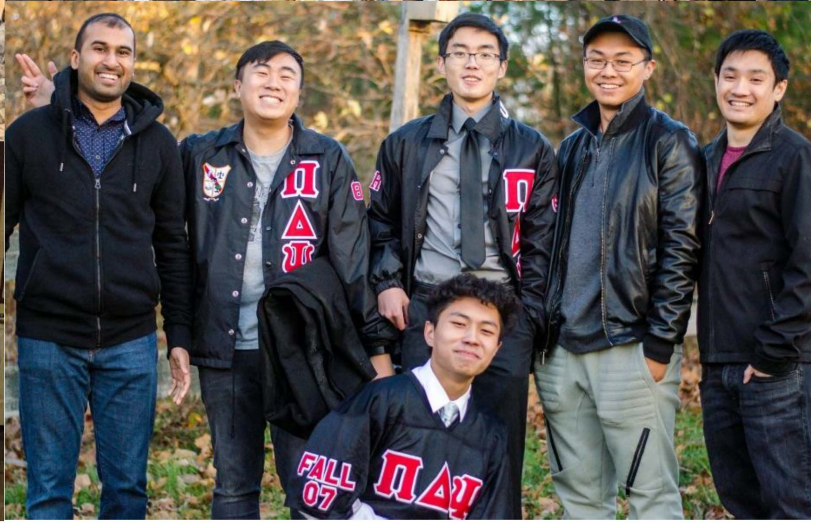
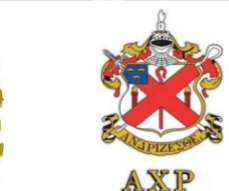
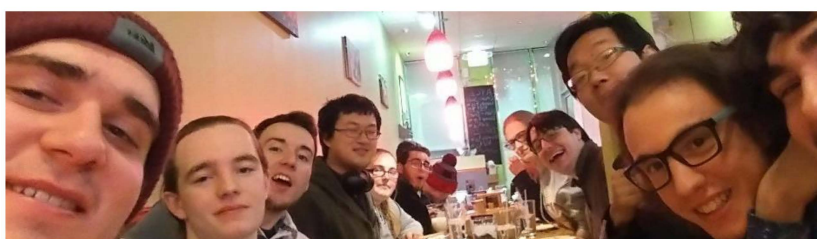




Draft Report of the Greek Life Task Force





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Executive Summary

For more than 165 years, Greek Life at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute has played a profound role in elevating the student experience. The camaraderie and service that are hallmarks of Greek Life have

- enriched the lives of our students
- created great resources for philanthropic causes
- dramatically accelerated the successful careers of alumni/ae

While the Rensselaer system has a strong foundation and a powerful legacy, every institution, including Greek Life, is subject to change, and successful institutions learn how to adapt. Today, we see evidence that our Greek system is showing signs of deterioration similar to the recent trends seen across the national landscape.

We have all witnessed the tragedies that have befallen fraternity members at colleges and universities across the nation. These events, outgrowths of reckless and unlawful behavior by members of Greek communities, have resulted in the senseless loss of young lives – including four-hazing related deaths in 2017 – that have left students, parents, and entire communities reeling. In the wake of these heartbreaking events, some campuses have chosen to shutter Greek Life entirely.

We felt the urgency to take proactive steps now, before the loss of life and other reckless behaviors occur at Rensselaer, as has happened on at least four of the nation's campuses. In cases of active sanctions against Rensselaer fraternities through spring 2018:

- 86% of the cases involved a violation of the alcohol policy
- 27% of active cases included a violation of the drug policy
- 27% of active cases involved a violation of the anti-hazing policy

We have also witnessed an alarming rise in sexual misconduct cases connected to Greek organizations. In fall 2017, while the Greek community made up 23% of the undergraduate

population, 29% of all reported sexual misconduct cases were connected to Greek organizations. By spring 2018, **47%** of all sexual misconduct cases reported at Rensselaer were connected to several Greek organizations.^{1,A.10} This is unacceptable behavior and we must take proactive measures to prevent these violations.

In addition, many of our Greek organizations are not operating at a financially viable level. Many of our houses have multiple safety violations or lack resources to keep the houses in compliance with safety codes. Last year, 70%, or 16 out of 23 Rensselaer-affiliated houses declined in overall health and safety performance between the spring and fall semesters. Such a decline is worthy of notice.

Our goal is to protect the safety and well-being of all of our students and to prevent the senseless tragedies we have witnessed elsewhere. To that end, we have undertaken a systematic study of the current state of Greek Life, and determined that alcohol-related hospitalizations, hazing, assaults, and sexual misconduct occur with greater frequency within the Greek system than in the rest of the student population. The findings detailed in this study show that not only are students who participate in Greek Life exposed to greater hazards than those of the general student body, but the continued sustainability of the Greek system is at risk.

We are therefore proposing recommendations to address four key areas:

- improving behavioral issues
- addressing health and safety deficiencies
- improving the financial viability of all chapters
- creating uniform and transparent measures of success

¹ To be more specific, that means that the sexual misconduct took place at a Greek house, during a Greek party or the parties involved had been attending a Greek party, or the individuals involved are members of Greek organizations.

These recommendations are aimed at making Greek Life more **sustainable**, improving its record of health and safety, creating a stronger Greek **community** and providing a path toward better **citizenship** for every member of the Greek system.

The Greek Life Task Force makes the following ten recommendations to strengthen and protect our community:

1. Incorporate CLASS Goals and Practices into Greek Life
2. Strengthen Finances, and Improve Health, Safety and Behaviors
3. Establish Stronger Relationships through the Timing of Recruitment and Intake
4. Mitigate High Risk Behaviors, Alcohol and Substance Abuse
5. Integrate the Greek Life Commons and The Arch
6. Foster an Intentional Emphasis on Diversity and Inclusion
7. Develop a New Transparent Scorecard
8. Merge all Greek Life Agreements
9. Redefine the Student Judicial System
10. Build Trust, Leadership, Integrity and Accountability

We recognize and revere the positive values that Greek Life can instill in its members including a sense of family, service to the community, and leadership skills. Our aim is in no way punitive; our goal is to help every house and chapter have the tools to fulfill their stated missions. It is our hope that by implementing these recommendations, we will enable Greek Life to flourish and encourage a renaissance in Greek values at Rensselaer.

Introduction

On June 8, 2018, President Shirley Ann Jackson issued a public statement to the Rensselaer Community about its Greek Life.^{A.1} She observed that Rensselaer has one of the oldest campus-based Greek systems in the nation. At its best, Greek Life fosters deep bonds of friendship, provides members with a supportive network, promotes philanthropy, leadership skills and community service, and aids in the personal development of students. For generations of Rensselaer alumni/ae, their student experience was defined by Greek Life and these affiliations helped maintain deep connections between our alumni and the Institute.

Nationally, the Greek system is under public and legislative scrutiny; multiple campus tragedies, involving both injury and death, have received broad media attention. Dozens of universities and colleges have made the decision to suspend Greek Life because of incidents related to alcohol abuse, illegal drug use, hazing, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, and acts of racism and bigotry.

In recent years, Greek organizations at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have faced an array of issues. Fraternities have experienced declining membership.^{A.4} The conditions in some residences have deteriorated and the financial stability of some houses is in jeopardy.^{A.7} In addition, several Greek houses are under suspension because the fraternity or its members have been responsible for serious violations of the *Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*, including alcohol abuse, sexual misconduct and behavioral issues that have jeopardized the health and safety of the Rensselaer community.^{A.7-12}

We recognize how profound the contributions of Greek Life are to the vitality of campus life, and at the same time, we recognize the seriousness of the issues we face. Whether Greek Life at Rensselaer can be sustained under prevailing financial conditions, whether membership can continue its significant contributions of social service and leadership, and perhaps most importantly, how to ensure that Greek members can continue to serve as pro-active citizens of

the Rensselaer community — these are questions we need to address if we are to create an environment that will help the Greek organizations thrive.

To explore these issues, President Jackson announced the formation of a Greek Life Task Force to be led by Vice President John E. Kolb, charged with investigating problems in the Greek system, and making recommendations on how to strengthen and preserve the fraternities and sororities that have brought so much good to the Rensselaer community. Le Norman J. Strong, Interim Vice President for Student Life, was named to lead the overall Greek Life Review.^{A.1-2}

The Greek Life Task Force began our inquiry after the Greek Life Forum and Campus Discussion Groups^{A.2} to ensure that students had a clear voice in the process and to help the Task Force arrive at a better understanding of the issues. The Greek Life Task Force had ongoing meetings where invited guests, many from different administrative departments, shared their insight and expertise.^{A.14} We also had the great benefit of External Panel Discussions, where leaders from other universities shared their experience of Greek Life best practices and helped sharpen our thinking.^{A.15} Finally, we were the beneficiaries of an External Panel Discussion featuring leaders from Inter/National Greek Organizations, who shared their perspectives on issues in the community and enabled us to benefit by their perspective.^{A.15}

As the Greek Life Task Force examined Greek Life, our inquiry was guided by the themes of sustainability, community, and citizenship. The objectives of the Rensselaer Greek Life Task Force were as follows: to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Greek system, to work with the community to design long-term, sustainable and comprehensive culture change, and to enact reforms that will preserve the positive aspects of the Greek system.

Specifically, the Task Force:

- Reviewed current behavioral, health and safety issues, and discussed related financial stability of houses with identified strengths and vulnerabilities of Rensselaer's Greek organizations and the methods by which they are managed and maintained

- Proposed recommendations to enhance Greek Life and address the issues and vulnerabilities that were identified
- Developed strategies that align Greek organization programs, activities, operations and facilities with Clustered Learning Advocacy and Support for Students (CLASS), our comprehensive approach to student experience at Rensselaer
- Encouraged all stakeholders, including alumni/ae, to participate and serve as valued partners in the Rensselaer Community
- Focused on our over-arching goal: to help students be successful

For an organizational chart of the Task Force and its committees, and a schedule of its events, see Appendix.^{A.2, A.14-16}

Tradition and History of Greek Life in General and Greek Life at Rensselaer

Fraternal organizations played a profound role in the nation's expanding educational opportunities. The historical legacy of fraternities has not only helped shape campus life;² it has played a formative role for generations of leaders — including 40% of U.S. presidents, 38% of U.S. senators, 25% of members of the House of Representatives, 85% of Fortune 500 executives,³ and many of Rensselaer's presidents, including President Shirley Ann Jackson.

In the nineteenth century, Greek Life supported the tremendous growth in higher education. Because many college campuses lacked facilities for increasing numbers of students, Greek Life often filled this gap, providing the housing that colleges lacked. Just as higher education sought to transform the intellect, fraternal missions — often as varied as the campuses on which they were formed — are consistently based in self-improvement, community, and fellowship. Greek Life thus helped aid the transformation from boys to men, and performed a similar facilitation for women.⁴

According to a Gallup poll, members of fraternities and sororities are more likely than other college graduates to be thriving in each of five elements of well-being: a sense of purpose, a sense of social well-being, financial well-being, connection to community, and physical well-being.⁵

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/03/the-dark-power-of-fraternities/357580/>; Hechinger, John, True Gentlemen: The Broken Pledge of America's Fraternities, 2017, 5.

³ <http://college.usatoday.com/2012/0508/examing-the-benefits-of-greek-life/300-9-greek-letters#main>

⁴ The first Greek letter women's fraternity, Chi Theta Delta, began when women petitioned for membership in the all-male fraternity, and a women's chapter was founded in 1856 at Troy Female Seminary. The Troy Female Seminary, founded by women's rights advocate Emma Willard, was also the first women's higher educational institution in the United States. It is now The Emma Willard School.

⁵ *Fraternities and Sororities: Understanding Life Outcomes*, gallup.com

Today there are approximately 9 million student and alumni/ae members of fraternities and sororities in North America.⁶ Fraternity membership rose to approximately 400,000 in 1990, from approximately 144,000 in 1971 and stood at approximately 380,500 in 2015.⁷ Membership appears to have plateaued in the last few years, and some theorize that millennials may have less interest in Greek Life.

Rensselaer played a key role in the history of Greek Life in the United States. Theta Delta Chi, first formed at Union College in 1847, became the first Greek letter fraternity on the Rensselaer campus in 1853. The oldest Latino fraternity, Phi Iota Alpha, had its roots at Rensselaer beginning in 1898, and after temporarily disbanding, it celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2006.⁸ Many other fraternal organizations developed at Rensselaer, and the history of the Institute and Rensselaer's Greek Life in particular are entirely intertwined. Several of the earliest fraternities, dating to the 1860s, at Rensselaer are still in operation today.

At Rensselaer, the contributions of Greek Life are especially visible: over twenty buildings are named for prominent alumni who were members of the Rensselaer Greek community.^{A.3, A.18} Greek Life members have made vast contributions to the community of Troy, its hospitals, and places of worship, and raised thousands of dollars in support of nationally recognized charitable organizations. For members of Greek Life, the spirit of communal connection — brotherhood and sisterhood — lasts a lifetime. The “continuum,” linking past students to present students and helping them forge their futures is a key part of Greek culture, and one that has greatly benefited our students in their professional careers. Participation in Greek Life increases leadership skills and supports commitment to community service and mentoring.⁹

⁶ <http://college.usatoday.com/2012/0508/examing-the-benefits-of-greek-life/300-9-greek-letters#main>

⁷ Baird's Manual and the North-American Interfraternity Conference, cited in NYTimes.com, “Schools are Tackling the ‘Bro’ Culture,” 09/30/2018.

⁸ http://www.rpi.edu/dept/NewsComm/Magazine/March99/atrenss_archives.html;
<https://orgsync.com/9123/chapter>

⁹ A notable example of this is Rensselaer President Livingston Houston (1913, a member of Delta Phi), and his mentorship of his fraternity brother and former student, Rensselaer President George Low (1948).

In addition, Greek Life on campus provides students with a home away from home and a supportive base from which to pursue their studies. While fraternity members tend to have slightly lower GPAs^{A.5} than the Rensselaer student body at large, they also have a higher 6-year graduation rate. Students who belong to a Greek-lettered fraternity graduated at a rate of 88%, compared to 81% of those who are unaffiliated.¹⁰ It appears that being part of a cohort committed to college life supports successful college completion.

At Rensselaer, all students participate in Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students (CLASS), a comprehensive approach to the student experience at Rensselaer. Through ongoing support, guidance, and co-curricular activities, CLASS connects students to a network of faculty, staff, and other students, ensuring that they are part of a strong community of learners. As students strive to become the leaders of tomorrow, CLASS helps them develop the intellectual agility, multicultural sophistication, and global awareness that will enable them to change the world.

In many ways, the Greek system is a natural model of the CLASS system. It is a living and learning environment, with consistent cohorts, the built-in support of senior members, and a focus on ongoing guidance and co-curricular activities. In addition, the Greek Life Commons Agreement 2017 makes explicit the goal of extending to Greek Life the opportunity to be part of the innovative CLASS Initiative.^{A.6} However, Greek Life lacks some features of the current system, like the array of trained support personnel that CLASS provides. This difference suggests that we may need to offer more advocacy and training to the resident leadership in Greek Life, or explore ways to bring in additional advocates to enable Greek Life to enjoy the full support of CLASS.

Another benefit of Greek Life is the relationship that develops among members; typically, these connections continue long past graduation and provide a lifetime of support and connection to participating students. Membership in Greek organizations provides ongoing professional

¹⁰ Based on an internal analysis of the 2010 Rensselaer incoming class cohort persistence to graduation rates for undergraduates.

opportunities, personal fellowship, and leadership opportunities. The Greek Life Task Force wants to ensure that the benefits of Greek Life can continue to enrich succeeding classes. All stakeholders – alumni and current members, as well as the community at large – need to come together to find remedies to enable Greek Life to thrive.

Draft

The National Scene

Fraternities and sororities operate today in a vastly different environment than most Rensselaer alumni experienced. Newspapers and mass media have brought needed attention to the tragic cases of hazing deaths. Parents have watched with alarm to see the rising statistics of substance abuse and sexual misconduct. However, even in the face of this troubling news, it pays to step back and assess what has changed in the last decades and how that has affected both conditions of Greek Life and our perceptions of it.

In the 1970's, the ratio of men to women at Rensselaer was approximately 10:1; today, the ratio of men to women is 2:1. In 1985, New York changed the legal drinking age from 18 to 21. As a consequence, most undergraduates cannot lawfully drink, and this may have caused much alcohol consumption to take place "underground," and often by individuals unaccustomed to alcohol. Surprisingly, in national studies, more women than men reported their weekly alcohol use exceeds recommended consumption.^{11, A.8-9}

In addition, all colleges and universities operate in a heavily regulated environment, and compliance with reporting requirements may have brought greater — and welcome — attention to campus problems. Moreover, the advent of legal reporting requirements has increased visibility and led to more awareness than in the past. While it is true that there are far more substances to abuse, both legal and illegal, issues of alcohol, drug usage, sexual misconduct, and criminal activity on campus did not begin when campuses were first required to report these statistics. They have been and continue to be persistent problems on college campuses.

The senseless and tragic hazing deaths of the last few years have sparked a national outcry and received deserved attention, amplified in social media and the 24-hour news cycle. Yet statistics show that while our awareness of this problem has dramatically increased, our perception of its prevalence may not comport with statistics.

¹¹ <https://www.quitalcohol.com/alcohol-abuse/college-women-drink-more-than-men.html>

Professor Hank Nuwer of Franklin College has spent decades documenting every hazing death in America. The first hazing death was recorded in 1873 at Cornell University. Since 1975, there has been one hazing death nationally every year. The one constant in 82% of hazing deaths is that large amounts of alcohol have been consumed. With the increase of binge drinking on campuses, this risk has increased.^{12 A.9}

In 2017, four fraternity pledges lost their lives in what are alleged to have been hazing-related incidents. Similar numbers of student fatalities were recorded in 2008, 2012 and 2014. All lost their lives during fraternity hazing rituals where alcohol played a major role. In 2018 there were some tragic results: a four-year old pedestrian was killed by a fraternity pledge alleged to have been driving under the influence after a fraternity tailgate party at the University of Kentucky.¹³

Because binge drinking plays a prominent role in all of these problems, on August 27, 2018, the North-American Interfraternity Conference passed a resolution requiring that its 66-member fraternities “adopt and implement a policy by September 1, 2019,” prohibiting the presence of hard alcohol products (alcohol content above 15%) at any chapter event or facility except when served by a licensed third-party vendor.¹⁴ The ban will apply to fraternity houses as well as private rooms of fraternity members. Banning hard liquor in Greek Life is an important step in addressing the negative aspect of alcohol-related behaviors in Greek Life.

According to the ACHA national survey, almost 60% of college students ages 18-22 drank alcohol in the last month, and almost 2 out of 3 of them engaged in binge drinking during that timeframe. The incidence of binge drinking is higher among fraternity and sorority members nationwide.^{A.8-9}

¹² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/seeking-an-end-to-hazing-deaths/>

¹³ <http://www.hanknuwer.com/hazing-deaths/>

¹⁴ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/No-More-Hard-Liquor-at/244436>

Abuse of alcohol and hazing rituals are problems that have plagued Greek Life campuses nationwide. There is also an indisputable link between alcohol and the risk of sexual assault.¹⁵ At one major insurer of fraternities, sexual assault represented 15% of liability losses, the largest category after assault and battery.¹⁶ Female college students who go to fraternity parties are one and a half times more likely than women who avoid them to become victims of what researchers call “incapacitated sexual assault.”¹⁷ Sorority women run three times the risk of rape as other college students.¹⁸ Fraternity parties often have an unwritten set of rules (*beware of the mystery punch, keep your cup in hand*). A woman is most likely to be sexually assaulted during her *first months on campus*, when she lacks a support system and may be unfamiliar with her tolerance for alcohol.¹⁹

In addition, there is greater diversity at most college campuses, corresponding with an increasingly diverse and upwardly mobile student population. While racially-motivated events are not new to academia, they have gained greater visibility with the advent of social media. The Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate crimes nationwide, has documented a clear increase in hate-related incidents in the last year, but the overwhelming majority do not take place on college campuses.²⁰

Part of our job as educators is to help students take their place within the wider society. Instances of hate or bias have no place on our, or any university campus. We must educate all members of our community on issues of unconscious bias, and unintentional yet regular practices of exclusion. As part of good citizenship, every student and every student organization must maintain an open and unbiased atmosphere in which all students can participate with ease.

¹⁵ “The Campus Sexual Assault Study,” Christopher Krebs, et. al., National Institute of Justice, October 2007, p. xv

¹⁶ Report of the Willis Group, Presentation on claims 1998-2011, cited in Hechinger, p. 77

¹⁷ <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>

Krebs, et al, The Campus Sexual Assault Study,” National Institute of Justice, October 2007p. ix.

¹⁸ Meichun Mohler-Kuo et.al., “Correlates of Rape while Intoxicated in a National Sample of College Women,” Journal of Studies of Alcohol 65 (January, 2004) 41

¹⁹ “Factors That Increase Sexual Assault Risk,” National Institute of Justice, October, 2008, at nij.gov/topics/crime/rape-sexual-violence/campus/pages/increased-risk.aspx

²⁰ <https://www.insidehighered.com/.../racist-incidents-colleges-abound-academic-year-be>
<https://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=jcshesa>

Campuses across the country, including Rensselaer, have struggled with serious problems stemming from incidents of hazing, alcohol and substance abuse, racial bias and sexual misconduct.^{A.10-12} Several colleges and universities have chosen to eliminate Greek Life entirely, including:

- Williams College
- Middlebury College
- Alfred University
- Amherst College
- Ithaca College
- Colby College
- Bowdoin College

A number of schools have suspended Greek Life following the death of a student because of alcohol and hazing violations. At least a dozen colleges and universities have taken steps to strengthen their Greek systems, including MIT and Cornell.

The Greek Life Task Force is taking this opportunity to pro-actively examine the strengths and vulnerabilities of our Greek system before we face the kind of tragedy so many other campuses have experienced. As discussed at the external panels^{A.15} National Greek organizations are taking steps to strengthen their policies and limit their exposure to local vulnerabilities. Greek Life is too important to the student experience and to Rensselaer's heritage to allow it to implode. The camaraderie that Greek Life provides, the academic cohorts that can supply both fellowship and achievement of goals, the leadership skills members share — these traditions are indivisible from the Rensselaer experience and warrant preservation.

We see the indications of potential trouble in the following scenario. Falling membership leads to financial instability. Organizations with fewer members then lack the resources to maintain

houses in good repair. Houses that do not have sufficient membership or resources cannot successfully recruit, and the cycle worsens.

The Greek Life Task Force has been formed to allow the Rensselaer community to usher in a reform of Greek Life. Our task is to consider how we can steer Greek Life on to a more sustainable course. Our goal is to bolster the system to make its members less vulnerable to financial instability, which seems to provoke behavioral, and health and safety problems. We want to address the systemic organizational issues of housing, financial stability, sustainability, and management because declines in these issues lead intrinsically to the denigration of the system. Greek Life has historically been led by the ideals of continuity, good citizenship and a sense of community. These ideals are very much needed in the 21st century.

Current Status of the Rensselaer Greek System

When Greek Life organizations live up to their mission, history has shown they enhance student experience, contribute to individual leadership skills and personal development, and serve as an important pillar to the entire Rensselaer community. In recent years, there has been an understandable and inevitable focus on the often tragic outcomes of misguided and sometimes illegal behaviors occurring within Greek Life at campuses near and far.

We are determined to prevent such tragedies from occurring on this campus. We also recognize that when Greek Life is at its best, it can serve as the connective tissue between students and alumni, creating bonds that continue for generations. Now is the moment when the necessity of intervening, to prevent a tragedy and to discover ways to re-establish the mission of Greek Life, is at hand.

Over the past three years, there have been 15 serious judicial cases involving 13 different Greek organizations.^{A.10} In the past three years, **43%** of the fraternity system has been involved in a serious violation of Rensselaer's Student Rights and Responsibilities.

In recent years, there have been as many as 35 Greek lettered organizations: 30 fraternities and 5 sororities recognized by Rensselaer and operating as a part of the community. Over the past 3 academic years there have been 22 Greek organization judicial cases involving 19 different organizations. In the spring 2018 semester, 5 fraternities were under disciplinary suspension, 2 organizations were placed on emergency suspension, and 7 organizations were under disciplinary probation. As of the fall 2018 semester, 4 fraternities remain on disciplinary suspension, 3 fraternities have been placed on emergency suspension and 4 fraternities are operating on disciplinary probation. Based on the behaviors which have led to so many serious judicial actions, an intervention was deemed necessary, as was an analysis of the current state of the Rensselaer fraternity and sorority experience and the alignment with the mission, values and goals of the Institution.^{A.10}

Students in the Greek system have experienced drug-related tragedies, serious alcohol-related hospitalizations, assaults, hazing and academic underperformance. While these issues are not unique to Greek Life, the data demonstrate that these issues are significantly more prevalent in the Greek system.^{A.10}

In cases of active sanctions against a fraternity through spring 2018,

- 86% of the cases involved a violation of the alcohol policy
- 27% of active cases included a violation of the drug policy
- 27% of active cases involved a violation of the anti-hazing policy

(Some cases may involve multiple violations and thus the percentages do not equal 100%.)

Alcohol Usage

According to a national survey, almost 60% of college students ages 18-22 drank alcohol in the past month and almost 2 out of 3 of them engaged in binge drinking during that same timeframe.^{21,A.9} More than 1,800 students die every year of alcohol-related causes, and an additional 600,000 are injured while drunk. While this problem has long been recognized, effective solutions seem difficult to alter behaviors, as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* noted in a 2014 series on alcohol's hold on campus.²²

Research findings show that college students who are affiliated with a fraternity or sorority consume more alcohol than their non-affiliated peers and also experience more adverse alcohol-related negative consequences. Rensselaer uses the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment, a national assessment which we conduct with students on a biennial basis.

²¹ SAMHSA. 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Table 6.89B, Alcohol Use in Past Month among persons age 18-22, b College Enrollment Status and Demographic characteristics.

[Hhttp://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-Det.Tabs2014](http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-Det.Tabs2014). See also

https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA-II_FALL_2017_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf

²² https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/alcohol_binge

The Rensselaer-specific data from the 2017 National College Health Assessment administered to students demonstrates a pattern in line with national trends: Greek-affiliated students report engaging in high risk drinking behaviors over three times the national average. At Rensselaer, Greek students are on average four times more likely than non-Greek students to be drinkers; and Greek students are almost four times more likely than non-Greeks to report experiencing blackouts while drinking.^{A.9} In addition, the same Rensselaer-specific data show that Greeks report misusing stimulants almost four times more often than non-affiliated peers.^{A.8} (This is not to suggest that membership causes members to indulge in alcohol or drugs, simply to demonstrate the correlation.)

Sexual Misconduct

In recent years, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights and the State of New York have increased requirements that college campuses address issues of discrimination based on sex and sexual misconduct and assault. In 2015, New York passed the most aggressive policy in the nation to fight sexual assault on college campuses, legislation known as “Enough is Enough,” *Article 129-B of New York Education Law*. At Rensselaer, any student that is subject to sexual violence or harassment is one too many.

According to internal statistics, since 2015, reported cases of Title IX sexual misconduct violations occurred within the Greek community at the same rate as the rest of the community. In the fall of 2017, while the Greek community made up 23% of the undergraduate population, 29% of all reported sexual misconduct cases were connected to the Greek community. However, in spring 2018, **47%** of all sexual misconduct cases reported at Rensselaer were connected to several Greek organizations.^{23, A.12} This behavior is simply unacceptable.

²³ To be more specific, that means that the sexual misconduct took place at a Greek house, during a Greek party or the parties involved had been attending a Greek party, or the individuals involved are members of Greek organizations.

Recent research suggests that half of all sexual assaults involve alcohol consumption, but that cultural norms play an important role in sexual assault. Whether individuals are supported by their peers in negative attitudes towards women, whether it is socially acceptable to stalk an incapacitated woman, whether there are social consequences for young men who ignore a lack of consent — these questions have been found to play an important role in sexual assault.²⁴ Rensselaer has instituted Bystander Intervention Training, and some Greek organizations have sought to foster an anti-assault culture.

Housing and Safety Issues

At the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester, only **five of the thirty** houses had an occupancy of over 90%. Half of all houses had an occupancy of rate of 60% or lower and seven had an occupancy rate *below* 50%. For many of the houses, the lack of occupants threatens their financial viability.^{A.4} However, there are houses that have chosen to keep to occupancy below the maximum amount allowed.

The health-safety and well-being of students is an Institute priority. Each semester, Rensselaer is obligated to conduct external fire and life safety inspections for all fraternities and sororities with a designated housing facility, even those which are privately owned, at no cost to the organization. We conduct these inspections to ensure that Rensselaer students are housed in a safe facility.

This past year, we discovered many houses failed to meet their health and safety inspection requirements.^{A.7} In total, 70%, or 16 out of 23 Rensselaer-affiliated houses decreased in overall performance between the spring and fall semesters. Such a decline is worthy of notice. Areas of concern include: lack of fire drills; non-functioning smoke detectors, and sprinkler and fire extinguishers which are not functional or have failed the requisite inspection. Additional

²⁴ <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-says-toxic-masculinity-more-than-alcohol-leads-to-sexual-assault/>
See also Hechinger, John, *True Gentlemen: The Broken Pledge of America's Fraternities*, Chapter 3, Sexual Assault Expected, 73-107 (2017)

problems include blocked egresses, improper electrical wiring and excessive combustible loads. Any one of these issues have played a role in fires on campuses across the country, often leaving property damage and in some cases injuries or death.

In many ways recruitment data provides telling evidence of the relevance and vitality of Greek Life within the Rensselaer community. While the size of the undergraduate student body has grown considerably in the past several years, the number of students affiliating with fraternities has not.

In 2018, Rensselaer saw the greatest **number of applications for admission** in our history — 20,377 applicants. This year's incoming class hails from 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and from countries all around the world. Almost 300 of our first-year students are citizens of countries other than the United States. Though we are a diverse community, we are united in our desire to change the world for the better.

Although Rensselaer enrollment has increased in 2017, Greek Life reports diminishing recruits. In fact, there were fewer members of fraternities in 2017 – (~ 1,140) – than there were in 2013 (~1,160). We need to acknowledge this decline in interest and determine how the Institute can assist in supporting the vitality of Greek Life.

When we examine the current state of judicial sanctions against houses, the Title IX violations connected to Greek Life, combined with the imbalance of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and recent discriminatory behavior, we recognize it is time to intervene. Many colleges and universities have responded only after dire events forced their hand. This is not an instance of a “few bad actors,” but a system in need of a communal reform. What we need is a re-thinking of the culture and values that we want Greek Life to preserve and project.

A key feature of the student experience at Rensselaer is Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students (CLASS). Through ongoing support, guidance, and co-curricular activities, CLASS connects students to a network of faculty, staff, and other students, ensuring that they are

part of a strong community of learners, who become our next generation of leaders. Students form critical bonds with one another and through CLASS, with residential leaders and faculty advisers who provide mentorship. The goals of CLASS are to ensure that students develop the intellectual agility, multicultural sophistication, and global awareness that will enable them to change the world.

The Task Force has determined that it will examine, under the rubric of CLASS, how Greek Life is enacting this important feature of the Rensselaer experience. We will view Greek Life through the vantage point of student experience and will examine four core issues of the Greek system: Behavioral, Health and Safety, Financial Sustainability, and Internal Agreements and Scorecards for member organizations. We will use these categories to explore how Greek Life might be better aligned with Rensselaer priorities. Our goal is not simply to ameliorate problems but to help enact a systemic change in the culture of Greek Life, to assist its members in becoming better citizens of the Rensselaer community.

Values and Greek Life

What is the value proposition for Greek Life? Our chapters speak of “Sisterhood, Scholarship and Solidarity”;²⁵ they value “personal character development through leadership, scholarship, community service and positive social experience”;²⁶ they aim “to create an uncommon and lifelong brotherhood that develops leaders and encourages service to others for the betterment of our community”.²⁷ These ideals, which valorize good citizenship, community, leadership, and scholarship, are values we want all Rensselaer students to exemplify.^{A.19}

How can we aid the Greek system to realize those values? We need strategies and methods of accountability to ensure that chapters provide development opportunities that balance the importance of academics, leadership, service and social development as students prepare for their chosen careers.

In the fact finding and deliberations of the Greek Life Task Force, we found many strong components of the current Greek community at Rensselaer. We focused on three themes for our work:

- Sustainability – How do we ensure the long-term sustainability of the Greek system?
- Community – How do we move from a Greek system to a community?
- Citizenship – How do we promote good citizenship within the Greek community?

The most difficult issue to address is the “variability” of the different chapters/houses. How do we keep the strong chapters strong and help the weaker chapters improve? The answer may lie in re-thinking the chapters’ relationships to one another. Some competition is healthy when it lifts the entire system, but chronically weak houses can only serve as a drag on the entire system. Just as one bad actor can tarnish a group, a chapter that does not live up to its mission tarnishes

²⁵ Alpha Phi (S) Mission Statement

²⁶ Lambda Chi Mission Statement

²⁷ Pi Kappa Phi Mission Statement

the system. If Greek Life is a community, if the values of that community matter, then all parts of the Greek system must lift one another in order for the whole to thrive.

Despite the considerable variation between Greek organizations, one of the consistent goals among them is the development of leadership skills.^{A.19} Much of the activity of Greek Life is designed to help students assume more and more responsibility for their communal goals; senior members are expected to model behavior that the rest of their organization can emulate. If we can collectively harness those skills, and if leadership goals in a Greek organization can translate to leadership within the Greek community, then many of our problems can be solved.

The following ten recommendations are designed to help Greek Life align with CLASS values and to strengthen the behavioral, financial, and health and safety record of each chapter. We propose a new and more transparent approach to agreements that govern Greek Life and scorecards that represent the chapter to the community. Finally, we suggest a new way of relating to one another, marked by leadership, accountability and transparency. It is our hope that these changes will not only solve the identifiable problems, but will elevate Greek Life and experience to enable all students to meet the challenges of citizenship and community in a transforming world.

We want to make clear that these recommendations are the *beginning* of a process of reconsideration and reform. Many of our recommendations identify issues in need of further study. We hope that this report will usher in new ways of thinking and solutions beyond what we have proposed here.

We welcome the input of the community and look forward to a productive discussion of how these recommendations may help solve the issues we have identified and advance the success of all members of the Rensselaer community.

Recommendations:

1. Incorporate CLASS Goals and Practices into Greek Life

CLASS (Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students), our comprehensive student experience based on time and location-based clustering, offers students unique growth experiences. The Greek Community has the potential to be a model of CLASS through the ongoing support, guidance, and co-curricular activities it provides along with a strong network of faculty, staff, and other students. As our students seek to become the leaders of tomorrow, Greek Life and CLASS provides the framework, resources, and experiences that will enable the Greek community to ascend to great academic and professional achievement.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: All fraternities and sororities must employ a stratified advisory framework to support CLASS objectives, to ensure that Greek members have the same opportunities for high achievement and positive continuity.^{A.20}

The Greek student organizations will be well-served by advising, mentoring and guidance from multiple advisers in complementary roles and with diverse experiences. A framework identified by multiple campuses and inter/national organizations as a best practice is the appointment of an alumni advisory board that reflects the key executive positions of the undergraduate chapter:

- President Adviser
- Recruitment Adviser
- Operations Adviser
- Finance Adviser
- Risk Management Adviser
- Academic Adviser
- Service/Philanthropy Adviser

It is our recommendation that each organization have, at minimum, the following key advisory roles:

Alumni Adviser: This adviser is usually selected by the chapter or parent organization, and is typically affiliated with the Greek organization; works closely with chapter officers to ensure that they are fulfilling the responsibilities of their positions; is knowledgeable about policies, standards, expectations of inter/national and Institute requirements and provides relevant guidance to the undergraduate members of the organization.

Chapter Adviser: This adviser should preferably be a *local* individual who can provide the necessary guidance to maintain the day-to-day operations of the chapter. For chapters that have long-distance advisers, it is our recommendation that they work with the Alumni Inter-Greek Council (AIGC) to identify a local point of contact, who complements the availability and role of their long-distance adviser.

Faculty Adviser (or an alternative academic adviser): This adviser should be a Rensselaer faculty or academic staff member who is able to work with the chapter's academic officer to ensure a thriving culture of academic excellence. Currently there are many houses on campus without these key positions.

- b. RECOMMENDATION: Rensselaer will require all fraternities and sororities with housing facilities to establish a Greek live-in adviser (GLA). The GLA will be a student member of the organization – with senior status or above.

Consistent with the tenets of CLASS, the presence of a live-in adviser will facilitate a safe environment and promote the development of each student member, consonant with the values of the organization and the principles of the Institute.

The Greek live-in adviser's role is to serve as a mentor, adviser, and role model. They are there to coach the chapter officers on their responsibilities, serve as a liaison with the Institute, alumni and inter/national fraternity, and ensure that facilities are in excellent working order and meet an appropriate standard of living conducive to educational and personal growth and development. A longer description of how this plan might work appears in the appendix.^{A.20}

Educational Programming

Programming is essential to the life of a Greek chapter. The chapter officers should be mindful of current trends in the Greek community and should be intentional about the type of programming developed by the group. Programs should be centered on themes and central values related to the chapter:

- Leadership
- Community Building
- Excellence
- Sisterhood/Brotherhood
- Public Service

Academic Education

A Greek system operating without a holistic view of academic success cannot be expected to serve the needs of our student body. Currently, the key individual responsible for academic affairs of the chapter is the "academic officer" in each chapter. In some cases, the chapter academic officer's role is narrowly focused on meeting the chapter's minimum GPA requirements instead of the individual student. This negative view seldom results in intrinsic change in the academic outlook of the students who are performing poorly. We make the following recommendation to address this situation:

- c. RECOMMENDATION: All Greek Life chapters must participate in an annual meeting of the “academic officers” and “faculty advisers.” This would allow for an efficient exchange of best practices between the different chapters and could enrich the Greek leadership summit.

2. Strengthen Finances, and Improve Health, Safety, and Behaviors

Relationship of finances, behaviors, occupancy, facilities conditions

A review of the data points related to fraternity and sorority performance (e.g., academic performance, behavioral issues, house condition/code compliance, and recruitment success) indicates what appears to be a substantive correlation between each. Fraternities and sororities with facilities in good order and solid finances tend to also have higher academic performance, successful recruitment numbers, and few to no behavioral incidents.

To improve the Rensselaer Greek experience, and to lift it to the heights we all agree it should be, an investment in the facilities and systems that aid in financial sustainability are necessary.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Develop a strategic financial assessment tool for organizations to use in their annual budget and cost for membership planning process.

Launch an inclusive effort of the primary fraternity and sorority stakeholder groups which includes students, alumni, Rensselaer staff/administrators, and inter/national partners to collaborate on a tool assessing their operational costs, necessary capital reserve contributions, debt payment, and other expenses, relative to the number of beds if applicable (room & board), and number of members (dues & fees). Rensselaer can provide comparative market costs as a gauge for chapters to determine the charges they need to set to maintain a high-functioning student organization and a well-kept facility.

- b. RECOMMENDATION: Encourage investment by external sources in the Greek Life Commons.

First, pursue a collaborative comprehensive assessment of each fraternity and sorority house affiliated with Rensselaer. The study should seek to identify capital needed to address facility improvements. These projects could be divided into two categories: those essential to safety and compliance, and those which are suggested or desired (e.g., technology upgrades) or necessary maintenance. Work with each organization to identify and/or develop opportunities for external funding (gifts, loans, grants, etc.).

Financial Sustainability

- c. RECOMMENDATION: Conduct need and feasibility studies concerning the engagement of professional accounting services to improve the financial health of the Greek Life community.

It is a practice by financially strong fraternity and sorority systems (MIT, Cornell) to employ the services of a community accounting firm. The firm provides services such as assistance in annual budgeting, monthly financial statements and accounts receivable reports, weekly vendor payments, quarterly and year-end tax filings, comprehensive accounting and tax advisory services.

The Built Environment

The built environment in which students live must first and foremost be a safe place, free of safety violations and other hazards. Student housing must provide a haven and a place to grow. There is strong evidence that the built environment also contributes to students' mental health.²⁸ Some chapter houses do not currently provide this environment. We must ensure that we are providing an environment that supports a quality of life conducive to study and growth.

²⁸ The Journal of American College Health, Variation in Students Mental Health and Treatment Across US Colleges and Universities <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2015.1040411>

- d. RECOMMENDATION: Require, as described in the Greek Life Relationship Statement, annual safety inspections and compliance with requirements for fire and life safety systems and the general maintenance and sanitation of the built and occupied environment.

An independent third-party with the expertise to understand the code and standard safety practices can significantly improve the overall safety and condition of all houses. Students, alumni, and Rensselaer all play a part in compliance. We must clearly define current student and alumni/ae positions that are responsible for house maintenance and code/safety compliance. Rensselaer should develop thorough training to prepare those responsible for the facilities, and provide sample inspection guides, checklists, and calendars. Rensselaer should conduct pre- and post-walk-through meetings with chapters to prepare for and to follow-up on inspections.

3. Establish Stronger Relationships through the Timing of Recruitment and Intake

Incoming students require time to establish their relationship to the Rensselaer environment, to adjust to the new academic challenges they are asked to meet, to establish friendships among their student cohort, and to explore the entire First Year Experience. Of those colleges in the U.S. which host fraternities and sororities, as of fall 2018, more than 200 require that the recruitment of first year students be deferred beyond the first semester.^{A.17}

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Shift recruitment for incoming freshmen to the spring semester.

Holding recruitment in the spring for freshmen and interested parties will improve the overall Greek and Rensselaer communities. Freshmen will be able to focus on academics during the first semester and will have established college GPAs before considering going Greek. By waiting one semester, new students can then make an informed decision about whether they can take on the additional commitment of Greek Life along with their academic responsibilities. Greek houses in turn will also be able to understand the potential new members' academic abilities before

deciding to invite them to join their organization. Having an additional semester before recruitment will also give potential new members time to see how organizations operate on campus, apart from recruitment, to get a better idea of what that organization represents. ***New transfers and continuing students can be recruited in the fall.*** All decisions, whether to join a Greek sorority or fraternity or who should be recruited as a new member, will thus be more informed.

We recommend using this next year to prepare for the change to spring recruitment (it would commence in spring 2020). The Greek community needs to experience the effects of The Arch at least once before another major change is made to scheduling. The timing of recruitment along with The Arch summer semester are likely to have an effect on some of the major issues Greek houses are facing including housing vacancies, financial stress from receiving less dues, and filling leadership positions in houses. A change in the recruitment timeframe will be beneficial, but only if the houses are given the proper amount of time to adjust to The Arch before this additional change is made.

- b. **RECOMMENDATION:** Conduct a comprehensive orientation and education program for all Rensselaer students prior to the Greek Life recruitment period.

Greek Life has been and should remain an important aspect of the Rensselaer community. At the same time, it is important that students who wish to explore membership with Greek Life organizations be educated and informed about the purposes of Greek Life, its concomitant values, expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities of membership. We need to ensure that there is a comprehensive educational program provided to all students interested in affiliation with a Greek organization prior to the start of any recruitment or intake activities. We see an opportunity for informational sessions that organizations can present in the fall, as well as opportunities for community-wide programming to engage the campus community.

4. Mitigate High Risk Behaviors, Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Our statistics show that members of Greek Life tend to engage in alcohol and substance abuse at a rate significantly higher than the community at large. Because members tend to expose themselves to more high-risk behaviors, we need to employ and enforce regulations to mitigate illegal alcohol usage and substance abuse. We make these recommendations to protect the health and safety of members of Greek Life as well as the entire Rensselaer community, and to prevent unlawful and dangerous practices.

We must institute consistent and equitable alcohol policies.

The age breakdown of the Rensselaer undergraduate student population is typically 80% who are under 21 years of age, and 20% who are 21 years of age or above. New York State Law prohibits persons under 21 years of age from purchasing alcohol or possessing alcohol with the intent to consume. Consumption of alcohol remains a problem campus-wide. The majority of student misconduct and disciplinary cases are associated with the consumption of alcohol, and the poor decision making that results from inebriation.

At Rensselaer, fraternities are the only student organizations that may host social events at their residence where alcohol can be served and the student members are responsible for upholding all associated policies and expectations. The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) affiliated women's fraternities and sororities have had policies in place for many years prohibiting alcohol to be present in their facilities. If the students choose to host a social event with alcohol present, the event must comply with clearly defined regulations which places the responsibility for purchase and distribution on a third party, such as a licensed caterer.

Guidance from the guest panelists who represented inter/national fraternities, sororities, the North-American Interfraternity Conference, and the National Panhellenic Conference were clear that third-party venues equipped to enforce law and policy, and to provide measures to keep

event attendees safe, are far and away the best practice if student groups continue to have events at which alcohol is present.²⁹

- a. RECOMMENDATION: At a minimum, adopt the NIC guidelines on hard alcohol effective January 1, 2019. Greek houses will also be subject to all Rensselaer regulations regarding alcohol in residence areas. Fraternities and sororities wishing to host a social event with non-hard alcohol must do so at a reputable third-party venue which holds the appropriate license(s).

In order to host a social event that includes alcohol, a chapter needs to develop a plan for the event which identifies the third-party vendor. All Bystander Training necessary should be conducted before any social event can take place. All plans will be reviewed and registered with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office reserves the right to monitor any event for compliance with the posted plan.

- b. RECOMMENDATION: All students will receive annual Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy and sexual assault prevention education and programming.

There has been an increase in reported sexual misconduct cases across the campus, and an alarming increase reported to be taking place at Greek-owned houses. Alcohol often plays a significant role in these cases. We need to provide better training so that students understand how blood alcohol content is measured and affected by drinking practices, including the role that binge drinking can play in distorting judgment, which can expose students to potential criminal liability and undesirable outcomes. We also need to share measures that can be taken

²⁹ In fact, the North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), an organization that includes the majority of fraternities, has issued a ban on hard alcohol that is slated to take effect no later than September 1, 2019. On August 27, 2018, the NIC passed a resolution stating that alcohol products above 15% ABV are prohibited in any chapter facility or at any chapter event, except when served by a licensed third-party vendor. This ban applies to all common areas as well as students' private living spaces, and the ban applies whether or not the students are over the legal age of 21. This policy prohibits hard alcohol from fraternity houses and functions with the single exception of those events in which a licensed third-party vendor is hired. This committee recommends the adoption and enforcement of this resolution at Rensselaer no later than January 1, 2019.

organizationally to prevent sexual assaults (and other risky behaviors) from taking place, for example, training more students in Bystander Intervention.

- c. RECOMMENDATION: Appoint a committee to examine the current new member initiation/pledge process to ensure that hazing is no longer practiced and that the developmental goals of and desired outcomes of CLASS are met.

Hazing has been taking place here at Rensselaer leading to the suspension of some of our fraternities as recently as last year. To address the risks within our system, and to do all we can to instill a sense of community and civility, we must eliminate hazing.

5. [Integrate the Greek Life Commons and The Arch](#)

The Arch provides a unique opportunity for our students to pivot from their first two years of study to more advanced work and enrichment activities to enhance their educational experience. During the summer after their sophomore year, all rising juniors will be on campus as a cohort for their academics and specialized programming – including unique academic, professional, cultural, and recreational experiences. During the fall or spring “semester away,” there will be opportunities for students to experience an extended internship or co-op assignment, perform research, launch a company, volunteer for a great cause, or have an independent learning experience.

The full implementation of The Arch presents opportunities and challenges for the Greek Chapters. It is an opportunity for chapters to grow membership (with associated revenues), and enhance programming for their membership. It will require a change of current housing and leadership development activities in chapters, at the same time, it also offers chapters the chance to enhance their current housing strategies and leadership development and engagement.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Explore the opportunity for enhanced programming (e.g., leadership, cultural awareness, etc.) for students involved with Greek Life and under the aegis of the Director of The Arch Student Transitions.

The Greek students can demonstrate leadership to develop programming during The Arch. There is the potential – as long as the house meets the standards of the Institute for health, safety, programming, and is not under sanctions – for the Greek Commons to be considered as a residential cluster during The Arch.

6. Foster an Intentional Emphasis on Diversity and Inclusion

A community that is diverse and inclusive creates a welcoming and safe place for all students; at the same time it supports Rensselaer's goal of creating an individual who is multi-culturally sophisticated and has a global view. In supporting a diverse Greek community, we must look at our policies and procedures to ensure that we are creating an environment that is inclusive and equitable to all students regardless of their background. We should support increasing the number of Greek organizations that are culturally relevant to students from various ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that Chapters are using language and creating programs that are inclusive in nature, Chapters, Interfraternity Council (IFC), and the Panhellenic Council should complete a full review of their policies and procedures with the help of the Director of Multicultural Programs.
- b. RECOMMENDATION: All chapter officers be required and all other organization members be strongly encouraged to participate in Unconscious Bias training on an annual basis.

- c. RECOMMENDATION: Chapters should be encouraged and incentivized to find opportunities to co-sponsor culturally relevant programs with other student groups.
- d. RECOMMENDATION: The Greek Life professional staff must work closely with Regional/National NPHC and others to create and activate organizations on the campus to provide more options for our diverse student population.

7. Develop a New Transparent Scorecard

The community at large will benefit if we can rely on data about Greek Life using consistent factors on a standardized scorecard issued on a regular basis. Exemplars of scorecards from different campuses are attached.^{A.21} We must therefore develop a scorecard using agreed upon factors determined to be important in gauging the overall status and sustainability of individual organizations and the Greek Life community in general. We propose that the factors below be considered:

- Academic achievement - Average member GPA
- Behavior sanctions – Categories such as: Alcohol violations, hazing, Title IX/sexual assault, etc.
- Chapter size (including a minimum number of members): 1) active, 2) inactive
- House occupancy
- Safety scores of the built environment
- Philanthropic activity /events
- Average hours of community service per member
- Average funds raised for charity over the past 5 years, normalized to member number
- Organization conduct findings/status of chapter
- Chapter status: recognized/unrecognized/closed
- Adviser to member ratio
- Number of advisers trained by Rensselaer

- Awards (National, University, etc.)
- Five Star Rating
- Chapter highlights/campus achievements (i.e., individual member accomplishments, such as Scholarship or Campus Leadership Position)

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Rensselaer should create, in collaboration with the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and the Alumni Inter-Greek Council (AGIC), a new scorecard that will reflect these priorities.

The implementation of a scorecard for Greek Life organizations will also provide a transparent and useful tool to provide assistance to the Greek Life community. The committee may also want to consider how best to communicate these data, and identify whether a ratio, extending over time, would be more informative to the community.

8. Merge all Greek Life Relationship Agreements

There are currently multiple operational agreements between the Greek chapters and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The “Relationship Agreement” is the fundamental document of “recognition” between Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Social Fraternities and Sororities. Recognition is the formal process by which Rensselaer agrees that a social fraternity or sorority may function on the campus, enroll undergraduate members through established rush activities, use campus facilities and services, and identify its chapter with the university. The latest version was made effective as of January 1, 2006. The Greek Life Commons Agreement was adopted in 2009, and “...is designed to extend to Greek Life the opportunity to be a part of the innovative CLASS initiative at Rensselaer...” These multiple agreements should be re-drafted and merged into a single, authoritative agreement, comprehensive and consonant with all agreements governing Greek Life and Rensselaer policy.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Revise and combine all existing agreements governing Greek Life into one comprehensive agreement that will emphasize the need for accountability and responsibility of all parties affected by the agreement and its terms.

The committee should include alumni/ae, especially those with knowledge of Greek Life, undergraduates, and administrators with strong institutional knowledge. This new agreement should include clearly stated sanctions for violations of its rules and regulations; consensus between its signatories will ensure its objectives are met. The final single agreement will be comprehensive, equitable and consonant with other applicable regulations.

9. Restructure the Student Judicial System

There appears to be some confusion regarding the jurisdiction and authority of the student judicial system. To clarify: the Student Judicial Board has overall responsibility to review all alleged violations of the *Grounds for Disciplinary Action* by individual students or student groups, except where other institute policies or procedures grant jurisdiction to other panels, such as the Sexual Misconduct Policy.^{A.13}

The Student Judicial Board is the appeals board for *all* individuals and organizations found to have violated Institutional regulations and/ or policy. The Greek Judicial Board, a separate body, currently serves as the appeals board for fraternity or sorority organization judicial cases. This includes matters addressed by the *Grounds for Disciplinary Action*, violations of the *Relationship Statement between Rensselaer and Social Fraternities and Sororities*, and violations of the *Greek Commons Agreement*. The Greek Judicial Board also has jurisdiction over alleged violations of Interfraternity Council (IFC) or Panhellenic (PC) policies.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Establish the Student Judicial Board as the student body that works with the Dean of Students Office and that has primary jurisdiction for hearing and

adjudicating student and all student organizations' violations of Rensselaer policy and regulations (this includes all Greek organizations), other than sexual misconduct cases.

- b. RECOMMENDATION: Establish the Greek Judicial Board as having limited jurisdiction over the hearing and adjudication of violations of IFC or Panhellenic policies and must refer violations of Rensselaer policy to the Dean of Students Office. The Greek Judicial Board can add to sanctions that have been otherwise determined by the judicial process.

10. Build Trust, Leadership, Integrity, and Accountability

We have all been the beneficiaries of a Greek system at Rensselaer that has endured through centuries. Greek Life members have served as leaders of our community and inspired their peers to greater community service and achievement.^{A.19}

The attributes that have made Greek Life endure are needed now more than ever. We need individuals to model the behavior the rest of the community should aspire to, and who can serve as the leaders of tomorrow. We need to trust one another in order to choose community above self-interest. We need to hold each member accountable if they fail to live up to the ideals the chapter sets as its mission; we need to hold each other accountable if we do not live up to the expectations we have as citizens of a shared community.

These are the ideals Greek Life has championed on our campus. We need a renaissance of those values. If Greek Life at Rensselaer is going to progress from a “system” to a “community,” we need trust, leadership, integrity and accountability.

- a. RECOMMENDATION: Establish accountability standards. It is the responsibility of members as citizens of the Rensselaer community to uphold these standards. We must mobilize the tools to recognize and reward good behavior, and the mechanisms to recognize and take action if rules are breached.
- b. RECOMMENDATION: Increase the role and responsibilities of the staff in the Office of the Greek Life Commons to provide guidance and direction needed to facilitate the success of Greek Life organizations.
- c. RECOMMENDATION: Establish an implementation group and action plan to execute the recommendations of this report. This group should act in a deliberate and thoughtful manner to prioritize and implement recommendations with sensitivity. This group should be intentionally inclusive to ensure a broad range of opinions during implementation. In the codifying of agreements of relationships and in publishing of scorecards and other measurement mechanisms, the community will need to hold each other accountable with integrity built through mutual trust.

