Great year. Changes ahead.

Fraternity and Sorority Life has had an incredible year. Beginning in July, 2014, we welcomed our new Assistant Vice Provost for Student Engagement, Dr. Lamar Hylton, to our community. In this role, Dr. Hylton has begun shaping a variety of areas, including the fraternity and sorority experience at the University of Minnesota. A significant accomplishment of Dr. Hylton’s was acquiring added funding and support to expand the Fraternity and Sorority Life office staff by one, beginning this coming July.

The accomplishments of the year for our four governing councils have been great. First and foremost, beginning in 2014, there were only three sustaining councils. This year, great work has gone into the evolution of a National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), which will govern our historically black fraternities and sororities. This council has been working to standardize meetings and processes and will focus on expanding programming and support for our NPHC organizations this coming fall.

Fraternity and Sorority Life is also sad to say goodbye to Mia McCurdy, Coordinator for Fraternity and Sorority Life. Mia has taken a job near her hometown in Seattle, WA, working in Advising, Career Counseling and Orientation at Edmonds Community College. We wish her all the best and thank her for her endless support and great work.

Traveling and Higher Ed.

The following students will be traveling on behalf of their national organizations in 2015/16 or pursuing a higher education advanced degree.

Nicole Ballou—Pi Beta Phi HQ
Talia Saville—Alpha Phi HQ
Kristin Stock—Delta Gamma HQ
Garret Zastoupil— University of Connecticut (Beta Theta Pi)

Recruitment Success

Fraternity and Sorority Life has seen tremendous and sustained community growth over the past several years. The current headcounts by council are as follows:

Interfraternity Council—1509
Multicultural Greek Council—121
National Pan-Hellenic Council—26
Panhellenic Council—1394

*Only UMN students included

Our councils addressed big issues over the past year. Here is an overview of the work they took on and the status of those issues.

Social Policies

The Panhellenic Council has been working closely with their National Panhellenic (NPC) partners, including our NPC delegates, Area Adviser, and local advisers to tackle issues surrounding upholding the national social policies. Similar conversations are taking place within our MGC, NPHC and IFC organizations in an attempt to curb potential risk management issues.

The policies of our national organizations are intricate and specific. There are limits to types of events, duration, alcohol use, chaperones, etc. In recent months, we have seen a national trend of holding organizations accountable for events taking place that are not registered or following national policies. Groups are being held to a high standard for what constitutes a sorority event. To protect our local organizations, the councils have been working to better educate and enforce the national policies.

We appreciate the efforts by our advisers as they work to step up enforcement. We also appreciate the support from our alumnae working to respect these changes. We will continue to work with our IFC partners to help them better understand the policies and necessities of hosting events with PHC sororities.

Greeks and Race

The Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) ended the year with the beginning of a conversation about race and its relationship to our fraternal community. This was a response to the incident at Oklahoma involving Sigma Alpha Epsilon and also an artists’ depiction of that incident at the University of Minnesota.

In early May, more than 30 members representing all four councils came together to start a conversation about identity, race and how Greek Life can embrace, support and explore this topic to better engage our members. It was the start of a conversation that should happen regularly, and we are excited MGC took it on.

Registering Recruitment/Intake

FSL has been working closely with our member organizations to submit their information related to membership intake and recruitment practices. FSL requires this information, especially should any paperwork be required for national offices. Please make sure to work with officers responsible for these processes to work in advance and set up appointments with their direct advisers to sign off on the necessary items.

Sex Assault

The fall semester presented the community with an immediate call to get behind work being taken on by UMN’s student government. (MSA) The No Gray campaign, sponsored by our Greek community leadership and MSA, focused to change the policies surrounding Sexual Assault and how our campus reviews these cases. MSA has taken on the challenge to redefine our UMN policy to mutual consent and has enlisted the help of many Greek leaders.

Mental Health

FSL continues to work with chapter advisers on issues surrounding mental health. The loss of a member in our community related to mental health issues only heightens the need for us to focus on this issues and embrace the reality of the stressors of college life.

Creating a National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)

The creation of a local chapter of NPHC was an immediate focus of Dr. Danita Brown Young, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. Our historically black organizations range back as much as 103 years. The history of these organizations on our campus is vast, but the relationship with the University has not always been as strong as it should be.

This fall, Mia McCurdy, working closely with student leadership, worked to formalize and implement local bylaws to begin enabling these organizations to better support themselves and work with the University.

Part of Mission of NPHC:

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated (NPHC) is currently composed of nine (9) International Greek letter Sororities and Fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. NPHC promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of information and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities and functions.
Bigs and Littles—A Title IX challenge

The University of Minnesota has a rich history surrounding the big brother/sister and little brother/sister program. This conversation is similar to that surrounding Sweethearts. This program is not typically formalized through our organizational processes and exists in the context of the membership experience of joining one of our IFC and PHC organizations. The program has become formalized and manifests itself in the form of sweatshirts and apparel amongst our members.

In recent visits by some of our national partners to campus, this issue was raised with FSL staff and our governing councils. The challenge with these types of programs is that, from a legal perspective, they could be seen as providing membership to people of opposite gender, placing our single-sex and Title IX protected organizations at jeopardy.

This issue has been tackled at a national level. Both the North American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference (see right-hand column) have passed either unanimous agreements and/or resolutions that specifically address and ban these types of programs and involvements from existing. In these agreements, it outlines the types of involvement not allowed. If you’d like to read the specific resolutions, please visit nicindy.org (NIC) andnpcwomen.org (NPC) for the language.

Moving forward, the IFC and PHC have been tasked with and challenged to make substantial adjustments to their enforcement of these programs. Working closely with our NPC Area Advisor and communicating with the NIC main office, IFC and PHC aim to slowly begin phasing these programs out of. Understanding this is not an easy task and that changing a culture around this program will take time, the goal is to provide a 3-4 year phase out.

In the coming year, men and women will not be allowed to choose/assign bigs/littles. As the end of the phase out, the apparel will no longer be allowed and the chapters will be held accountable for those actions.

In the meantime, I urge everyone to ask the question:

*Why is it appropriate for a man/women to be wearing my letters, representing my organization, when they have not taken the oath I swore to for a lifetime commitment?*

NPC Unanimous
1. The women’s sororities of the National Panhellenic Conference have the right to confine their membership to women and shall defend their right to exist as single-sex organizations.

2. Auxiliaries. Each College Panhellenic shall denounce the participation of undergraduate Panhellenic women in auxiliary groups to men’s fraternities.

3. Men’s Recruitment. Each College Panhellenic shall denounce the participation of Panhellenic women in men’s fraternity events when or where the primary purpose is recruitment.

NIC Resolution
The North-American Interfraternity Conference believes sororities and women’s fraternities offer excellent opportunities for women to share a fraternal experience and that auxiliary women’s groups organized by some men’s fraternity chapters, commonly referred to as “little sisters,” are inconsistent with the concept and philosophy of separate and equal women’s fraternities. The Conference joins the Fraternity Executives Association and several member fraternities in strongly discouraging “little sister” groups as inappropriate adjuncts to the collegiate chapters of men’s fraternities. One of the Standards of the NIC calls for member fraternities to work with their chapters to eliminate these programs.

MGC and NPHC Fall Drive-In
Co-Sponsored by FSL and Iowa State University

In October 2014, the MGC and NPHC organizations were able to participate in an event hosted at Iowa State University and co-hosted by the University of Minnesota. Together, our fraternity and sorority life offices came together to plan a full day event in Ames, IA that focused on MGC and NPHC issues. This event was free for students and open to members of all four councils. In our inaugural year, approximately 30 students participated, with two of our students taking on a presentation for the event as well. FSL sponsored one of the two keynote speakers, transportation, program and lodging for our students.
Fraternity and Sorority Life collects data each year to track our progress. Membership growth continues to steadily increase for all four councils. Our students continue to graduate, something that we are proud of and hope that chapters continue to push their members to excel at.

In fall 2014, our students were engaged in a conversation about high risk drinking, as data emerged that show a high rate as compared to non-Greeks. This conversation has continued into 2015 and will be a focus as we enable our organizations to work with their members to provide safe environments that promote positive behaviors.

Student Engagement Research Universities (SERU) Survey

Each year, the University of Minnesota provides the SERU to all University students. Fraternity and Sorority Life works closely with the Office for Institutional Research (OIR) to ensure Greek members are provided ample opportunities to submit their responses. From this data, we get a great picture of how our students’ overall experience compares to non-Greek peers. The bullets below highlight information provided by OIR in January 2014.

Some of the areas of strength for our membership are:

- More satisfaction with their educational experience
- More satisfaction and sense of belonging on campus
- Increased critical thinking and communication skills
- Increased engagement in the classroom
- Elevated academic effort

Areas for growth and improvement amongst our membership:

- Poor academic habits
- Decreased use of non-academic time
- Focus on academic research

It is the goal of Fraternity and Sorority Life to enable our organizations to utilize this data to re-engage their members in active conversations about how to best take advantage of their time on campus. Our office will continue to provide resources and details to chapter leadership in hopes they can share those resources and encourage active participation in our campus community by our members.

For more information on the SERU data for our campus, please visit www.seru.umn.edu.
Upcoming Events

PHC Sorority Recruitment: September 5th-12th, 2015

The Panhellenic Formal Recruitment Process begins with a mandatory information meeting on 9/5/15 in the Great Hall, Coffman Union. Registration opens on June 1, 2015.

IFC Formal Recruitment: September 5th-12th, 2015

The Interfraternity Council is hosting a series of formal events for men to get to know chapters across the University. Saturday, 9/5, kicks-off an information meeting and house tours.

Homecoming Week: September 20th-26th, 2015

Homecoming events begin September 20th and run throughout the week. The football game will be on 9/26/15.

Multicultural Greek Council: September 8th-11th, 2015

The Multicultural Greek Council is hosting a week dedicated to Meeting the Greeks for UMN students to visit with each chapter and learn more about joining.