

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
FRATERNITY AND SORORITY COMMUNITY  
CONSULTATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
APRIL 13-16, 2018



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## INTRODUCTION

This summary of information represents the perspectives drawn after a three day consultation visit. It is based upon pre-assessment information and data obtained from a review of the Greek life website, a review of previous consultation visit reports, a review of social media posts, as well as information gained from various constituent interviews during the on-site visit. The assessment includes input from a variety of sources and from individuals who were interviewed during the visit as well as personal observations. Additionally, a review of best practices in fraternity and sorority affairs was considered in drafting the final report. The following should be considered reliable information but not statements of fact.

In January 2018, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Elizabeth With contacted me to conduct a comprehensive review of the fraternity and sorority community at the University of North Texas. The following report provides an executive summary of a comprehensive visitation which took place April 13-16, 2018 and involved meetings with the following stakeholders:

Dr. Neal Smatresk, University President  
 Dr. Elizabeth With, vice president for student affairs  
 Daniel Armitage, associate vice president for auxiliary services  
 Dr. Maureen McGuinness, dean of students and assistant vice president for student affairs  
 Dr. Melissa McGuire, assistant vice president for student affairs  
 Dr. Teresa McKinney, assistant vice president for student affairs  
 Dan Naegeli, executive director, career and leadership services  
 Ray Willhoft, senior communications strategist  
 Jason Biggs, assistant dean of students for Greek life  
 Kari White, Greek life coordinator  
 Grace Lopez, Greek life coordinator  
 Faith Espindola, administrative specialist  
 Interfraternity Council Executive Board  
 Interfraternity Council Chapter Presidents  
 Interfraternity Council Alumni Council  
 Interfraternity Council Chapter Advisors  
 National Pan-Hellenic Council Executive Board Member  
 National Pan-Hellenic Council Chapter Presidents  
 National Pan-Hellenic Council Alumni Council  
 National Pan-Hellenic Council Chapter Advisors  
 Panhellenic Council Executive Board  
 Panhellenic Council Chapter Presidents  
 Panhellenic Council Alumni Council  
 Panhellenic Council Chapter Advisors  
 Multicultural Greek Council Executive Board  
 Multicultural Greek Council Chapter Presidents  
 Multicultural Greek Council Alumni Council

Multicultural Greek Council Chapter Advisors  
Various Greek Leaders  
Various Non-Affiliated Student Leaders

Collectively, I met with over 200 students, approximately 80 volunteer advisors and alumni (ae), and institutional staff over a three day period.

### **Section 1: Basic Summary and Community Strengths**

While the following information is common knowledge at the university, it is provided to confirm that the consultation visit and the University are operating with the same set of facts that are utilized throughout this report to assess the health of the fraternity/sorority community during a specific point in time.

The Greek community at the University of North Texas was established in 1952. With a 66 year history, the community has contributed significantly to the culture of the institution and has provided students and alumni (ae) with tremendous opportunities for growth and development throughout its history. With a current membership base of 1,724 students (per data provided to me during my visit) and a total of 41 collegiate chapters, the Greek community has a membership base that is foundational; however, exponential growth is possible. The Collegiate Panhellenic Council is comprised of 735 women, the Interfraternity Council is comprised of 662 men; the National Pan-Hellenic Council is comprised of 138 men and women; and the Multicultural Greek Council is comprised of 189 men and women.

Affiliation with one of the 41 organizations on campus provides students with interconnectedness which in turn facilitates an affinity for the University, and creates a positive campus community.

*Among some of the noteworthy programs, services, and support provided include the following:*

**Greek Life Center:** The Greek Life Center is an exceptional physical structure. There are very few institutions of higher education that have this sort of building that can facilitate programming and leadership development for the community in one geographical location. With the location of the Greek life offices also housed within the center, this is an additional benefit. The facility is beautiful, well designed, and located on the perimeter of campus in close proximity to many of the Greek houses already constructed.

**Chapter Housing:** The chapter housing that is currently occupied by many of the Greek organizations appears to be well maintained and located on the perimeter of campus. The Panhellenic Council chapter housing is exceptional. Fraternity housing, from an outside perspective, appears to be well maintained. I did not have the opportunity to view the interior of the houses to gain a better perspective of inside maintenance. Some advisors were concerned that there is increasing difficulty in building or obtaining housing. The current housing structure is not possible for many of the groups due to

financial constraints and/or size of the facilities. There was a desire from many that the University provide additional housing options for non-housed organizations, if possible.

**Greek Ambassador Program:** Students that were interviewed during the consultation visit spoke with pride about this program. It provides currently affiliated students with an opportunity to future develop their knowledge about the positive attributes associated with membership in a Greek letter organization and continues to develop their leadership skills, especially public speaking.

**Greek President's Retreat:** Held in January of each year, this program provides an opportunity for chapter presidents, across all four councils, to come together to discuss important issues facing the fraternity/sorority community. It also provides the leadership of each chapter an opportunity to facilitate dialogue about mutual internal challenges.

**Greek Honor Societies:** With Rho Lambda and Order of Omega already being established on campus, fraternity and sorority membership has the opportunity to gain recognition for their contributions to the community and the university. Membership within each organization was not shared with me during the visit; therefore, I am uncertain if the maximum number allowed for recognition has been obtained.

**Greek Preview Day:** During the consultation visit, Greek Preview Day occurred. While a wonderful opportunity to showcase the fraternity/sorority community and an exceptional medium of reaching potential new students, the number of chapters that were involved in the process was relatively low. This is an area of opportunity for the Greek community.

**Alumni (ae) Support:** It was evident from the amount of alumni (ae) that participated in the consultation visit that this is one of the greatest strengths within the fraternity/sorority community. These men and women spoke glowingly about their commitment to the University of North Texas, to the Greek community as a whole, and to their respective individual organizations.

**Standards of Excellence:** In a review of the guidebook provided which outlined the reporting requirements associated with the Standards of Excellence program, the stated purpose is to provide a high quality level of performance among all fraternities and sororities on the University of North Texas campus. If utilized effectively by chapters, this document is an efficient guide in assisting chapters to achieve their full potential and to provide guidance on functional areas that need improvement.

**Greek Life Staffing Matrix:** Currently, associated with the University of North Texas Greek Community, there are three full time staff, one graduate assistant, and one administrative specialist who have oversight of the day to day operations of the Greek Life Center and the leadership development and programming of the 41 Greek organizations on campus. Based upon the current size of the community and the composition of the various four councils, this is an appropriate support structure. On many campuses, the number of professional staff empowered with this responsibility would be lower. The staff structure in place to support Greek life continues to exemplify the level of commitment that the institution has for the fraternity/sorority community.

**Institutional Support:** The University of North Texas provides outstanding institutional support for the fraternity/sorority community. There is a strong level of commitment from the Vice President for Student Affairs and within the Division of Student Affairs to assist chapters in reaching their potential. Additionally, in speaking with staff and students, it is evident that there is an appreciation for the contributions that both undergraduate members and alumni (ae) provide to the University and the leadership development of affiliated students. Sorority housing is maintained by the University and the facilities are exceptionally well maintained and beautiful additions to the landscape of the campus. Lastly, in speaking with President Smatresk, it was evident that he has an appreciation for the contributions of the fraternity/sorority community leadership and its volunteers and is an advocate for a quality Greek life experience on campus.

## **Section 2: Limitations of the Fraternity/Sorority Community and Opportunities for Improvement**

### **Communication:**

In speaking with almost every group during the consultation visit, it was repeatedly stated that there is a lack of communication between councils, volunteer alumnae (ae), institutional staff, and chapter presidents. As I stated in my visit, "communication is the key to success". Without transparent communication, chapters will not be able to achieve their full potential, prospective students will not understand nor appreciate the benefits of fraternity/sorority affiliation, and volunteer advisors will not be able to effectively assist their chapters. I would respectfully recommend that the following suggestions be implemented in order to enhance communication to benefit all audiences:

**Greek Life Website:** The Greek Life Website needs to be updated and current. Several guiding documents associated with the four umbrella councils are outdated or not accurate. The individual council pages have documents that have not been updated since 2010, some organizations are listed that are no longer active on the campus, and some resources that are supposedly linked are not uploaded (chapter advisor manual). Additionally, some of the publications that are linked and active are not reflective of the diversity indicative within the community. I would suggest that all publications uploaded to the site be examined for inclusion, make sure that they are up to date and accurate, and that linked pages accurately reflect the current organizations that are active within the Greek community. There should be a section dedicated to academic excellence where Greek life academic reports from prior semesters are uploaded and visible; there should be a philanthropic section which details the number of hours volunteered, dollars raised by Greek organizations, and names of community organizations and nonprofit agencies benefited by the work of fraternity/sorority community. I would also suggest that one section of the website be developed and password protected to provide alumni (ae) volunteers with newsletters, a communication distribution list (with cell phone numbers and email contact information), and a schedule of events for the academic semester. Your Greek life website is your "window to the world" for outside entities. It should be current, attractive, user-friendly, and contain information that both affiliated students, non-affiliated students, and parents/family members would find useful and informative.

**Marketing Plan:** There needs to be a comprehensive marketing plan developed for the fraternity/sorority community. Many students, both affiliated and unaffiliated, responded that Greek life is not very visible on campus. Additionally, in speaking with volunteers and staff, there appears to be little coordinated effort to visibility showcase Greek life except during limited times throughout the year (Orientation and Greek Preview Day). I would suggest utilizing either the UNT Public Relations Department or Mr. Ray Willhoft, senior communications strategist, within the Division of Student Affairs for assistance in this endeavor. Opportunities are endless in this area and with the strength of the student leadership, institutional support of the fraternity/sorority community, and committed volunteer alumni (ae), this one focus could dramatically change the landscape of the community. Social media campaigns should be utilized which incorporate Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat as means to communicate with students, both affiliated and non-affiliated.

### **Recruitment and Growth:**

*Greek Preview Day:* While on campus, Greek Preview Day occurred. I heard several students' remark that very few Greek organizations actually participated in the program. Attendance was limited, chapters were not engaged with the process, and many organizations simply failed to show. Among some of the reasons given were time commitment, lack of interest, perception that the event really didn't assist chapters in the recruitment of new members, etc. I would suggest that Greek Preview Day be overhauled. Each umbrella organization should be represented with a table; each individual chapter should be present, if possible; and the event should be held during a week day while classes are in session. Having the event on a Saturday may not be the best possible time based upon the pedestrian traffic on campus and the availability of students to staff their respective tables.

*Panhellenic Council Recruitment:* In speaking with both the collegiate students and volunteer alumnae, there was concern expressed in having recruitment overlap with the first two days of the fall term. Students currently affiliated with the chapters and potential new members are challenged to both commit the time necessary to effectively recruit new members while preparing for the first days of class each fall. I would suggest that the Panhellenic Council examine combining two rotational rounds into one night (Open House and House Tours) and thus shortening the time commitment by one day. Additionally, it would be beneficial if Bid Day could occur on a Sunday afternoon instead of Tuesday. Perhaps looking at starting the process on a Thursday night and concluding on Sunday afternoon. Work in concert with the Orientation and Transition Programs Office to make sure that the schedule for First Flight and Panhellenic Recruitment do not overlap. Another option that is possible and done on many college campuses across the country is to conduct Panhellenic Recruitment during Labor Day Weekend, starting the process on Thursday night with an Informational Session and beginning the first round of recruitment on Friday night after classes, with Bid Day being held on Labor Day when classes are not in session. I would also suggest that women who are participating in the recruitment process not be required to provide letters of recommendation. This could certainly be an option for women who seek to participate through the recruitment process but not a requirement. If a chapter requires a letter of recommendation or a verbal recommendation for a potential member, the responsibility for obtaining the recommendation falls upon the

chapter and/or alumnae volunteers. Requiring women to seek letters of recommendation in order to affiliate is a rather outdated practice and perceived as a barrier to student integration into the campus culture. The practice of focusing only on incoming freshmen or traditional aged students should be examined and modified. The student population at the University of North Texas continues to grow; the sororities should mirror that growth and an increased focus on transfer and non-traditional students should occur in order to maximum potential.

*Panhellenic Council Extension:* The Panhellenic community at the University of North Texas has seen a decline in membership over the course of the last four to five years; however, there is a tremendous opportunity for growth within the community. The number of women who are withdrawing from the recruitment process is growing; students have expressed that they have not found their "home" from within the current NPC chapters; and there exists a substantial number of women on campus who are unaffiliated. There has been an establishment of an exploratory committee to examine extension on campus. I would encourage both collegiate students and alumnae volunteers to seriously look at the possibility of extension on campus in the future. Historically, research has shown that with the establishment of new chapters there exists an opportunity for every organization to increase in membership. There is an excitement that is generated by new chapters colonizing on campus and the opportunity for students to find their "home" is increased. The condition of the current chapters is strong; chapters are making quota annually, and total is obtained by most chapters.

*Interfraternity Council Recruitment:* The organizations affiliated with the Interfraternity Council should be allowed and encouraged to recruit 365 days per year. This is the standard model adopted by the North American Interfraternity Council. Again, a focus on transfer and non-traditional students should occur in order to stimulate growth in the community. Additionally, there has been a closure of at least three chapters over the course of the last three to four years. Chapters must continue to focus upon values based recruitment; otherwise, students will continue to become disenchanted with their experiences and leave their organizations or choose not to affiliate with any organization. I would also encourage the University of North Texas to enlist the support of the North American Interfraternity Conference to conduct a training seminar facilitated by a recruitment specialist. The advisors for the Interfraternity Council chapters felt that the recruitment process needs to be driven by the Greek life staff and not left entirely up to the Interfraternity Council Officers to plan and execute. The fraternity men, from my conversations with many of them, expressed that they are challenged with how to effectively recruit new members. The employment of a recruitment specialist will only enhance their ability to effectively market themselves and return to a values based recruitment process. Many national fraternities would be happy to provide staff to facilitate this training at little to no cost to the University or to the Interfraternity Council.

*National Panhellenic Council and Multicultural Greek Council Recruitment:* In speaking with representatives from organizations comprising the NPHC and MGC, it appears that the organizations are recruiting appropriately. However, I think there is an opportunity to increase their numbers by continued marketing, a focus on different segments of the student population, and by enlisting the support of the Greek life staff and of their volunteers. These organizations are not historically large chapters on most campuses

across the country and their ability to conduct intake is regulated, in large part, by their national organizations. An excellent suggestion that was shared during my visit was that a video showcasing the efforts of NPHC and MGC chapters should be created, and that the video should be bilingual, in order to attract students from historically underrepresented populations. Again, I encourage the NPHC and MGC organizations to focus on transfer and non-traditional students for increased opportunity for growth.

### **Training and Development:**

*Greek Umbrella Council Training:* In meeting with the officers of the four different umbrella councils, it appears that many of the students are unsure of their roles/purpose. I would suggest that a comprehensive training take place with each of the current students comprising the leadership of the four councils. Additionally, a set monthly meeting with the presidents of the four umbrella councils needs to occur in order to facilitate ongoing communication and to better relations between all leadership.

*Greek Ambassador Program:* While this program has been in place for a number of years, students shared with me that the interest in the program has declined. Additionally, students who initially expressed interest in the program have found that it may not be worth their time. I would suggest an overhaul of this program. More extensive training be provided to students who are selected for the program and there should be incorporated incentives for students who actively participate.

*North-American Interfraternity Conference IMPACT Program:* In speaking with almost every umbrella organization and alumni (ae) volunteer, it was repeated numerous times that the Greek community at the University of North Texas does not operate as a "community" but instead appears to be operating in "silos". There is not a sense of "community" among the students; cross programming is uncommon, and there is not a sense of "pride" that prevails across all segments of the population. In order to truly change the culture of the community, I would strongly recommend that the University of North Texas invest in bringing the NIC IMPACT to campus. This program is an intensive, interactive, 2.5 day program with a curriculum that focuses on problem solving, leadership development, values-based decision making, effective communication, and community development. Information pertaining to this program can be found at the following link: <http://nicindy.org/>

*North-American Interfraternity Conference Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI):* In order to change the culture of the Greek community at the University of North Texas, it's important to properly educate, challenge, and cultivate the leadership within both the chapters and various umbrella councils. I would also strongly recommend that the University of North Texas invest in sending a minimum of 10 students annually to the NIC UIFI program. Held each summer during the months of May-July in Bloomington, IN, this program brings together fraternity men and sorority women from across the country to examine the critical issues facing the fraternity and sorority community nationally. Additionally, the students from UNT will be able to address those challenges back on campus while developing skills necessary to affect change. Information pertaining to this program can be found at the following link: <http://nicindy.org/>

*Council of Officers Training:* In speaking with student representatives of the various Greek umbrella organizations, it was shared that there is little to no training provided for the various officers within each chapter. I would suggest that each spring semester a Council of Officers Training be conducted to provide education and support to the various officers within each chapter. Scholarship officers will collectively meet together; new member educators meet; chapter presidents should be meeting routinely to discuss mutual concerns; etc. Each officer roundtable can be facilitated by alumni (ae) from the various organizations who have expertise in each of the functional areas. This will not only continue to provide education for the chapter officers but also engage alumni (ae) volunteers to reconnect with chapter leaders across the community.

### **Academic Enhancement:**

The academic performance of some chapters within the Greek community needs to be addressed. Several chapters are below the All-Men and All-Women GPA and in reviewing the fall 2017 Scholarship Report, the Interfraternity Council is below the All Undergraduate Men GPA; the Multicultural Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council GPA was below the All Undergraduate Campus GPA; however, the Panhellenic Council GPA was slightly above the All Undergraduate Women's GPA.

I would suggest that a focus be placed on the scholastic development for each chapter. Incentives should be provided to chapters that exceed the All-Men's and All-Women's GPA each semester. The academic report each semester should be placed on the Greek Life Website and a section added to the website that lists both the resources available on campus to enhance the academic performance of chapters as well as tips that can aid chapters in providing support for their individual members. An academic reception, held each semester by the Greek Life Office, recognizing students who were above a 3.50 is another tangible way to applaud academic excellence within the community. Additionally, I would suggest that the Greek academic honor society, Gamma Sigma Alpha, be started on campus to reward and encourage academic excellence within the respective chapters. Information pertaining to the establishment of a Gamma Sigma Alpha chapter can be found at the following link: <https://www.gammasigmaalpha.org/>

### **Alumni (ae) Support and Development:**

*Chapter Advisor Training and Professional Development:* In meeting with volunteer alumni (ae) within each of the four umbrella councils, the one area that was repeatedly referenced that is sorely missing is training and professional development for volunteer advisors. Many advisors who attended the sessions with me remarked that they had never even met each other prior to my visit. I would suggest that there be a training/professional development workshop provided for volunteers each semester. Additionally, any email communication that is sent to chapters should be copied to all volunteer advisors for those chapters. The more advisors feel "in the loop" they are more effectively able to assist the university will providing guidance and support for members and chapters.

*Alumni (ae) Communication:* Ongoing communication must be developed in order to engage and support volunteers. An alumni newsletter should be distributed each semester and each newsletter should be uploaded to the Greek life website, along with a calendar of events for both fall and spring terms. A distribution list should be compiled with volunteer alumni (ae) from each organization, updated annually, and widely distributed to each volunteer in order to facilitate ongoing communication.

In speaking with the alumnae volunteers for the Panhellenic Council, there was wide discontent that volunteers have to pay for parking when they come to campus to provide support for their chapters. Having to buy a parking pass in order to “give back” to the university is a barrier for engagement. Most of the organizations have multiple volunteer advisors who give tremendously of their time and talents to aid and assist the undergraduate members. Several suggested that the University should provide parking passes to be utilized by volunteers when visiting chapters for support. I would recommend that the University explore providing, at minimum, five parking passes per chapter to be utilized by volunteer alumnae in support of their collegiate chapters. Asking alumni (ae) to give of their time while having to pay for volunteerism is a barrier for success.

In meeting with the NPHC advisors, there was concern expressed that during Homecoming they are regulated in the tailgate area outside the mainstream of student traffic. The perception from those volunteers is that NPHC alumni chapters are not welcomed by the University and while the university wishes to make social events and programs safer for students there needs to be open and honest dialogue with NPHC advisors. Their input is needed before policies are put into place that have an effect upon their member chapters. The advisors also suggested that university administration should be more openly engaged with NPHC alumni by attending events whenever possible and being more visible.

While it is understood that the University’s expectation is that alumni (ae) support the fraternity/sorority community, and that no extra incentives are needed for volunteer participation, it is recommended that the University consider incentives for participation in volunteer roles with its chapters. Ongoing appreciation dinners bringing advisors together from all four governing councils is a great way to show acknowledgement for their volunteer efforts. This should be done each semester and could also provide advisors with an opportunity to share successes with each other in effectively working with their chapters. Creating an “Advisor of the Semester” award is another tangible way to express appreciation for what is, in many respects, a “labor of love”.

### **Develop Proactive Relationships with Sorority/Fraternity Headquarters and Regional Volunteers:**

The Greek life staff should consider engaging the headquarters staff and regional volunteer structure in communicating the goals and objectives of the Greek community. Regularly communicating both concerns and praises for individual chapters will develop a strong support for student life and a broad support network for University of North Texas students. Additionally, many national volunteers are content experts on various subject matter and can be valuable resources to facilitate training for student leadership and alumni development. Monthly communication with

headquarters staff and regional volunteers would enhance the relationship provided to individual chapters. Quarterly progress reports about each chapter, academic reports generated each semester, and philanthropic efforts completed by each chapter is just some of the information that can be relayed to outside parties. Additionally, many national organizations provide scholarships for academic excellence or financial incentives to attend programs such as UIFI or to recognize members for acceptance into national honor societies. The more you share the better the "return on investment".

### **Acknowledgement and Thanks**

I want to personally thank everyone for a wonderful three days of informative, educational, and thought provoking discussion. As I said many times throughout my visit, there is tremendous opportunity for growth and development of the Greek community at the University of North Texas. I enjoyed meeting with the dedicated student leaders, wonderfully supportive alumni (ae) from all four umbrella councils, and the support provided to me from the Greek life staff while on campus.

I hope that my observations and report will be discussed and disseminated to all interested parties. I welcome the opportunity to clarify or further discuss any of the enclosed recommendations.

I would be remiss if I did not personally thank President Smatresk, Dr. Elizabeth With, vice president for student affairs, Dr. Maureen McGuinness, dean of students and assistant vice president for student affairs, Jason Biggs, assistant dean of students for Greek life, Kari White, Greek life coordinator, Grace Lopez, Greek life coordinator, and Faith Espindola, administrative specialist in the Office of Greek Life, for being gracious hosts and making sure that I had everything that I needed for a productive visit. Your collective support of the Greek community and to students in general is noteworthy and commendable. The University of North Texas is, indeed, fortunate to have you all as part of its staff and just one of many reasons why UNT is "Innovative. Diverse. One of a Kind"!