters • Lack of involvement with on-campus clubs and resources • Despite unique and creative philanthropy
--	--

<p>with our national headquarters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong drive in the classroom and dedication to events geared towards the betterment for the futures of each brother • Limited conduct history due to diligent risk management and safe social behaviors 	<p>events, we have a trouble fundraising large sums of money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar recruitment strategies as other chapters makes us struggle with showing potential new members how we differentiate ourselves.
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a stronger alumni board to increase alumni involvement and knowledge of our chapter going forward • As chapters continue to get investigated/suspended, that opens a door for our chapter to recruit a larger classes in future semesters and highlight how we are unique and different from other chapters • Hold more events with on campus organizations (Pride Center, Career Services, Tutoring Services, ect.) 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As chapters continue to get investigated/suspended, it could turn away new Lehigh students from getting involved in Greek life • The negative press regarding Greek life along with the Greek pause may decrease overall recruitment numbers • If recruitment numbers dwindle, it may be difficult to meet the occupancy threshold for our chapter house

OFSA Assistant Director Feedback:

<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Being able to recruit 365 days gives the chapter and advantage to grow continuously.</p> <p>The Balanced scholarship is a tremendous endeavor that has a real impact in the Lehigh campus community.</p> <p>Continue the safe social behaviors and build on those successes</p>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <p><u>What efforts have been made to create a stronger bond with alumni?</u></p> <p><u>How can the chapter foster members to become involved with on-campus clubs?</u></p> <p><u>Will the recruitment of new members who are already a part of clubs change that narrative?</u></p> <p><u>In terms of fundraising, have you considered collaborative efforts?</u></p> <p><u>Has there been a change in the tactics in which the chapter seeks larger monetary donations?</u></p>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <p>I would suggest setting up a network for</p>	<p>Threats:</p> <p>It is up to the organization to set the</p>

collegiate members and alumni for mentor ship as well as internship and job opportunities.

An action like this will foster a deeper relationship between collegiate members and alumni, which in turn can be turned into a positive for joining the organization.

precedent and rebuke those negative opinions.

What does Sigma Phi Epsilon do differently than organizations that are suspended?

Promote the positives of the chapter to ease the doubt that potential new members may have about not only the chapter but greek life as a whole.

Concluding Summary

Sigma Phi Epsilon has shown the promise of being a chapter on campus that is an example of how a chapter should operate, especially being a dry chapter. The chapter should include more brotherhood events, more collaboration and continued involvement in the campus and local community. A suggestion would be to not rely so much on the social scene as it leads to incidents and the conduct office. If the chapter focuses on being great beyond the social scene, Sigma Phi Epsilon will have a bigger impact on campus moving forward.