

Social Policy and Risk Management Committee
University of Oregon Fraternity and Sorority Life Recommendations

Submitted to Robin Holmes, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Life

Members of the Committee:

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Charge:

“This committee will review the current social policies governing fraternity and sorority life and make recommendations that will meaningfully address and support a significant reduction in high-risk behaviors such as underage drinking, large-scale parties in live-outs, as well as prevention efforts focusing on reducing sexual misconduct, hazing and other high-risk behaviors. Review of the current “dry” policy for all fraternity and sorority houses and the effectiveness of this policy should also be considered.”

The committee reaffirms that UO Fraternity & Sorority Life (FSL) has the capacity to be a national leader in mitigating high-risk drinking, sexual misconduct, hazing and other troubling behaviors. The committed student leaders and staff are not only eager to engage in serious conversations, but also in seeking solutions that will allow chapters to *live* their espoused values, dramatically change the current conditions within the FSL community, and positively impact the next generation of Ducks.

On May 19, 2016, the *American Psychological Association* provided a press release featuring a 25-year meta-analysis conducted from 1987-2014 on fraternities and sororities and 21 different types of well-known alcohol interventions.¹ The researchers involved in the study discovered that for FSL-affiliated students there was “no significant difference between students who received an intervention and those who did not for alcohol consumption per week, frequency of heavy drinking, frequency of drinking days or alcohol-related problems. In some cases, alcohol consumption even increased after an intervention.” This report should serve as a serious wake-up call for local chapters, national headquarters, and higher education institutions across the country.

As a result of this startling report, committee members have now come to realize that they need to be very cautious in following the path of other institutions that are utilizing any of the current “best practice” interventions, and to consider new alternatives.

¹ Scott-Sheldon, L. A. J., et al., 2016

Review of the Current Social Policies

The committee concurs and sees familiar themes and concerns with the external review's snapshot of FSL regarding high-risk behavior, accountability, and community culture.² In addition, it recommends utilizing data from the Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey (FSES); data from AlcoholEdu; data from the UO Campus Marijuana Survey, National College Health Association (NCHA) data, data from two campus climate surveys, and data from the campus Sexual Assault Experience Survey to help guide efforts.

Risk Management

The committee acknowledges that the majority of all inter/national fraternal organizations, as well as the North American Interfraternity Council (NIC), have adopted the Fraternal Information and Programming Group (FIPG) Risk Management Policy which addresses high risk behaviors including the use of alcohol and other drugs, hazing, and sexual abuse and harassment. The mission of FIPG, Inc. is "to promote sound risk management policies and practices and to be the leading resource of risk management education, programming and information to the broad based constituency involved in all aspects of Greek life." The FIPG policy highlights that fraternal organizations must follow all applicable laws, must follow applicable guidelines from headquarters, should not engage in hazing behavior, and should refrain from all sexual abuse and harassment.³

Perfect compliance with the FIPG policy would eliminate all or nearly all high-risk incidents in fraternities and sororities on the UO campus or *any* college campus across the country. As the external reviewers noted, however, chapters at the UO are bombarded by numerous, and sometimes conflicting expectations from the inter/national headquarters, chapter bylaws, the IFC and PHC councils, the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, the UO Student Conduct Code, and various city and state ordinances. A lack of clarity regarding expectations has led to confusion, frustration, and a lack of internal accountability from even our strongest chapters.

Recommendations

- 1) The committee recommends the creation and implementation of a *Fraternity & Sorority Life Risk Management Policy and Resource Manual* (ONE common-source document) to promote the safest possible environment for the members of the UO FSL community. This document will outline the UO PHC-IFC social policy, provide direction and support in maintaining the standards from FIPG, and support the values by which our fraternities and sororities have been founded upon. The committee recommends the document should be aligned with the UO Student Conduct Code and all applicable federal, state, county, and local regulations. In the case that fraternities and sororities have policies that are more restrictive than the UO-specific document, we urge the chapters to abide by their own inter/national policies.
- 2) The external review by Koepsell and Shinn recommended an on-campus summit to "consider challenges, opportunities and strategies for moving forward."⁴ The committee not only supports this recommendation, but would like to advance the recommendation further. We strongly recommend that additional attention, leadership, and accountability should be directed

² Koepsell & Shinn, 2016

³ FIPG, Inc., 2013

⁴ Koepsell & Shinn, 2016

towards the leadership at the inter/national level, with a “national call to action”. The committee recommends that the UO serve as a host site for a proposed summit to bring together inter/national headquarter partners, student leaders, campus leaders, and academic researchers from across the country to discuss challenges, structural issues, research opportunities, and potential solutions to these identified problems.

- 3) The committee recommends the UO be bold and to take a stand at the national level by challenging structural issues that place our students at risk on campus, including issues the inter/national headquarters *can* control. Examples given by committee members and students include the issue of quota for chapters (resulting in large and unmanageable chapter sizes), and the inability to remove some members (per inter/national expectations) when they are not adhering to standards of behavior within a chapter.
- 4) It is clear from the recent meta-analysis research report, just adopting “best practices” with regard to the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) within FSL communities, as recommended by the external review, may not be effective and could result in the UO wasting time and resources. Thus, the committee partially rejects the recommendations regarding AOD prevention. The committee recommends a formal partnership with UO Prevention Sciences be established to form its own Pacific Northwest Consortium in addressing AOD prevention, as well as sexual assault prevention. The Consortium would inform current prevention efforts for the FSL community – as well as other student target populations, utilize faculty and their graduate students to assist with research, and develop new and innovative, science-based interventions and solutions for the various student populations that exist on our campus.
- 5) The committee supports the external review’s recommendation of a comprehensive sexual violence prevention and education training program for the FSL community. However, based on the findings of the recent meta-analysis regarding AOD interventions, the committee remains concerned that more research is required, specifically about sexual assault and the types of interventions that may or may not work within the FSL community. It is possible that current evidenced-based interventions may not be effective for fraternity and sorority populations, much like researchers recently discovered with AOD interventions. The committee recommends thoroughly reviewing existing campus climate data regarding sexual assault, as well as conducting new research to guide University efforts for sexual assault prevention. The committee also recommends working with campus researchers to develop a pilot, *Get Explicit - FSL* program to obtain more data and guide future efforts. Finally, the committee recommends enhancing new member orientation and on-going training to be more comprehensive in educating about sexual violence prevention and response—specifically setting the expectation that sexual violence will not be tolerated on the UO campus.
- 6) Hazing is not just a Greek phenomenon. The *National Study of Student Hazing* found that 47% of students had experienced hazing prior to attending college. The study also found that more than half of college students involved in club, teams, and organizations on campus are hazed.⁵ There are more than 200 university recognized groups at the UO, including athletic teams, fraternal organizations, honor societies, and other student organizations. By focusing on the occurrence of hazing within the UO FSL community, we risk losing the opportunity to address prevention and response on a campus-wide level. We have a duty to mitigate potential risk for all of our

⁵ Allen & Madden, 2008

students. The committee recommends entering into a partnership with the researchers from StopHazing.org Coalition to become a 2016 Consortium Cohort member. The Interfraternity Council (IFC) and Panhellenic Council (PHC) support this recommendation. A coalition of University stakeholders would work with national hazing research experts, conduct a comprehensive hazing assessment, and identify viable solutions to hazing over a three-year period. The committee recommends the involvement of a wide variety of groups such as academic units, the Dean of Students, FSL, Intercollegiate Athletics, Club Sports, Marching Band, and student government (ASUO) in an effort to learn how to reduce hazing risk across campus. FSL student leaders are passionate about leading the way and have agreed to seed the funding for the three-year consortium cycle with an expectation of support, both financially and by participation, from the University community as a whole.

- 7) In an effort to connect students to confidential resources and advocacy, it is recommended that the staff members from Office of the Dean of Students' Crisis Intervention and Sexual Violence Support program create ways to become more visible with chapters and invest time partnering to promote their support services. The committee also recommends that the promotion of information regarding rights and services for accused students be available and provided to FSL, and that bystander intervention resources be provided to all chapter members.
- 8) The committee fully supports the external review's recommendation in exploring the feasibility of a consistent five-day academic week in an attempt to impact the social scene that is fueled by alcohol and other drugs, and reduce the number of negative consequences that high-risk drinking presents to the UO campus including injuries, sexual assaults, missed classes, DUIs, missed assignments, etc. The committee recommends working with the University Senate to explore this further, and also recommends a review by researchers of patterns of behavior from students across academic programs to establish if there are any common themes with behavior across academic disciplines.
- 9) The committee supports the external review's recommendations to address the alcohol culture at UO athletic events—specifically football games at Autzen Stadium. In addition, the committee encourages a no-re-entry policy at Autzen, as well as exploration of other practices to foster a healthier campus and community culture. The committee is interested in identifying ways for students to participate in social events such as tailgates at the stadium that don't include alcohol, or social events which reduce the risk of harm if alcohol *is* served to students of age.

Dry Chapter Houses

The committee recognizes that all sorority chapter houses at the UO went dry in 2000 (in response to the Select 2000 directive at the inter/national level) and fraternities followed soon thereafter. The committee acknowledges the current status of chapter houses is problematic and there are numerous concerns to be addressed. In addition, the committee acknowledges that allowing alcohol in chapter houses – where the overwhelming majority of residents and members-at-large are under the age of 21 – may not be in the best interest of the overall safety and wellbeing of the FSL community. There were problems regarding the presence of alcohol in both sororities and fraternities in the decades preceding the implementation of these national and local restrictions. The committee is not convinced that reversing the current local policy will solve any of the identified problems. Panhellenic members and advisors also voiced concern that allowing alcohol back into fraternity chapter houses could increase risk to their communities, and the FSL community as a whole

Recommendation: While the committee considered the prospect of a pilot initiative for the introduction of alcohol into a chapter facility if there were currently no high-risk drinking behaviors, no underage students living in the houses, no sexual assaults and related sexual misconduct incidents occurring, and no hazing incidents within the FSL community, the committee is unable to recommend such a pilot project at this time..

Live-Outs

For the purpose of this review and these recommendations, the term “live-out” is defined as a private residence, where at least one member of a chapter lives, that is used to host official or unofficial events associated with the chapter. Often, high-risk drinking occurs at these “live-out” locations either as a “pre-game” to an official social function or as a standalone social event. These events are problematic in a variety of ways. Especially concerning is the lack of chapter officer/leader participation and the absence of risk prevention, which stems from the perception that these mitigating actions would constitute an “official” chapter event and therefore make the chapter responsible for any negative consequences. The committee is also very aware that fraternities and sororities are not the only student organizations in which members live together off-campus. There are many other students participating in student organizations that live with their friends.

Recommendations

- 1) The committee recommends that the University of Oregon’s Good Neighbor Committee should establish new ways to effectively communicate with off-campus students, including FSL members, when there are ongoing concerns or violations of the Student Conduct Code, in an effort to reduce negative behaviors in the neighborhoods surrounding the community by students.
- 2) The committee recommends that the UO Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards work with organizational leadership to identify individual students who have violated the Student Conduct Code when a behavior or action is associated with an organization, but has not necessarily been identified as an organizational violation.
- 3) To facilitate a collaborative relationship in addressing behavioral concerns, the committee recommends the implementation of the Partnership Process that has been created by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The Partnership Process encourages internal accountability and offers an opportunity for record removal upon the completion of a self-prescribed “enhancement plan”.
- 4) The committee recommends that individual students or student organizations (including fraternities and sororities) found responsible through the student conduct process, should be held responsible for their behavior(s) on multiple levels including the individual level, community level, and societal level. The committee strongly urges that when an off-campus Conduct Code violation occurs impacting the greater community, individuals (and student organizations, when applicable) be held accountable by serving their greater neighborhood community to the greatest extent possible through an innovative and effective sanction program.
- 5) The committee recommends that a work-group review jurisdiction and explore preventive measures and an MOU opportunity between EPD and UOPD police departments to create

consistent enforcement and accountability with student housing in neighborhoods surrounding the University.

- 6) To encourage and promote a holistic view of FSL organizations and their members, the committee recommends that the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life move forward with their plan to send notifications to campus leadership, local advisors, chapter leadership, and inter/national staff regarding both positive and negative behaviors or actions. Currently, notice is only provided for student conduct related matters. The committee feels it is important to be transparent and communicative about *all* aspects of Greek Life at UO.
- 7) Although FSL members have established their own dynamic community and perform highly successful community service initiatives and philanthropic events, the committee has identified a “disconnect” between FSL members and their chapters (regardless of where members are living) and the campus community in understanding and demonstrating their greater responsibility to the greater community of Eugene and beyond. The committee recommends that a work-group of student leaders, prevention staff, Holden Leadership Center, and community partners examine civic engagement, leadership, and service within FSL, and identify ways in which FSL can contribute back to their community and uphold their values. The plan should identify ways for FSL to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood, improve their partnerships and the potential that exists between the University and the community, and play a leadership role in promoting safe, healthy, and vibrant neighborhood communities. The plan should also establish student outcomes focused on critical thinking, the examination of values, and reflection/learning that advances our students participation in the communities in which they live.

Additional Recommendations in the External Review supported by the committee:

- 1) The comprehensive plan for a new endorsement program, member education, and leadership development, which has been developed by the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life needs to be implemented at or before the fall 2016 term. This committee recommends creating a work-group to assess progress and recommend updates regarding desired outcomes. As part of the new endorsement program, the committee believes that FSL chapters should be given the opportunity to be rewarded for specific benchmarks, including factors like GPAs, meeting student conduct expectations, full participation in civic engagement activities, etc.
- 2) Regular town hall meetings need to occur in chapter houses with senior leaders, alumni, and chapter leaders in an effort to strengthen relationships and shift community culture.
- 3) An increase in dedicated funding for staffing that can carry out evidenced-based prevention efforts that are deemed “effective” for the FSL community.
- 4) Create an Event Monitor training aimed at reducing harm and curbing high-risk behaviors, including sexual violence and alcohol and other drug prevention. The program would teach a wide range of skills, including bystander skills, basic first aid skills, and event management techniques, as well as provide education to help monitors understand signs of alcohol toxicity

and sexual violence. This program would be piloted and researched in partnership with the Prevention Sciences Institute for effectiveness before being implemented on a large scale.

References

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