



LAUNCHPOINT

James Madison University
External Review Report

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Overview and Organization

This report is the result of a comprehensive document review and a three-day, campus visit in which focus groups were conducted with various constituencies. These constituencies included students, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers, and alumni. The purpose of the focus groups was to develop a concept of the ideal fraternity and sorority experience at James Madison University and to define the current experience. From there, the contributor developed a set of recommendations and areas of further exploration for growth and progress of the community to reach their ideal experience. This report is organized into these three areas.

The Ideal Fraternity and Sorority Experience at James Madison University



The ideal fraternity and sorority experience at James Madison University looked consistent across the various constituents interviewed. First, in this ideal experience, fraternities and sororities positively contribute to the greater James Madison University community. These organizations, and their members, are connected to and engaged with the university. Students choose to join fraternities and sororities for the right reasons, seeing social as a benefit and not the purpose. Scholarship and philanthropy are focal areas and members seek out opportunities for leadership and personal growth. Engaged alumni provide mentorship and guidance and continue to serve as volunteers, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to membership. Individuals feel welcomed and valued as a member and find a place where they truly feel they belong. Members are motivated throughout their career and individuals and chapters strive for constant improvement, consistently working towards living their organization's values. The community is strong with collaborative and supportive relationships between chapters and councils. Outgoing officers and older members are engaged and supportive of current officers and the decisions they make on behalf of the organization. Members and organizations are accountable to themselves, each other, and the university community and processes help cultivate engaged citizenship among members. Organizations feel they have a stable and sustainable home in which to grow, perhaps in a Greek Village, where members can return for years to come. Members have a fun and enjoyable experience, of which hazing plays no part. The university community and Harrisonburg all find the contributions made by fraternities and sororities valuable.

Current State of Fraternity and Sorority Life

The Fraternal Community is Fractured and Weak

The students build strong relationships within their chapters, but they are largely unaware of the greater fraternity and sorority community around them. Chapter presidents find their governing councils and regular meetings with other chapter presidents within their council to be particularly helpful. However, the inter-chapter communication seems limited to just presidents. Most general members are unaware of other chapters and they do not have many productive interactions with each other.

Chapters are unfamiliar with chapters in other councils. Councils are often left to organize community wide events on their own. Due to a lack of organization or ability to bridge gaps between governing councils, these events rarely occur.



The Greek Community is fractured between the Inter-Cultural Greek Council (ICGC) and Interfraternity Council (IFC)/Panhellenic Association (PHA), with culturally-based fraternal organizations advised by the Center for Multicultural Student Services (CMSS) and all other fraternal organizations advised by Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL). Many different stakeholders, including staff and students, commented they would like to see a closer relationship between the three councils. However, due to a lack of attendance by IFC/PHA members when ICGC hosts an event meant to bring them closer, there is a feeling within CMSS that the efforts are not valued, and the interest is empty rhetoric. While it is commonly seen as a best practice for all fraternal organizations to be advised by the same office and staff, in this case, the ICGC is getting outstanding support and guidance from the CMSS staff. The organizations would not receive the same advising level if they were brought under Fraternity and Sorority Life in its current structure and form.

Negative Community Image

The overall perception of the fraternity and sorority community is negative. This is largely an external perception but also perpetuated by affiliated students as well. Sororities are generally seen as more purposeful and functional while fraternities are viewed as having mainly a social intent.



There is a stigma of being in a fraternity or sorority on campus. Students compartmentalize their experiences. When they are leading their fraternal organizations, they are proud and unabashedly 'Greek'. However, when these same students are elsewhere on campus, interacting with unaffiliated individuals or working with non-Greek organizations, they choose to hide their fraternal affiliation. Students feel judged by various campus constituents for their membership within fraternal organizations.

The Fraternity and Sorority Life community has become increasingly isolated in recent years. Organizations and individual members were previously involved in large campus events and holding membership and leadership positions in various organizations and departments across campus. Over time, this involvement and the presence at events has decreased significantly. Many stakeholders see the fraternity and sorority members existing in a parallel community rather than as an integral part within the James Madison University campus community. This could be attributed to an actual separation as well as a perceived separation if students are unwilling to disclose their fraternal affiliation when interacting throughout campus.

The community lacks marketing and overall positive publicity. Though the community faces significant challenges, many stakeholders, including faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and students, described positive parts of the fraternal experience at JMU. However, few outsiders are aware of these positive attributes.

Staff and Oversight

Fraternity and Sorority Life lacks direction. There does not seem to be a common mission, vision, values, or guiding perspective leading the programming, budgeting, decision making, and advising structure of the organization. This has led to disjointed advising and position structures and a perception by students that programming is haphazard.





The Fraternity and Sorority Life staff seem burnt out. The programming and resources offered by staff, by all accounts, are largely reactionary. This likely is due to being burnt out as well as contributing to being burnt out. The students find staff helpful after an incident has occurred, but they feel they have little guidance in their positions and preventative programming or assistance is not offered. Staff also find their work and the overall university culture relatively reactionary.

The staff feels the department had been given a great deal of leeway in the past to create whatever type of community they want, while simultaneously being hamstrung by an institution that is risk averse and desperately wants students and alumni to be happy, even at a cost of accountability and development. Many programs or ideas seem to be adopted outright from other institutions, even if they do not entirely fit James Madison University or are developed in a vacuum without knowledge or understanding of best practices. When concerning or conflicting items are brought to the attention of staff, there seems to be little motivation to make shifts or changes.

Many hierarchical members within the university organizational chart had not previously had fraternity or sorority experience. With few exceptions, it seems as if there also has not been an interest to learn about the intricacies of advising fraternal organizations. Due to this, the staff, and in turn the community, has had little guidance, oversight, or critical support. Agreeing to every idea brought forward by young, relatively inexperienced staff is not support. Fraternity and Sorority Life is an area that needs challenge, constructive criticism, and accountability in order to truly flourish. However, one cannot challenge on an area they are relatively unknowledgeable about, particularly when they choose to remain as such. Due to this, the staff have been largely on their own. They can choose to do anything, or not do anything, without much guidance or oversight.

Staff feel supported by James Madison University as an institution, largely because they feel a balance between work and life is encouraged. However, their characterization of what a balance between work and life might be is limited and seems skewed towards life. The balance portion of work life balance indicates that both are done at relatively equal levels. However, in this case, work seems to suffer due to a consistent choice towards life when work and life schedules conflict. The university culture does not encourage or expect staff to stay past 5pm and the staff within Fraternity and Sorority Life value this part of the culture specifically. However, many student meetings and events occur past 5pm and on weekends, when staff are often not present on campus. This has created a situation where the governing councils and individual chapters largely run themselves and their own programs, with little oversight or presence by staff. This has resulted in weak, if any, relationships between fraternity and sorority members and FSL staff.

Other than council officers and some chapter presidents, few students reported positive working relationships with Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Many students knew staff advisors' names, but few had ever interacted in person with anyone other than the advisor that works directly with their chapter. Students were unsure of the role of Fraternity and Sorority Life and feel they only hear from staff when their chapter has done something wrong or they were in trouble. While council officers and some chapter presidents see staff as resources, most



of the chapters' leadership are unfamiliar or untrusting of the FSL staff. Students reported a fear of the school and seeing questions staff ask as investigative rather than supporting. Students would like more support from the university and Fraternity and Sorority Life but are unsure what support options might even be available. Staff members also recognize they are largely unfamiliar with students outside the handful of students they see regularly and attribute that to a lack of work on developing those relationships.

Many students feel there is a lack of support from the institution. Students feel like there is a lot of red tape to get anything done at the institution. They find the barriers hard to navigate and don't understand why the barriers exist in the first place. Students feel largely ignored by university staff. The students reported feeling as if they are a 'dirty secret' of the institution, while staff feel their guidance over the years has been to keep the community out of the press. Though this was likely intended for negative publicity, it seems there is a lack of publicity or marketing for the community overall, including positive information. Students feel the general community is not aware of how they contribute, and faculty and staff seem to be unaware of all but the largest contributions the fraternities and sororities make to the larger campus and Harrisonburg communities.

Just as the fraternity and sorority community seems isolated from the greater university community, so does the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Campus partnerships are murky and ill-defined. While staff often partner with other offices, some campus partners feel as if these partnerships lead their staff and departments to take on more work and responsibility due to a lack of interest or accountability from Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Students have also observed these strained relationships and wonder where they fall between the departments involved. Campus partners also wonder if Fraternity and Sorority Life staff sees them as experts in their areas as students are not often recommended to see them for plans or programs. If they do see students to assist with programs, it is often at the last minute and by pure luck rather than a recommendation from FSL staff.

There is a perception that Fraternity and Sorority Life is treated differently than other groups, departments, programs, and staff on campus. From inside the community, students and staff believe they are the only groups to be held accountable. The rest of the JMU community believes that Fraternity and Sorority Life sees themselves as exception to the rules. There is a perception that everyone looks the other way on policy violations committed by fraternal organizations and members, and that reports of poor behavior are ignored by staff. Even when significant information was turned over to the office, either no process was completed, or partners are not informed of any outcome. This has led staff and faculty from across campus to question whether they should bother to report concerning behavior.

The staff have many ideas for new developmental programs for students or processes leading towards greater efficiency. However, due to a perceived lack of available time, appropriate support, or student interest, these programs or improvements have not yet occurred. Graduate assistants and practicum students are often working on large initiatives that could have great impact on the community, such as an emerging leader program or hazing prevention programming. While this is great practice for these future professionals, the short terms and high turnover rates of these positions, these programs largely go unimplemented or do not meet the potential they could potentially have on the community.



Risk Management



Risk is of significant concern in this community. Students are flatly unaware of policies, lack skills to implement risk policies and expectations, or lack the foundation of understanding why policies exist and why these policies are important. Chapter members and leaders are particularly confident in their abilities to handle risk issues within their chapter or at their events entirely on their own. The fear they have of judicial outcomes from the university or their national organization prevents them from reporting incidents or asking for help. Students also believe the university is aware of the issues within the community, particularly involving alcohol, and so the university should just drop the regulations because the behavior is not going to stop. Students are largely unaware of the liabilities associated with risky decisions or behaviors.

Most parties or other events with alcohol go unregistered. The students feel the policies are hard to navigate and often contradict each other. Chapters do not feel they can live up to their national organization's risk management policies for events with alcohol, so they choose not to register events with the campus as well, in order to avoid tipping off their advisors or headquarters. Students do not know how to practically implement policies and expectations. Students also do not want to open themselves up to policy violations through Assistant Greek Coordinator (AGC) event checks, so they do not register their events. The students feel the likelihood of their chapter being held accountable for an unregistered party is low and they choose to take their chances with that rather than submit to the potential of being held accountable for what they deem to be unattainable expectations.

Hazing is rampant, visible, and denied. When asked about hazing, students would avoid eye contact and flatly deny that it occurs on campus, even though every group could name examples of men carrying silly objects or dressing in ridiculous costumes throughout campus as part of the fraternity new member process. As hazing generally shows, the visible tip of the iceberg is small compared to the parts that are hidden. If these types of behavior are so accepted, and organizations are so brazen with hazing they are unafraid for these acts to be seen on campus, what are they willing to hide? Faculty, staff, and advisors reported a significant shift in body language and students seeming uncomfortable when the topic of hazing is broached. Faculty anecdotally see a correlation between men in fraternities and academic difficulty. They become concerned when they learn students are joining Greek Life as they then notice significant changes in their demeanor and quality of work during the semester the students choose to join. Though the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff conduct hazing investigations, these investigations often yield little information and the issue continues to go unaddressed.

Accountability

Overall accountability is lacking within the community. Interfraternity Council men do not feel it is appropriate to hold their peers accountable. Breach of policies and expectations, particularly in the area of risk management and events with alcohol, are commonly known though the community and the behavior is widely accepted. The chapters seem to have a common agreement to allow organizations to do what they want without fear of report or retribution. While staff feel accountability has become clearer and more mainstream, the community does not report the same feeling. Fraternity and Sorority Life staff feel they have been unable to legitimately hold chapters accountable due to an interest of keeping students and alumni happy. While Fraternity and Sorority



Life staff would also like to have happy students, they have interest in high accountability for the safety and longevity of the community and the growth of the students into productive adults. However, campus partners, faculty, staff, and advisors feel the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff are not interested in accountability and either ignore issues or delay any response long enough that the situation is already closed. The students see the currently accountability process as unconstructive.



Chapter Experience

Panhellenic sororities are excessively large for the campus. Many Panhellenic leaders commented that their chapters are too large to appropriately manage considering the current space resources available to them. However, the groups need the size to maintain financial stability due to comparatively low dues. If chapters were willing to charge more for dues, and could provide the value appropriate to increased dues, the chapters could sustain smaller sizes without financial sacrifice. There is also a perception that the chapters are 'doing Greek' for 150 members when they have now grown to 250, meaning they just have not learned how to deliver the membership experience to a larger audience.

Retention is an issue. Students often resign due to financial costs and seniors are rarely engaged. Chapters reduce dues and attendance expectations for seniors just to convince them to stay on as members. However, seniors and outgoing officers are often difficult members for current chapter leaders to work with. This may be both attributed to a lack of a membership experience due to space constraints or ability to build sisterhood among such large chapters as well as a lack of value provided to the members. However, the retention issue is not limited to Panhellenic organizations. If members join for the social experience only, as those members get older, the social experience is not enough to keep them engaged in the group. Chapters need to provide ongoing personal and professional development, as well as social aspects, in order to build engagement early in membership and keep those members engaged throughout their collegiate careers.

Many members seem to focus on the social aspect of membership and join for the parties. Student leaders, as well as many other stakeholders, report most members see social as the purpose rather than a benefit. Students also feel the university culture in general is socially motivated and that students come to JMU looking for a party experience. These individuals may then self-select into fraternal organizations due to the perception that a college experience is synonymous with the social experiences the fraternities and sororities provide.

Chapters have little incentive to improve, live above the standards and expectations, or even maintain a high standard of achievement. Once a group reaches an awards or recognition level, there is little incentive or support to maintain that level. New groups that form on campus come in with high expectations and a close adherence to standards but because the community culture is strong and with low accountability, it is easier for groups to lower their standards than maintain their high expectations. There is an accreditation process, but students and advisors largely reported the process was more about checking boxes to stay in good standing with the institution than achieving their best. While the accreditation report process includes goal setting with campus advisors at the culmination of the program, only chapters that did not meet accreditation standards created a Chapter Development Plan. Goals are not shared broadly among Fraternity and Sorority Life staff or



with headquarters or chapter advisors. The process does not consider that headquarters staff, advisors, alumni, volunteers, and students are partners in fraternal organizations achieving their best.

While several challenges with the fraternal experience are outlined here, students also reported significant positive experiences. Students are given the opportunity to hold leadership positions, create strong relationships with others, network, and use leadership skills within their fraternities and sororities. Brothers and sisters will study together and help each other network for on campus jobs. These organizations do serve as their family while away from home.

Philanthropy and Service

Philanthropy and service is described in many ways depending on the group with which one was speaking. Many sorority leaders discussed philanthropy and service as a focal point. Students reported members regularly contributing service within the local community. However, some leaders suggested that it is difficult to get members motivated to participate in service events. There are also regular reports of alcohol present at philanthropy events and fraternity members being removed from philanthropic events due to alcohol and intoxication, yet accountability around this issue seems nonexistent. Though the community is involved in campus-wide philanthropic programs, some staff feel the organizations are just throwing money around to help combat the issues their poor behavior causes and the negative perceptions of the fraternal community.

Fraternity and Sorority Housing

Housing is seen as more of a burden than a resource. Sororities report the spaces are not useful to their chapters as the spaces are not large enough to accommodate the entire chapter for meetings or programs. There is difficulty finding members to live in the houses as they can have nicer, private rooms elsewhere for a comparable or lower price without the challenges of living with sisters or brothers and navigating those relationships. Fraternities that are interested in housing feel their applications are often denied and the rest are not interested in obtaining on-campus chapter houses due to what they feel to be excessive oversight, unfair targeting, and fines. There is little guidance on basic housing management, such as cleanliness or relationships among residents. The strained relationship between Residence Life and Fraternity and Sorority Life is clear and apparent to students and they are confused who oversees what part of their housing.

Unrecognized Chapters

Unrecognized organizations are considered a larger issue by the staff than they are by the students. Student leaders and advisors feel they are unclear which chapters are even unrecognized. The students report the unrecognized groups are small but maintaining. Fraternities believe these groups have declined significantly and they don't hear much about these organizations. However, other focus groups mentioned they are not clear which organizations are unrecognized by the university or their headquarters. While Panhellenic chapters are aware they should not be programming or associating with unrecognized organizations, their lack of awareness of other chapters and which chapters are recognized and which are not likely leads to continued participation by unrecognized fraternities in community events.





Alumni and Volunteer Engagement

Chapter advisors feel they have a positive relationship with the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff and feel updated on important information occurring within the community, regardless of how much they like or dislike the content of those updates. However, many advisors have never met the staff in-person, nor have they met each other. Chapter advisors recognize times have changed and they want to be a part of that positive change, though they don't necessarily feel they have the tools or knowledge to contribute. Many chapter advisors drive great distances to work with chapters due to the lack of engaged alumni in the immediate area. Chapter advisors present at chapter meetings are so uncommon, representatives from other chapters visiting a group's chapter meeting assumes the group is in trouble if their chapter advisors are present at meetings.

Opportunities and Recommendations



Phase 1: Immediate Implementation



- 1.1 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must attend weekly council meetings, including executive board, delegate, and/or presidents' meetings. Council officers and chapter leadership need to build trust and relationships with the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Staff also need to gain knowledge and oversight of the councils through regular attendance at the meetings and hearing about the issues the chapters are facing and the plans the community develops. Coordinators should attend the weekly meetings the council they advise hosts, while the associate director of Fraternity and Sorority Life should rotate which meetings they attend each week, attending Panhellenic meetings one week and Interfraternity Council meetings the following week.
- 1.2 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should meet weekly with Center for Multicultural Student Services staff to share information about the various fraternity and sorority chapters on campus. Regular meetings between these two offices can help build trust and understanding among staff, which may contribute to building community amongst all chapters. These meetings should be used to discuss chapter and community issues, share important dates, and develop community wide programming that includes all chapters and fulfills various community and individual member needs.
- 1.3 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must work with council and chapter leaders to develop, support, and execute regular and annual community wide programming. Such programs should be intended to develop relationships among chapters and between councils as well as develop pride and tradition within the fraternity and sorority community. Such events may include welcome events at the beginning of the academic year, senior recognition programs, academic celebration events, and/or other large, positive programs that would inspire participation by members.
- 1.4 Fraternity and Sorority Life should develop a task force to look at policies, expectations, and practices around events with alcohol. Students should have the largest representation on the task force. This task force should collect and review all national organization policies, review campus and Harrisonburg policies, and develop new strategies for policies and procedures around events with alcohol. The outcome of the task force should be to establish reasonable and appropriate expectations for organizations and practical applications of the policies agreed upon.

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- 1.5 The Interfraternity Council constitution and by-laws must be edited to allow for new chapters joining the community to have the right to vote and hold office prior to gaining their charter, which may take upwards of three years with some organizations. Further, chapters should not lose the right to vote or hold office due to their size. These policies hamstringing organizations from helping to contribute to change or to develop policies and strategies to assist small organizations. Allowing these organizations to have a vote and their members to hold office will help change culture and challenge the status quo.
 - 1.6 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must host a quarterly advisors meeting. Advisors that can attend in person should be invited to do so while a teleconference option should be available to distant advisors. This meeting can review information in the advisors' newsletter as well as discuss chapter and community issues as they arise.
 - 1.7 Training and skill development in areas pertaining to risk management should be offered to the entire community, immediately. Students have strong misconceptions regarding risk management, including events with alcohol and hazing. Students also lack understanding of accountability and confrontation skills. Each member of the community should be required to participate in trainings to build their knowledge and skill set so there is a foundational understanding. This training could be offered in person, but online training could help students learn at their own pace and refer to programs and information as needed.
 - 1.8 Adjust the unrecognized chapters webpage to include specific information on each chapter, by who they are not recognized, whether the university, headquarters, or both, and why. While having this page is helpful to students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff, it is vague and does not fully convey the dangers of each group, whether joining or socializing.
 - 1.9 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should immediately begin working with campus partners, such as Residential Life, University Health Center, Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices, and the University Recreation Center, as well as community partners, such as Harrisonburg Police and area landlords, to gather information on individual students connected with unrecognized fraternity chapters. This information can help identify patterns of behavior and ensure that individuals are held accountable as appropriate.

Phase 2: Implementation Through Summer 2019

- 2.1 The Fraternity and Sorority Life office suite should include office space for each of the governing councils, including the ICGC. The office suite is an incredible space and can be a prominent resource in helping to bridge councils, build relationships between students and staff, and providing a place where everyone can work together towards the common goals.
- 2.2 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should establish relationship statements with various campus partners, particularly the departments in which programs or resources are jointly managed. Examples include Residential Life and the University Health Center. Relationship statements can clarify which department oversees which area to help establish roles and ensure no parts are lost or forgotten and the students receive comprehensive and seamless support, guidance, and oversight.



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- 2.3 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must work with council leaders and campus partners to help develop opportunities where the fraternity and sorority community can positively contribute to the campus community. As chapters or members commit, Fraternity and Sorority Life staff, council leaders, and chapter leaders should work together on behalf of the campus partner to ensure follow through and hold groups that do not fulfill their commitment accountable. The Fraternity and Sorority community should have an established presence at all campus-wide and large-scale university events, volunteering and contributing where appropriate.
 - 2.4 A marketing and public relations campaign around Fraternity and Sorority Life should be established. The greater university community lacked knowledge of the fraternity and sorority community. A realistic and positive marketing campaign can help to disseminate information to the greater James Madison University community, including unaffiliated students, changing hearts and minds regarding the fraternal organizations and their members.
 - 2.5 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should work with campus partners to develop a social norming campaign around alcohol, parties, and events with alcohol. Students have grave misconceptions around events with alcohol and alcohol issues on campus. Understanding the reality versus the perceptions can help refocus community culture around alcohol
 - 2.6 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should work with chapter presidents to establish a Chapter Development Plan based on the accreditation program for every organization, even those that meet accreditation expectations. Even a chapter that meets accreditation standards can continuously improve. A Chapter Development Plan for each organization, regardless of accreditation level, will help establish a culture of improvement. This plan should be disseminated to the chapter advisors and headquarters staff of each organization in order to promote collaboration and support the help the chapters meet their goals.
 - 2.7 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must develop a regular assessment and evaluation program. As the Center for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education recommends, the assessment and evaluation program should determine the extent to which the program accomplishes stated mission, goals, and learning outcomes, to what degree the community compliments the university mission, and to collect general feedback on needs and services of the community. Any assessment and evaluation program should include qualitative and quantitative data. Membership trends, retention, judicial concerns, behavioral complaints, and financial expectations should be tracked annually. Material submitted from the accreditation program can be used to track the overall health and quality of chapters and the community. Often, assessment and evaluation can be conducted utilizing materials the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff already collects or to which they have access, rather than requiring expensive and extensive surveys or assessment programs.
 - 2.8 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must work with national headquarters of unrecognized chapters to address their presence on campus. For groups that also do not recognize their former chapters on campus, staff should work to understand the national organization's future interest in re-establishing their chapter on campus and leverage that information to partner in ending their former chapter's presence on campus. This could include cease and desist letters from the national headquarters for using the name or insignia of the organization without authorization or requesting a headquarters' assistance in increasing pressure on alumni to end support of the former chapter and its current members.



2.9 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should send letters and other communication to current fraternity and sorority chapters, members, alumni volunteers, and Panhellenic headquarters to clarify which groups are not recognized by the university and what the university's expectations are around socializing and supporting these organizations. Further, communication should be sent out to all university faculty and staff to clarify the status of unrecognized groups and request assistance in identifying concerning behavior that may be associated with these groups.



Phase 3: Implementation Beginning Fall 2019

- 3.1 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must attend a minimum of one event per chapter, per semester. This expectation should include ICGC chapter events. In order to build relationships with community members outside of the chapter leadership, Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must be present at chapter events. This presence can help to demonstrate the care staff have for the chapters and their members, aiding in building trust between the general members and the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff. Staff can also gain valuable insight into the chapters' experiences, helping to identify areas of further training and development.
- 3.2 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must host monthly meetings with council leadership and chapter presidents. By bringing all Fraternity and Sorority Life chapters together, the group can work on community-wide issues and develop community standards and accountability expectations. Chapters can learn about trends, share best practices, hear about important dates, and have a chance to ask all Fraternity and Sorority Life staff members questions to gain understanding and clarity. Like other recommendations in this area, this section can help Fraternity and Sorority Life staff build relationships with student leaders, which will build trust. Staff will also learn about common issues within the community or areas of common confusion to help adjust or develop future programming and communication strategies. ICGC council officers and chapter representatives should be invited to attend.
- 3.3 Fraternity and Sorority Life must develop a mission, vision, a common values set, as well as goals and learning outcomes for the fraternity and sorority community that compliment and enhance those of James Madison University. These will help guide the structure, resource allocation, and programs of the office as well as the community and are best practices outlined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education for Fraternity or Sorority Advising Programs. A mission and vision can help inform the staff on various decisions within their roles and the office. A common values set can help build a cohesive community and establish standards for accountability. Finally, goals and established learning outcomes can help students learn what to expect from membership in a fraternal organization at JMU, can assist with program development, and can provide expectations that can be assessed by the community and staff. Students should be involved in the development of these pieces.
- 3.4 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must develop strategies and programs to reach more community members in person. This should include regular and annual programming for new members, emerging leaders, and chapter officers. Programming should include introductions for Fraternity and Sorority Life staff, community building, and leadership skill development. To reduce fear and misconceptions of the university staff, in person



discussions and team building with a large variety of community members must occur. Members are also seeking opportunities for growth and development and greater value from their membership with fraternal organizations. The personal and professional development offered through these programs will help fulfill a need for which the students are asking to be filled.

- 3.5 Fraternity and Sorority Life must work with the Interfraternity Council leadership to develop an aggressive expansion plan. One of the quickest ways to change fraternity community culture is to bring groups on that will function in alignment with their values and follow policies and expectations. Without other organizations around them that are living their values, a fraternity will quickly devolve to the actions of the general community. By seeking out fraternities the institution is interested in having as part of their community, and working with those organizations to establish strong chapters, expansion can have a significant positive impact on the community culture. Where it is not generally recommended to have a new fraternity join a community more frequently than one every three semesters, in James Madison University's case, it is recommended that a new fraternity be scheduled to join the community once per academic year. The men self-selecting into fraternity recruitment are looking mainly for a social outlet. Men that fraternities would be highly interested in having as members never considered fraternity to be an option, due to the culture and stereotypes, and therefore involved themselves in other areas of campus. If these highly qualified men regularly saw values-based fraternities as a positive option, the community culture may begin to change because the purpose for which men are joining fraternities evolved. This expansion plan must include an outline of how to work with interest groups that form on campus outside of a planned expansion. Interest groups are generally tied to one particular organization and will not necessarily be swayed into joining another chapter already slated for expansion. Including this in the plan will provide consistency across occurrences and may dissuade organizations from encouraging interest groups to form prior to university communication and partnership.
- 3.6 Staff on all levels must focus on curating professional development opportunities. Each staff member in the organizational chart that oversees Fraternity and Sorority Life should hold membership in the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors as well as the NASPA Fraternity and Sorority Knowledge Community. All members of the Fraternity and Sorority Life staff, and those that supervise the Fraternity and Sorority Life area, should attend the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors Annual Meeting each year. During this meeting, staff should not only attend relevant sessions and town hall meetings but should reach out to each headquarters of organizations present on campus and meet with the staff attending the Annual Meeting to continue building partnerships with these organizations. All administrators that oversee Fraternity and Sorority Life who attend the NASPA Annual Conference should attend the sessions and town hall meetings hosted by the Fraternity and Sorority Life Knowledge Community and intended for senior student affairs officers. Staff should also participate in the ongoing training and development offered through Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors in the form of webinars and publications. Fraternity and Sorority Life staff members should apply to serve as facilitators for the North American Interfraternity Conference's IMPACT and Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute programs. Facilitating these programs can help build relationships with headquarters staff, volunteers, and other campus professionals, build knowledge on individual organizations, councils, and national trends, and develop facilitation skills. Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should apply to attend the Fraternal Executive Association's Interfraternity Institute, if they have not already attended the program. This program develops staff skills in



managing and progressing a fraternity and sorority community while also building relationships with headquarters staff, other campus professionals, and seasoned professionals within the field of Fraternity and Sorority Life. The Associate Director should apply to participate in The Gathering, hosted by the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values. This program is designed to help professionals refocus their energy towards change and progress within their community. Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should continue to volunteer to facilitate regional programs for various fraternities and sororities, as appropriate. While several organizations' programs are invite-only to facilitate, many organizations post applications for facilitators. Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should seek out application opportunities for serving as a facilitator for these programs to build relationships with headquarters staff, alumni, volunteers, other campus-based professionals, and the chapter representatives present at these programs from James Madison University. Finally, staff should work with councils to attend regional, student focused conferences together. Currently, the Inter-Cultural Greek Council and Interfraternity Council both attend the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values Central Conference, albeit separately. The Panhellenic Association attends the Coalition for Collegiate Women's Leadership Conference. These conferences, and the travel involved, can be an incredible team building activity and can help staff and students build relationships, trust, and understanding. All Fraternity and Sorority Life staff should attend with governing councils and jointly plan travel and programming with the Center for Multicultural Student Services staff and the Inter-Cultural Greek Council to attend one conference that benefits everyone. As two of the governing councils already attend the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values Central Conference, which also includes the National Black Greek Leadership Conference and an abundance of culturally-based fraternal organization programming, this seems like the natural choice.

Phase 4: Implementation Beginning Spring 2020

- 4.1 Fraternity and Sorority Life staff must offer an annual advisors' conference. During this conference, advisors can build relationship with Fraternity and Sorority Life staff and each other, helping to create a unified approach to addressing community issues. Advisors can learn about expectations, requirements, trends, and best practices to help change culture within their chapter and, ultimately, the community.
- 4.2 Chapters should be expected to encourage members to hold membership in non-Greek student organizations, hold leadership positions across campus, participate in intramurals, and otherwise contribute and engage in the greater university community. Incentives and credit for involvement can be incorporated into and/or expanded upon within the accreditation process.

Phase 5: Long Term Recommendations

- 5.1 James Madison University must develop a common process to adjudicate organizational behavior issues. Each area adjudicates issues on their own, lending to an inequity in accountability and judicial outcomes. One common adjudication process can establish campus norms and expectations, beginning to change campus and community culture.



Conclusion

The Fraternity and Sorority Life community at James Madison University has an immense amount of opportunity. The students are bright and capable and are looking for more out of their membership than social events. With this interest, the community is ripe for change. The Fraternity and Sorority Life staff care a great deal about their students but have fallen into a pattern of complacency, due in large part to a lack of challenge, oversight, and informed supervision over many years. With a movement toward gaining knowledge on trends and best practices, a commitment to the time and dedication it will take to rebuild relationships with the student leadership and their chapters, follow through with recommended changes, and a commitment to accountability, the Fraternity and Sorority Life community at James Madison University can reach their fullest potential and positively contribute to their members' lives and the overall university community.