

SUNY POTSDAM

GREEK LIFE TASK FORCE:
FINAL REPORT

JANUARY 2014

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- Alan L. Hersker, Ph.D.
Chair, Greek Life Task Force

BACKGROUND

The Greek Life Task Force was convened by the SUNY Potsdam President’s Council on March 1, 2013. The Task Force has ten members, faculty/staff, alumni and students both Greek and non-Greek. The Council charged the Task Force to answer two questions: 1. Should Greek Life continue to have a place

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at SUNY Potsdam? and 2. If so, how can the SUNY Potsdam campus community make changes to strengthen the Greek system and protect the wellbeing of students?

On May 15, 2013, the Task Force presented the President's Council with its recommendation to the first charge: that Greek letter organizations be allowed to continue at SUNY Potsdam but only if "significant changes occur and endure." The Task Force memorandum to President Schwaller is attached as Appendix A.

Then, the Task Force turned to Charge 2 and began the process of determining what changes need to be made to strengthen the Greek system and protect the well-being of current and future students. This report outlines in detail the changes that the Task Force feels are needed to have a positive and productive long term Greek presence at SUNY Potsdam.

MEMBERS OF THE GREEK LIFE TASK FORCE

Robert Barber Barber is an undergraduate senior from North Carolina majoring in speech communication. He is the Social Chair of the All-Greek Council and the Vice President of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. Coming from a military background, he has a special interest in leadership communication and organization.

Sara Behuniak Behuniak is an undergraduate senior who is majoring in Politics with minors in Environmental Studies and Pre-Law. She is Student Government Association President and is a member of Arethusa sorority.

Tara Bohon Bohon is a graduate student currently enrolled in the Organizational Performance Leadership and Technology master's program at SUNY Potsdam. She is involved in student organizations, such as Student Entertainment Services and the Student Government Association. Bohon earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from SUNY Potsdam in history and creative writing and has been a student since the Fall of 2007.

Peter Galloway A 1984 graduate of SUNY Potsdam where he was a brother of The Order of Prometheus Fraternity, Galloway served the chapter in many positions in both the undergraduate chapter and the Alumni Association. Since leaving Potsdam after receiving a degree from Clarkson University, he has remained involved in Greek Life through advising fraternity chapters at the two campuses where he has worked. Currently Galloway is at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, where he holds the dual roles of Director of Housing Services and Assistant Dean of Student Involvement, overseeing the areas of Student Leadership & Involvement, Campus Recreation, and Fraternity & Sorority Life.

Alan L. Hersker An associate professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology, Hersker is a brother of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity's Kappa-Eta Chapter (Widener University), where he served as president. He earned his bachelor's degree from Rutgers-New Brunswick and his Ph.D. in anthropology from American University. Hersker has been a member of the SUNY Potsdam faculty since 2005.

Amy Kellogg An alumna from the Class of 1999, Kellogg received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Politics and Economics. Kellogg is a partner at the law firm of Harter Secrest & Emery having earned her law degree from Albany Law School in 2002. Kellogg is currently the President-Elect of the Potsdam Alumni Association.

Kathleen M. O'Rourke An associate professor and chair of the Department of Community Health, O'Rourke earned her bachelor's degree from SUNY Cortland, her master's degree from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and her Ph.D. in Public Health from UMASS Amherst. Her areas of interest include alcohol/substance use and abuse. O'Rourke has been a member of the SUNY Potsdam faculty since 1994.

Romeyn Prescott A native of Keeseville, NY, Prescott attended AuSable Valley Central School and received his Bachelor of Arts in English Writing from SUNY Potsdam in 1992. He was hired by SUNY Potsdam as a Computing Helpdesk Technician in 1996 and currently serves as SUNY Potsdam's Director of Academic Computing. Prescott is active at the SUNY-wide level, participating in several governance groups. At the local level, he contributes in an advisory capacity on IT matters to the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce and Potsdam Central School, and is a member of SUNY Potsdam's Alumni Board and a Board Member of the SUNY Potsdam Child Care Center.

Beth A. G. Todd A program coordinator with the Center for Lifelong Education and Recreation, Todd is a sister of the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority's Gamma Kappa Chapter (West Virginia Wesleyan), where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management. In 2012, she graduated from SUNY Potsdam with a master's degree in Information and Communication Technology. She has been a member of the SUNY Potsdam faculty since 2006.

Erin Wilson Wilson has served as a member of the SUNY Potsdam Staff as the Career Counselor in the Career Planning Office since January of 2007. She is an alumna of SUNY Potsdam who graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Writing and Speech Communication. She received her Master of Education degree from St. Lawrence University in May of 2010. During her undergraduate years at SUNY Potsdam, she was an active member of the Gamma Epsilon Chapter of the Alpha Sigma Tau (AST) sorority, where she also served as President for one year. She remains involved with the chapter and is currently their Academic/Faculty Advisor, as well as an active alumni member.

Glen Zagorski An IT Manager with Johnson & Johnson in Rochester, NY, Zagorski earned a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science from SUNY Potsdam in 1987. He joined Psi Phi Delta Fraternity as an undergraduate, and he is a past President of both the Psi Phi Delta Alumni Association and the SUNY Potsdam Greek Alumni Council. He and his wife, Jane Morale '80, have established the Morale-Zagorski Greek Life Internship Scholarship at SUNY Potsdam.

INTRODUCTION: CULTURE CHANGE

This report begins by offering general comments on the current state of Greek Life on the SUNY Potsdam campus and recommendations for changing the campus culture. Following these remarks, the Task Force summarizes our findings and offers specific recommendations for change in four areas: Greek governance and leadership, college support and governance, college and community culture, and risk management.

It is critical that all members of the college community (from students to faculty to administrators to alumni) work toward establishing a culture of trust and openness. This will require active and honest lines of communication between all stakeholders as well as a willingness to refrain from gossip, character attacks, and misrepresentations. It will require a critical look at stereotypes (of what Greeks

do, of what administrators want, etc.) to question their basis in fact and reality. The College community will need to consider carefully and then justify what needs to be secret (whether in a judicial hearing or a new member education program). Just as importantly, the College and Greek Community need to identify values that will be promoted (such as those outlined in the Potsdam Pledge) and destructive behaviors that absolutely will not be tolerated such as hazing, drug/alcohol abuse, and sexual, verbal and physical harassment.

Members of the Task Force visited the campuses of SUNY Plattsburgh and SUNY Geneseo, both of which dramatically reworked their Greek systems after tragedies. We were impressed with the ability of Greek organizations at those schools to govern themselves and their community. We found that (1) the culture that enabled Greeks to make the right decisions and to take responsibility for their own actions took many years to achieve, and (2) Greeks continue to make bad decisions occasionally, as do all students. Thus, efforts, by the College and by the Greeks themselves, to educate and empower members to make good decisions (and to address those who do not) must be continuous and unrelenting. This transition to Greek “self-governance” must be gradual and realistic, with progress evaluated by clear benchmarks that have been negotiated by all stakeholders.

Close collaborative relationships between Greeks and College staff must be ongoing. Stakeholders must realize that rather than a “problem to be solved,” the persistence of hazing and alcohol/drug misuse and abuse needs to be a permanent agenda item (and arguably not just for Greek organizations). This is not necessarily negative. Giving all students the tools they need to make good decisions and providing them the space to learn when they don’t (when this is possible and appropriate) is an important part of the College’s mission to train students to think critically and enable them reach their full potential.

We would encourage all members of the College community—Greek and non-Greek, students and staff, actives and alumni—to consider how the goals of Greek organizations do and can align with the overall goals of the College. The Advancement/Alumni Relations division has had much success in partnering with Greek alumni. This can serve as a model in developing other cooperative ventures. For example, if given the opportunity, Greek chapters might welcome the opportunity to participate *as Greeks* in College-sponsored activities such as Freshman Orientation and welcoming students to campus. This could also help dispel long-standing and often untrue stereotypes about Greeks.

While we see tremendous potential for change on our campus, Task Force members concurred that one of the most significant barriers to change is the presence of banned and unrecognized Greek organizations. The unbridled and public alcohol/drug use; sexual, verbal and physical harassment; and hazing practices of many of these groups has created a toxic environment that damages the reputation of the College and negatively impacts the Greek community. While the College may be able to pursue legal and administrative action against these groups, recognized Greek chapters must take the lead in shunning these banned groups and refusing to acknowledge them as part of our Greek community. Unless active members of recognized chapters are willing to do this, the future of Greek Life at SUNY Potsdam will remain in question.

Further, mindful that the recommendations of the 1996 Greek Life Task Force went mostly unimplemented, and building on the current enthusiasm and openness on the part of all stakeholders for change, we strongly recommend the creation of a permanent Greek Life Advisory Board. The advisory board would lobby for the implementation of these recommendations, monitor progress, make additional recommendations as needed, and provide oversight in areas of policy and procedure relating to SUNY Potsdam Greek Life. This board should consist of active Greeks, Greek alumni, college administrators

and staff, faculty, local officials (Potsdam Police, for example), and representatives from the residential community. Once this board is created, we strongly recommend that its first task should be to review College policy and procedures regarding banned and unrecognized organizations and the current judicial process as it relates to Greek students and organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While dealing with banned and unrecognized organizations and a review of the current judicial process are two of the most pressing issues, there are many changes and recommendations that the Task Force thinks are necessary to ensure a positive Greek presence at SUNY Potsdam. The Task Force Recommendations are broken down into four areas: Greek governance and leadership, college support and governance, college and community culture, and risk management.

1. GREEK GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Greek governance and leadership category focused on the core subcategories of leadership development, new member recruitment, new member education, and alumni and advising.

There are many positive processes and programs currently in place at the College, including the Greek leadership seminar and the Greek Alumni Council (GAC). Additionally, this past semester in response to the issues that prompted the creation of this Task Force, Julie Dold's office organized the first Greek Life Summit. This included active members, alumni, faculty advisors, staff and administrators, and conduct hearing officers. Also, in response to the perceived challenges raised by the changes mandated by Student Affairs to the New Member Education (NME) program in the Fall of 2012, Ms. Dold convened a working group of Student Affairs staff and members of Greek organizations to rework the NME guidelines to meet the goals of the program while addressing the College's concerns about hazing and alcohol/drug misuse.

In response to the issues of hazing, drugs, and alcohol, the All Greek Council (AGC) has placed these issues, along with that of banned organizations, at the top of its agenda. The AGC has created a working group to suggest policy and procedural changes. While the Task Force has not reviewed their work, we are encouraged that these discussions are taking place (and have been initiated by the AGC itself). This work mirrors ongoing discussions by the Greek Alumni Council and other involved alumni. While progress is being made, more work needs to be done to empower Greek organizations to govern themselves in a substantive way. The goal should be that the College plays a role only in cases involving egregious violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

In developing the recommendations on Greek Governance & Leadership, Task Force members drew on sources including meetings and interviews with administrators, faculty and staff; site visits to SUNY Geneseo and SUNY Plattsburgh; attendance at the Fall 2013 SUNY Potsdam Greek Life Summit; and the Greek Alumni Council's Proposal for Improvement of Greek Life at SUNY Potsdam.

a. Leadership Development Recommendations

1. The values and standards of Greek organizations need review. Each chapter should revisit its mission statement to ensure that it aligns with the core values of the organization, incorporating the ideals into their new member education process.

2. Student Affairs staff along with active members should revisit the College's requirements and guidelines for Greek organizations. Since the Task Force was created because of concerns about violations of hazing and alcohol policies, we recommend that all requirements and consequences outlined for Greeks focus on academics and risk management. Any other expectations, such as community service and philanthropy, should be stated as guidelines, and should be promoted for all SUNY Potsdam students.
3. A culture of self-governance should be fostered. Students should take action within their own organizations and hold their own members accountable. The College should support chapters in this regard, focusing sanctions on individuals rather than organizations if accountability is demonstrated. Regular meetings with leadership from every active chapter to discuss expectations of the Greek community and address on-going/potential issues are necessary.
4. A culture of partnership between the College and the Greek system is essential. The current Greek system has at its core a culture of secrecy. While there may be some value in the secret nature of rituals or information, secrecy in matters of governance is counterproductive at best. Chapters and Greek governing bodies must embrace the practice of disclosing policy infractions to the College. The College in turn must acknowledge this increased trust by providing respectful guidance and support, focused on strengthening the integrity of both the Greek system and the larger College community.
5. A culture of partnership between chapters will improve the overall quality of the Greek system. Some chapters have made excellent progress in improving their internal governance and their working relationship with the College. There are instances today where chapters are reluctant to share their approach, plans, and results with other chapters. Each chapter should instead openly share their best practices, either through All Greek Council, or by some other means. Doing so will help ensure the viability of all chapters.

b. New Member Recruitment Recommendations

1. Increasing efforts to promote and brand Greek organizations would be beneficial to campus-wide student engagement and new member recruitment. The Greek Community should set a goal of driving the general faculty and student opinion of Greek Life from 'negative' to 'positive.' Ideas include:
 - increasing positive awareness through the use of social media, a Greek section in *The Racquette*, computer screens, the SUNY Potsdam Weekly media campaign, information monitors, etc.;
 - enhance the Greek Life section of www.potsdam.edu to include more dynamic and robust content;
 - specifically comment on negative press, clarifying as needed, but supporting the ideals of the College; generate positive press, highlighting the achievements of individuals and groups;

- develop programming such as logos and a campaign similar to ‘Glow late-night activities;’ host more high-visibility Greek-related events on campus to draw positive attention to these student organizations.
2. More training for members who are serving their chapter in the role of New Member Educator is necessary. These individuals play an instrumental role in teaching new members about Greek culture on our campus.
- c. New Member Education Recommendations
1. A more formal recruitment/rush process should be instituted for fraternities (this can be similar to the one in place on campus in the 1980’s and 1990’s). The goal is to ensure that each prospective new member has the opportunity to learn about each chapter, its members, and its ideals, in order to find the best fit. Chapters will similarly benefit by having access to the entire pool of prospective new members. Student Affairs staff and active Greeks working collaboratively should develop guidelines for recruitment.
 2. A peer-mentoring program that empowers students to provide positive guidance to each other should be implemented. This program may include a mandatory mentoring program for new members of all organizations that includes sessions on Risk Management, Hazing, Greek History, and Community Engagement. This program could build on (and involve participants in) the Greek Leadership course taught by Julie Dold.
 3. Any activity or ritual incorporated with Bid Day, new member education, or initiation should be one that students would be proud to conduct in public on campus. Applying this guideline, regardless of where the ritual is actually conducted, will help to ensure that rituals are both meaningful and consistent with the ideals of both the chapter and the College.
 4. The College should establish new member education program guidelines with input from and collaboration with members of the Greek community.
- d. Alumni and Advising Recommendations
1. Alumni advisors should be mandatory for each Greek chapter and a formal program to train and educate alumni advisors should be created. The All Greek Council and Greek Alumni Council should work with Student Affairs staff to adapt the expectations and training documents used on other campuses to serve as basic training for alumni advisors of Greek organizations. Additionally, the AGC should consider guidelines and training for active Greeks on how to manage alumni behavior as it relates to chapter activities.
 2. The Greek Alumni Council should consider requiring each chapter to assign a delegate who is a current student to actively participate on the Council. If the GAC adopts this policy, they should inform Student Affairs staff when chapters do not attend meetings and other Greek alumni events.

2. COLLEGE SUPPORT AND GOVERNANCE

This category focused on the core subcategories of college support and staffing, public, campus and community relations, disciplinary procedures, and academics.

Julie Dold and her staff and colleagues are doing exemplary work despite very limited resources. Given the state of Greek affairs at the College though, it is unrealistic to expect improvement without allocating more resources—human and financial—to this area. This need not entail significant expenditures on the part of the College. Rather, allocating work study students (on the models of SUNY Plattsburgh and SUNY Geneseo), creating endowments for paid interns (as with the Morale-Zagorski Greek Life Internship), and partnering with faculty/staff on projects (for example, working with Public Affairs to promote positive press) may offer creative and affordable ways to augment Student Affairs staffing in this area.

In talking to staff, administrators, and Greeks, the Task Force found much miscommunication and a lack of trust: faculty often failed to acknowledge that Greek behavior was often exemplary; Greeks believed that the College was overtly working toward banning Greek organizations on our campus; Student Affairs staff felt that Greeks were incapable of changing the culture of hazing; Greek alumni were more likely to get (incorrect and inflammatory) information from Facebook than they were to contact the College or even active members of their chapters directly. Clearly, we must create both formal channels for information sharing as well as informal opportunities for staff, administrators, actives and alumni to interact cordially and collegially.

In preparing recommendations, Task Force members considered statements by and interviews with College faculty, staff, and administrators; information from faculty members (including a survey) and advisors of Greek organizations; State of Greek Life reports; a review of College disciplinary procedures; meetings with the All Greek Council and Greek organizations; two open forums for Greek students; site visits to SUNY Geneseo and Plattsburgh; and a review of recent articles on Greeks in local print news media.

a. College Support and Staffing Recommendations

1. The College should task Julie Dold to work exclusively on Greek issues, creating a full-time position of Assistant Director of Greek Life. Additionally, more student employees should be hired to provide support for Greek Life in Student Affairs and a student position should be created in the Greek Life office that is devoted to public relations to increase positive Greek Life marketing.
2. The College should establish the position of Risk Management Coordinator. This position would address Greek Life issues but would also work to coordinate risk management efforts in general. Programming and education for all student organizations on campus, including clubs and athletic teams, would be an integral responsibility of this position.
3. College Advancement should work with Greek alumni to endow scholarships and internships that would place Greek students within Student Affairs. These internships could focus on specific issues such as New Member Education, Philanthropy, Public Affairs, and On-Campus Programming.

4. A formal mandatory program to educate and train Faculty Advisors on their duties and responsibilities should be developed. This should include providing advisors with ideas on how to positively promote their chapter using campus outlets, social media, and community outlets. Faculty advisors should also be familiar with issues such as Risk Management, the Student Code of Conduct, services available through the Student Success Center, maintaining an off-campus residence, and information and policies related to banned and unrecognized organizations on campus. In addition to the training program, Greeks and College staff should develop a handbook for faculty advisors. This handbook should be reviewed and revised regularly.
5. The College should increase engagement with and support of Greek-sponsored events and activities. The Greek chapters should work to educate the College on events and activities that they are organizing and supporting. Where appropriate, faculty and staff should be encouraged to attend these events. When reviewing requests for reappointment, continuing appointment and promotion, supervisors should consider attendance at Greek events as meeting college service requirements.

b. On-Campus Public Relations Recommendations

1. The College should support the Greek community as it works to engage faculty, educate them on Greek culture (such as New Member Education), and increase communication between the faculty and the Greek organizations. The College should encourage faculty and staff to be receptive to these efforts.
2. The All Greek Council should appoint a Public Relations officer or committee to work with Public Affairs and local media to improve the image of the Greek Community by publicizing their philanthropic endeavors, educational accomplishments, and other noteworthy achievements.
3. As noted elsewhere, the Greek Alumni Council and College should work with each recognized Greek organization to help them develop their own Vision and Values statements which both honor the unique history of each organization as well as support the vision and values of the Greek community and the Potsdam Pledge. This work will include helping to develop a public brand and mission that can be used for recruitment and to distinguish recognized Greek organizations from unrecognized organizations.

c. Disciplinary Procedures Recommendations

1. Greek students should take a more active leadership role in the discipline process. Student Affairs should actively recruit and train qualified Greek students to be Hearing Board members.
2. A committee consisting of representatives from the College and the Greek community should review the current judicial process as it is applied to Greek organizations and students. The College should work toward developing a system that is perceived by all to be fair and balanced. This review might include revisiting the Greek Judicial Board model that was in place on campus several years ago as a way to encourage self-governance by Greek organizations. As part of this review, the rights and responsibilities

for individuals and groups in the judicial process should be discussed, including the criteria for classifying information as private or public.

3. Task Force members grappled with the issue of banning an organization as an appropriate sanction but were unable to reach a consensus. Some believe that banning an organization is counterproductive because it encourages the group to go underground. Others felt that there must be unambiguous and severe repercussions for serious infractions of the Student Code of Conduct. While a consensus could not be reached, all Task Force members agreed that this issue warrants further study and review.

d. Academic Recommendations

1. Each chapter should continue to have an Academic Chair, and the Academic Chair should work closely with Faculty, the Student Success Center, and the chapter's Academic and Alumni Advisors to promote academic excellence for all members.
2. The Academic Chairs from each Greek chapter should form a council that meets regularly to offer updates on their chapter's progress, discuss problems and solutions, develop and share best practices, and consider academic incentives (such as an Academic Contest where the winner is the chapter and/or an individual member).
3. The College should work with the All Greek Council to highlight excellent academic accomplishments of its members and chapters. This could include publicizing successful houses (e.g., a "House of the Semester" similar to "Greek of the Week"), working with faculty members to provide tutoring to classmates, promoting programs such as Presidential Scholars and the Kilmer Apprenticeship to Greeks, and volunteering for organizations such as Literacy of Northern New York.

3. COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY CULTURE

The college and community culture category focused on the core subcategories of housing, public relations, diversity, vision and values education, and service and philanthropy.

The Greek community as a whole has embraced the concepts of service and philanthropy and they take pride in their service to our community and campus. This is demonstrated by the number of hours volunteered and the dollar amounts raised for charity. These efforts are seen, both within and outside the community, as one of the most positive aspects of Greek Life on the campus. Each individual chapter completes their own service project, and the All Greek Council comes together to volunteer. However, these achievements are not publicized appropriately and faculty, staff, students, and community members often fail to appreciate the positive effect Greek service and philanthropy can have on campus and in the community.

Fraternities and Sororities, individually and collectively, are inherently values-based organizations. However, if and how they live up to the values they espouse, as chapters and as a Greek community as a whole, plays a large role in how they are viewed by the larger community and determines their relevance to the College and the student body. In addition to service and philanthropy, this is particularly important with issues of housing since we found that Greeks (indeed, any group of individuals who appear to be students living in village houses and apartments) are often perceived as "bad neighbors" by residents.

In preparing recommendations on college & community life, Task Force members paid particular attention to the Greek Life Strategic Plan and Reports; meetings and interviews with college administrators, faculty, and staff; meetings with student members of Greek organizations; input from Greek alumni (including a survey) and Greek organizations; site visits to SUNY Geneseo and SUNY Plattsburgh; publications and web-based data from other colleges and multicultural sororities and fraternities; and input from Potsdam community members and local officials.

a. Housing Recommendations

1. Living in and maintaining a house serves as an important learning experience, but some Greek-occupied residences are seen as problematic by village residents and officials. We recommend that a “House Manager” position on the Executive Board be established for each organization. This officer should be in regular communication with the Village’s Code Enforcement officer. A monthly update should be sent to the Village via email or mail from each chapter- or Alumni Association-owned house.
2. A “Property Manager” position should be established in the alumni association for each Greek organization that owns its own house or occupies a house owned by an alumni association. Along with the active house manager, the alumni property manager would be a contact person for the Village. The alumni property manager would be required to check on the property periodically.
3. Whether a chapter owns their own home or rents off campus, every organization has a place off campus associated with them, so "Good Neighbor" training must be done for all who will be living off campus. We recommend this training for all students living off campus, not just Greeks. This training should include participation by community members/residents. Training can include topics such as current village codes, maintaining a healthy and clean environment, proper garbage disposal, and tips for effectively communicating with neighbors.
4. The Greek chapters with houses should strive to be good neighbors and should work with alumni and Village officials to ensure that their houses are up to code. They should consider philanthropic activities that benefit their neighborhood and its residents.

b. Off Campus Public Relations Recommendations

1. The active Greek students need to take responsibility for better public relations and provide training sessions on marketing and public relations for the Public Affairs Coordinator of the All Greek Council. The College could enlist the help of someone in the Department of Business Administration for assistance with marketing tips and techniques.
2. In addition to the Public Affairs Coordinator of the All Greek Council, each Greek chapter should have a Public Affairs Coordinator who will receive training through the Campus Life Office. This training should include identification of appropriate resources, tips and techniques for positively promoting their chapter’s achievements, and reinforcing the message that “You are Always Wearing Your Letters.”

c. Vision and Values Education Recommendations

1. The All Greek Council should confirm that it (and its constituent organizations) concurs with the basic community values developed by Julie Dold. If not, the Council and its constituents should develop new values to which all Geek organizations can agree. Once confirmed or revised, education about these community values should be incorporated into the Recruitment/Rush process as well as New Member Education programs on both the community and chapter levels.
2. All Greek Council should review the existing Greek Life Strategic Plan and either reaffirm the goals previously agreed to or amend them to meet the current reality of the community.
3. The above recommendations of reviewing and confirming values, goals, and mission of Greek Life should be done on a yearly basis.
4. The College and Greek community should continue to emphasize the importance and benefits of diversity and multiculturalism in programming and member recruitment. As part of an effort to expand the number of national Greek organizations on our campus, the College should explore and, if appropriate, recruit multicultural fraternities and sororities to form colonies.

d. Service and Philanthropy Recommendations

1. While we question whether the College should set minimum standards for community service for Greek organizations, we believe the Greek community must reaffirm their commitment to the concept of Community Service as one of its core values. They should consider developing standards for Community Service and Philanthropy, with appropriate consequences for those who fail to meet these expectations. The All Greek Council, not the College, should impose these consequences.
2. The Greek community and appropriate College offices (Public Affairs, Alumni Relations, etc.) must develop a closer relationship. This will provide avenues to share with the wider public the service and philanthropic activities of the Greek community overall and those of individual houses as appropriate.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The risk management category focused on the core subcategories of risk management, banned organizations, standards and accountability, and expansion/extension/recognition issues.

The Task Force spent a significant amount of time reviewing and learning about the issue of risk management and the process of identifying, assessing and prioritizing different kinds of risks. The goal of risk management should be to protect organizations and students from vulnerability to risks that are within their control.

While this report focuses on the Greek organizations (the charge of the Greek Life Task Force), it is important to note that the College should apply appropriate risk management policies and practices to all student organizations. Many of the programs that are being recommended for the Greek organizations

are appropriate for other student groups. Wherever there is an opportunity for cross-programming, the College should encourage participation by all organizations, not just the Greek chapters.

In addition to speaking with Julie Dold about the risk management policies in place at SUNY Potsdam, members of the Task Force also attended a Risk Management workshop hosted by SUNY System in Albany, New York. The Task Force reviewed articles on Risk Management including Linda Langford's "Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings." The Task Force also spent considerable time learning about the current judicial process from College staff and active members of Greek organizations.

a. Risk Management Issues Recommendations

1. The College, active Greeks, and Greek Alumni must participate in a yearly program that focuses on implementing risk management policies. This program may be done in conjunction with the annual Greek Life Summit hosted by the Greek Alumni Council and the Division of Student Affairs. Once the position is created and filled, the campus Risk Management Coordinator could organize this program.
2. Every Greek chapter must continue to follow and implement the FIPG Risk Management Guidelines. Each chapter must also designate a Risk Management Liaison and develop a strategy to ensure that the plan is followed.
3. New member programs must contain mandatory risk management training for the new members approved by the College, which includes but is not limited to topics such as hazing prevention and identification and the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse. Additionally, the College and Greek organizations must implement a regular program on risk management topics during the duration of the new member program.
4. Every Greek organization must have an anti-hazing plan in place and a designated Anti-Hazing Liaison. They must develop a strategy to ensure that the plan is followed and updated yearly. Each chapter must also acknowledge the plan regularly at chapter meetings. Additionally, before a chapter can accept new members for the semester and before a student can become a new member, the active members and potential new members must attend anti-hazing training.
5. Every Greek organization must actively participate in National Hazing Prevention Week.
6. The College should explore the requirement that every Greek organization with an off-campus house have a live-in supervisor in addition to the House Manager and Alumni Property Manager. The College should also discuss if this supervisor should or should not be an active member or a recent alumnus/alumna.

b. Standards and Accountability Recommendations

1. Regarding risk management, as with other areas, the Greek community needs to be better self-monitored and needs to develop specific and detailed self-policing protocols.
2. Non-SUNY Potsdam students should not be permitted to join a SUNY Potsdam Greek organization. In addition, SUNY Potsdam should strongly discourage (or, if possible, disallow) our students from joining non-SUNY Potsdam-affiliated Greek organizations.

c. Banned Organizations Recommendations

1. Our research suggests that some SUNY campuses have adopted different policies toward banned and unrecognized Greek organizations than has SUNY Potsdam. The College must consult with outside counsel to determine the rights of the College to punish or reprimand students who continue to affiliate with banned organizations. The College must also determine what the rights and responsibilities are regarding a banned organization's ability to re-form under a new name.

If it is determined that the College can take a more active role in extinguishing banned organizations and sanctioning those affiliated with banned organizations, the College must actively work to do so. In addition, the current policy regarding unrecognized Greek organizations should be examined and reviewed, particularly regarding the regaining of recognition by banned organizations. The College should explore the possibility of recolonizing banned organizations that remain active "underground" to undermine their ability to attract new members.

2. Members of recognized Greek organizations must not affiliate with unrecognized or banned Greek organizations. All members of recognized chapters must acknowledge their responsibility to work with the College to educate all students on the dangers of affiliating with an unrecognized organization.

d. Expansion/Extension/Recognition Recommendations

1. One factor contributing to the continuation of banned organizations may be the lack of alternative college-sanctioned groups for students (particularly men) to rush and join. The College should encourage new Greek organizations to form at SUNY Potsdam. Any new Greek organization that has not been previously recognized by the College must have an affiliation with a National Greek organization.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Greek Life has over a one hundred year history at the College, and the Greek Life Task Force feels that there continues to be a place for Greek organizations at SUNY Potsdam into the 21st century. However, in order for the Greek organizations to continue and thrive, change is needed. This change needs to be swift and significant and must be embraced by all stakeholders: active Greeks, Greek alumni, College administrators, faculty, and staff. In addition, stakeholders must work together to improve communication. Opening the lines of communication will increase everyone's ability to trust and will help to eliminate the rumors, speculation and assumptions that appear to be at the heart of many of the problems that were brought to the attention of the Task Force.

The Task Force knows that what we have proposed will involve much work. We are hopeful that all stakeholders, with their abiding love for SUNY Potsdam, will do what is necessary to ensure significant and meaningful change that will enable Greek Life to thrive and the College to prosper as we enter the next century of Potsdam excellence.

APPENDIX A GREEK LIFE TASK FORCE CHARGES AND MISSION

On March 1, 2013 the SUNY Potsdam President's Council appointed members of a Greek Life Task Force to investigate two specific charges:

Charge 1: Should Greek Life continue to have a place at SUNY Potsdam?

Charge 2: If so, how can the SUNY Potsdam campus community make changes to strengthen the Greek system and protect the wellbeing of students going forward?

Mission

Recognizing the century-long relationship between the College and Greek organizations, the task force will study what it means to be a fraternity or sorority member at SUNY Potsdam, from the individual, chapter and larger Greek community perspectives. The task force will explore all components of Greek Life at SUNY Potsdam, starting with tradition, leadership development, community service and contributions to the College.

The task force will also review the history of student conduct violations and sanctions related to fraternities and sororities, such as alcohol violations and incidences of hazing. SUNY Potsdam's deeply held values, as expressed in the Potsdam Pledge, will serve as a guide, with a focus on the College's top priority—the wellbeing of its students.

In addition, the task force will examine the College's programs and activities that support and govern Greek Life, including the education, regulation and support of individuals and chapters who are members of the Greek community.

The task force will be asked to present both preliminary and final reports to the SUNY Potsdam President's Council, including recommendations for the future of Greek Life at the College. Initial recommendations will be submitted at the conclusion of the Spring 2013 semester with final recommendations submitted at the conclusion of the Fall 2013. The President's Council will review all recommendations and provide a response to the campus community at the start of the Spring 2014 semester.

APPENDIX B GREEK LIFE TASK FORCE RECOMMEDATION ON CHARGE 1

MEMORANDUM

TO: John F. Schwaller, President, SUNY Potsdam
FR: Alan L. Hersker, Chair, Greek Life Task Force
DATE: May 13, 2013
RE: Greek Life Task Force Recommendation on Charge 1

For the past two months, the Greek Life Task Force has been reviewing information and gathering testimony feedback on campus Greek Culture as it impacts student life, academics, alumni and the local community. We have found much that is profoundly problematic but also much that is positive. Therefore, in response to our first charge and after much thoughtful consideration, **the Task Force recommends that Greek letter organizations continue at SUNY Potsdam.** However, while the Task

Force can only support a we think that there can be continuing role for the Greek community on our campus if significant changes occur and endure., we believe that changes must occur.

In making our recommendation, we have looked at a number of data sources. These include (but are not limited to) statements from members of the campus community (including Student Life, Development, the Academic Deans, Counseling and Student Health, University Police), a survey of faculty and staff, statements from both the the Student Government Association and the All Greek Council, two open community forums, meetings with and statements from active Greek organizations, meetings with and statements from Greek alumni, interviews with civic officials, reports detailing Greek Life on our campus, and reports on Greek Life and its opportunities/challenges in US Higher Education.

We have only scratched the surface of this complex issue, but we have found an environment system at SUNY Potsdam that is disturbingly dysfunctional. If fraternities and sororities are to continue on our campus, that system environment must be changeoverhauled. This will require a significant investment of human and financial resources, from within the college but also from outside sources such as alumni. Additionally, the college will only be able to achieve change if and can only be achieved if all stakeholders – from college staff and administration, to alumni, to members of the Greek community – are committed to replacing the current culture with one that nurtures a campus community, fosters communication and the exchange of ideas, and more fully affirms the values espoused in the College’s Mission and the Potsdam Pledge..

Through this fall, pending the decision of the President’s Council, the Task Force will work toward a response to our second charge: how can Greek organizations best fulfill a role that is consistent with the core values of both the College and the Greek community, and how can the College support Greek organizations in their service to our students and the community? We will continue to focus on several topical areas: campus life, academics, the Greek community, alumni, the local community, and evidence from comparable colleges and universities. Our goal is to have a final report, including recommendations, to the President of SUNY Potsdam by the end of the Fall 2013 semester. We expect that our continuing work with will require a modest commitment of financial resources on the part of the College and I will submit a budget to the President by June 1, 2013.

While we are not yet knowledgeable enough to make specific recommendations about how the Greek Life system should be modified, we do ask that the Office Office of Student Affairs work quickly and closely with alumni and members of recognized Greek organizations to review new member education (aka “pledging”) program guidelines (aka “pledging”). Every Greek organization to which we spoke found the recently implemented guidelines policies instituted in the Spring of 2013 to be unworkable, as did several staff members.. We hope that temporary guidelines can be put in place that provide the guarantee of student safety required by the College without impeding the ability of Greek organizations to recruit and educate new brothers and sisters have a meaningful and fulfilling new member education process.

On behalf of the entire Greek Life Task Force, I would like to thank President Schwaller and the President’s Council for the opportunity to serve the College and to affirm our willingness to continue our work through the Fall 2013 semester.