



**Office of the Dean of Students
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SWAC Report 2009-2010

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I. Committee Charge:

The necessity for the existence of the System-Wide Assessment Committee (SWAC) emerged from the Strengthening Greek Life Task Force's proclamation that:
"There will be an annual assessment of the overall Greek system, to measure progress towards realizing the vision for Greek life as well as to identify emerging needs and opportunities to strengthen Greek life. A System-Wide Assessment Committee comprised of students, alumni, and University staff, charged by the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, will be responsible for conducting this assessment. The System-Wide Assessment Committee is also responsible to make recommendations to the Vice Provost regarding the viability of expansion of the Greek system.

"The committee utilizes a full range of resources including but not limited to: accreditation reports, annual reports of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, a review of national trends and innovations in Greek life, insights and perspectives of members of the Lehigh community, as well as input from the executive leadership of affiliated chapters.

II. Committee Membership:

Sharon Basso, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Students, co-chair
Tom Dubreuil, Associate Dean of Students, co-chair
Tim Wilkinson, Director, Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs
Ozzie Breiner, Director, Office of Residential Services
Derek Lutchko '10, President Interfraternity Council,
Lauren Harte '10, President, Panhellenic Council,
David Trimble '86, President Greek Alumni Council, Phi Kappa Theta

III. Introduction:

As stated above the System-Wide Assessment Report is an annual examination of the overall fraternity and sorority community at Lehigh University. Given timing and staffing issues of the past year, this report is spanning a period that covers the 2009 – 2010 academic year with updates directly reflecting the “Next Steps for the Fraternity and Sorority Community” final report, as well as the 2009-10 Accreditation process. The System-Wide Assessment Report, recommendations were approved by Vice-Provost for Student Affairs John Smeaton on March 31, 2010.

IV. Academic Culture:

For the fall 2009 semester, the all-fraternity GPA (3.04) was close to the all-men’s GPA (3.06) and the all-sorority GPA (3.323) was over the all-women’s GPA (3.285). The all-greek GPA (3.183) was over the all-undergraduate GPA (3.153). Ten of 21 fraternities were above the all-men’s average, four of the nine sororities were above the all-women’s average.

For the spring 2010 semester, the all-Greek GPA of 3.128 was close to the all-undergraduate GPA of 3.131. The all-fraternity GPA (3.029) was close to the all-men’s GPA (3.044) and the all-sorority GPA (3.268) was again over the all-women’s GPA (3.260). The all-greek GPA (3.128) was below the all-undergraduate GPA (3.131). Eight of 21 fraternities were above the all-men’s average, four of the nine sororities were above the all-women’s average.

For more specific academic information, please go to:

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~indost/greek/PDFs/Spr10trendanalysis.pdf>

IV. Fraternity and Sorority Community Status/Recommendations

A. Accreditation:

As stated in the “Next Steps for the Fraternity and Sorority Community” final report...”
“The Accreditation process should continue to be assessed and revised as appropriate to allow chapters to connect Accreditation with Inter/National Headquarters values and priorities, streamline the requirements for the application and challenge students to demonstrate learning as part of their fraternal experience. Accreditation has become a key process in the development and maintenance of chapter standards. Additionally, chapter and alumni attitudes towards Accreditation have changed since its inception community-wide in 2004-05. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs has continued to track not only the progress made by chapters through Accreditation, but also the inter-workings of the Accreditation process itself. The Strengthening Greek Life Taskforce report articulated how the Residential Environment Report (R.E.R.) “devolved” from an assessment process that assisted chapters to one that was a “scramble to get signatures and the proper paperwork submitted. Accreditation was carefully maintained for the first five years of implementation. All the while OFSA was maintaining anecdotal feedback from chapter actives, alumni and Accreditation panelists. This feedback became the basis for the initial recommendations from the Accreditation Committee to allow the evolution of the process in order for Accreditation to remain relevant without making unnecessary work for chapters. It is also recommended that the Accreditation Committee remain active in order to ensure that all recommendations take root.”

For a complete listing of Accreditation Committee recommendations, please refer to the “Next Steps for the Fraternity and Sorority Community” final report, located at: (website link will be added)

B. Occupancy:

Occupancy remains a concern from two standpoints.

First, sororities continue to be over-occupied with at least one chapter considering over-occupying above and beyond what they have done before. While the number of students occupying would be within fire code standards, it is above what Lehigh would recommend in order to maintain an acceptable quality of living. The Office of Residential Services is working with the group to try to help them assess their decision and review possible outcomes. A recommendation of the committee to help alleviate this issue is the expansion of the sorority community (see below). This would be part of the extension proceedings as outlined by the National Panhellenic Conference.

Per the extension committee, on Friday, October 1, Zeta Tau Alpha (ZTA) was selected to become the ninth residential National Panhellenic Conference sorority at currently at Lehigh. ZTA will begin recruitment after the Panhellenic formal recruitment process concludes in the spring 2011 semester. In the fall 2011 semester, ZTA will move into Rathbone Hall in the Upper Centennial residence hall area. This facility has a current maximum capacity of 48 students.

The other issue discussed regarding occupancy, is that there are three fraternities that were under occupancy during the spring 2010 semester (Alpha Tau Omega, Delta Upsilon, Lambda Chi Alpha) could have been at or above the 90% standard if the chapters had required all upper class members to live-in. The recommendation is that the University and GAC should encourage chapters to continue to find effective solutions for having upperclass students live in the chapter house until they meet the 90% standard. The committee is cognizant that merely mandating upperclassmen live in the facility will work for some chapters, but not all. OFSA, chapter Inter/national Headquarters and alumni corporations and advisory teams must continue collaboration with individual organizations to find effective, individualized strategies. The committee will analyze the effect of the new Accreditation process on 90% Occupancy planning by the chapter, as this is assessed in the Facilities Management section.

The “Next Steps” committee on Continuity and Occupancy reaffirmed SWAC’s thoughts on the effectiveness of the 90% Occupancy policy, stating...

”the 90% occupancy requirement has not been overly burdensome for chapters in most cases evidenced by the fact that only one chapter has lost housing due to occupancy failure since this policy’s inception. Additionally, chapters that have been “close” to 90% occupancy failure have been able to recover from these chapter facility membership deficits and within the prescribed timeframe the current policy allows.”

Per the fall 2010 Occupancy Report, four chapters did not meet the 90% standard. Two chapters (Kappa Alpha and Kappa Sigma) were under occupancy for the first time. Similar to the chapters under occupancy in the spring semester, both of these chapters made the conscious decision to allow chapter members to live outside of the facility, effectively allowing the chapters to be under occupancy. One chapter (Chi Phi) is currently at 0% occupancy due to a University Committee on Discipline (U.C.O.D.) decision to remove recognition from all active and new members in the spring 2010 semester due to the chapter being found responsible for acts of hazing. As part of the sanctions against Chi Phi, the U.C.O.D. allowed the organization to remain active while the chapter’s alumni and inter/national headquarters reorganize. As an active chapter, Chi Phi still has Occupancy obligations, and must meet the 90% standard by the tenth day of the spring 2012 semester. The fourth chapter, Delta Upsilon, was below the 90% standard for the third semester. Delta Upsilon had been given a one semester occupancy extension, due to a decision made by the chapter to conduct a member review and reorganization. This extension came about as a result of a “Next Steps” Continuity and Occupancy committee decision to allow 90% Occupancy exceptions on a case by case basis to chapters that proactively petition the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs for such an exemption due to a reorganization effort. This committee decision was stated in the “Next Steps” report as follows...

” the (Continuity and Occupancy) committee recognizes that at times in order to make significant and necessary cultural changes in a chapter, an exception to the 90% Occupancy requirement may be helpful. In order to facilitate a proactive approach to handling chapter

problems, this committee recommends that there be a process put in place whereby chapters could request a one semester extension of the 90% occupancy requirements if they plan, and implement, a well-conceived membership review process.”

C. New Member Education/Pledging Culture:

The committee discussed the issue and recommends continued and sustained work to address the pledging culture and particularly hazing. The committee reviewed several of the efforts being made by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs as part of the “Next Steps for the Fraternity and Sorority Community” strategic planning process and reaffirmed SWAC’s joint commitment with the “Next Steps” New Member Education/Hazing Education awareness committee to work together, with students, alumni and university staff to continue to move forward. This commitment has already been evidenced with such initiatives as dedicating the spring 2010 Greek Alumni Council meeting to focus solely on bystander awareness education. This education was provided through a joint alumni/student/staff examination of bystander awareness through use of the Response Ability educational module.

As the “Next Steps” committee on New Member Education and Hazing Awareness completed its initial assessments and finalized the committee findings, the following executive summary and recommendations were submitted to the Greek Partnership Council per the “Next Steps” final report... “Hazing prevention and bystander intervention education must remain of primary importance within the fraternity and sorority community, as well as the entire Lehigh community. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs should position itself as the campus expert in hazing prevention awareness.

Since the inception of Strengthening Greek Life, three chapters (Beta Theta Pi, Sigma Alpha Mu and Chi Phi) have been found responsible for violations of the University Code of Conduct as a result of acts of hazing. Numerous other chapters have either been investigated for hazing allegations or have worked with OFSA to recreate their new member programs in a positive manner. While hazing prevention has become more of an emphasis in the fraternity and sorority community, hazing must become a campus-wide priority. The new member education/hazing committee was a positive step in bringing together various campus constituencies affected by hazing (Greek Life, Athletics, Student Organizations); however, further work should be put into insuring that all campus entry points for hazing have been analyzed and that proper resource allocation and accountability measures are in place.”

D. Non-Recognized Chapters:

The committee discussed non-recognized chapters both conceptually and practically, and supported the decision to have the University’s General Counsel send a letter to inter/national headquarters of any non-recognized chapter stating that they should cease and desist from using the Lehigh University name in referencing their non-recognized organization. Additionally, the committee agreed that the University must continue to push this non-recognized organization to adhere to University rules and regulations, as it is comprised of Lehigh University students before any sort of formal recognition would ever be considered.

E. Alcohol policy:

The committee discussed the new alcohol policy that is currently being explored by the University and students and recommends that we continue our work to keep all included and move the process forward. A student/staff working group has been assembled and is working to better review social policy and explore all options. The group’s intended outcomes are as follows:

- Reduce the risk to student’s health and safety due to the abuse of hard alcohol and the irresponsible distribution of alcohol
- Create a culture in which students assume more responsibility for the management of alcohol use

F. Deferred/Second year recruitment:

This is an action item that needs to have a recommendation made each year. The committee recommends that we do not move second semester recruitment to second year recruitment at this time. However, the committee believes we should keep it as an option to be considered if we feel that it is necessary to help stop hazing activities.

G. Expansion:

Each year this committee needs to determine if there is a need to expand our Greek Community. As for NIC and/or social fraternities, the committee does not recommend the expansion of the community at this time primarily due to the fact that Lehigh expanded last year to two non-residential fraternities and a commitment was made to support them by giving them at least two years to establish themselves before possible additional expansion.

The SWAC decision to provide the non-residential chapters additional time to find organizational solvency was reaffirmed by the Accreditation panels for both the Delta Chi and Pi Kappa Alpha, as both fraternities are still dealing with various formative challenges after their first year on campus. Delta Chi, being held as a colony due to academic issues...

“The committee believes the colony has taken the right steps in terms of setting a solid foundation and understanding the need to have a good organization in place, as well as the minutia of meeting minutes, Robert’s Rules of Order, running the fraternity the correct way, and choosing the best partnerships. The committee trusts that this solid base will help Delta Chi through future growth and success. The colony’s grades are a major issue, both for the actives and new members. This is an area that needs immediate focus and attention, as it is truly the only thing holding them back in terms of chartering.”

Pi Kappa Alpha, while able to receive their charter at the end of 2009-10, were still cautioned by the Accreditation panel regarding their structural deficiencies as an organization...

“While the committee commends the chapter for receiving their charter, there are concerns that some of the organizational basics of a fraternity seem to not be in place. The committee expects Pi Kappa Alpha to grow and improve next year, based off of the recommendations provided.”

Regarding Multicultural Greek chapters, the committee recommends we retain the current policy of keeping the option to expand open with the decision being made on a case by case basis. The Director of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs will make this decision with consultation from the GAC and appropriate University officials.

Finally, regarding Panhellenic, the committee considered both the possible expansion of residential and non-residential options. After doing research about a non-residential sorority, it does not appear that this will be a successful option on Lehigh’s campus due to current sorority culture. The committee therefore recommends that we immediately begin the sorority extension process for a residential NPC sorority, with plans to identify and recognize a group by the end of the fall 2010 semester, enabling them to participate in spring 2011 sorority formal recruitment and occupy a residence (to be determined) beginning in the fall 2011 semester. The recommendation for extension was made by reviewing current membership numbers and success of Lehigh’s current chapters, as well as reviewing recent Panhellenic formal recruitment numbers. Additionally, by expanding the sorority community, quota will be lowered during formal recruitment, meaning each chapter will have fewer rising sophomores. This in turn will alleviate some housing issues facing other chapters.

As previously discussed, the decision was made to bring Zeta Tau Alpha to campus as Lehigh’s ninth active Panhellenic sorority.

While this report speaks to the current sorority expansion and the decision to not expand fraternities, while Delta Chi and Pi Kappa Alpha have the two-year runway to gain traction, it does not assess whether the current system warrants expansion. This SWAC committee acknowledges that there is no such expansion review for this annual report, firstly because of the Delta Chi and Pi Kappa Alpha factor; and secondly, due to the fact that a defined measurement framework is in process.

In the autumn of 2010, the Greek Partnership Council (GPC) realized that SWAC does need some better defined framework to assess the status of expansion. The Greek Life Task Force Report notes, "This group (SWAC) should be charged to take into consideration a wide range of relevant data and indicators and should report annually on the progress achieved on the specific recommendations of the Task Force for Strengthening Greek Life, and on the strength of the overall Greek system at Lehigh." The Greek Life Task Force did not define what constitutes "a wide range of relevant data and indicators," nor has any subsequent iteration of the Greek Life Task Force (Greek Life Implementation Group or GPC) created such a means of assessment.

The GPC notes that assessment is a combination of art/science (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data, information, and opinion). The GPC has agreed that it is time to create a defined framework of the Greek Life Task Force's intent, so that: There is consistency in SWAC Committee reviews of expansion consideration; so that there is greater transparency to the SWAC audience and stakeholders with key interest in the prospect for expansion; and so the Greek Community as a whole can live up to its aspirational values, thus working towards a robust community and environment that would warrant greater membership and participation through expansion.

It is noteworthy that the framework won't be a mathematical equation, so that certain inputs "equal" automatic expansion. The framework needs to have quantitative measurement that is coupled with qualitative and judgmental input. When quantitative measurement otherwise "calculates" or points toward expansion, the qualitative and judgmental reviews need to rationalize and justify these quantitative factors to also support expansion or to warrant a delay in the "calculated" expansion. The framework needs to also allow for dynamic variables that would impact assessments across time and changing environmental factors.

The GPC and SWAC expect that the 2011-2012 SWAC report will opine on the criteria of the framework.