Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Alvarez-Peña, Arleny; Apgar, Travis; Bunson, Julie; Catalano, Alexandra; Chan, Teresa; Cray, Fiona; Dosono, Bryan; Ertl, Melissa; Golby, Leah; Griffin, Robert; Khatib, Sari; Martin, Kyle; Mendez, Cameron; Miller, Paul; Minor, Tamra; Miranda, Monica; Nuñez, Ariel; Stevens, Sheri; Urena, Moises

Guests of the Chair Present: Alexander, Pamela; Feuer, Emily; Jaromin, Michael; Lauricella, Nancy; Wrona, Dan

The meeting convened at 7:03pm.

I. Welcome - Dr. Robert Griffin

Dean Griffin reminded members that at the last meeting, the Commission decided to recommend continuing to recognize fraternities and sororities but to recommend changes to the current system. He informed members that the remainder of meetings will be focusing on the aspirations we have for the fraternity/sorority community and recommendations we would like to suggest.

II. Approval of Minutes of October 30, 2019 - Dr. Robert Griffin

The minutes were approved with no members in opposition.

III. Aspirations for the Fraternity/Sorority Community – Dan Wrona

Mr. Wrona started his presentation by explaining the differences between philosophy, policy, and practice and how philosophy drives policy which drives practice. He explained
that the focus of his presentation would be on philosophy as that is the foundation for the other two elements. He built his presentation around the facilitation of some central questions with the Commission:

- **Why do we care? Why recognize FSL?**

  Commission members mentioned items including the belief that there are positive outcomes for students affiliated with fraternities/sororities, that fraternity/sorority membership helps students stay at the institution and foster a sense of community at the institution, having a relationship with fraternities/sororities as an institution promotes opportunities to work together and promote student health/safety, and the idea that students affiliated with fraternities/sororities are still our students and cannot be ignored. Mr. Wrona also challenged members to consider why as an institution we invest in fraternities/sororities. Commission members discussed the impact the organizations have on students, families, and society, the positive impact on diversity/inclusion, leadership, and general opportunity these organizations provide for members.

- **How would you define UAlbany’s relationship with FSL?**

  Commission members discussed different relationship models that currently exist including a family member model where only accomplishments/issues are highlighted, an “us versus them” relationship (with a need on focusing on the “we” instead), the need for partnering and mentoring built on trust, and the need to rekindle relationships with faculty/staff and non-affiliated students. Mr. Wrona challenged members to also consider what behaviors are creating a lack of trust and what behaviors are needed to generate trust. A question was posed by a Commission members about how we can begin to decouple fraternities/sororities from behaviors such as hazing and alcohol use. Ideas were generated including institution-sponsored publications, faculty/staff also spreading information about fraternities/sororities rather than just students, the allocation of resources, using a supportive mindset rather than a deficit mindset, fraternity/sorority students owning up to issues, focusing on motivation/incentives to do the right thing, and including students in creating solutions. It was also brought up that focusing on the weight of the destructive behaviors of fraternities/sororities cannot be neglected.

- **Who is responsible for FSL?**

  It was discussed that many believe it is the responsibility of fraternities/sororities and the Office of Fraternity/Sorority Life, while others discussed that everyone who is part of the UAlbany community should be responsible. It was also mentioned that for change to occur, the change has to come within the fraternity/sorority membership, but while also realizing there will always be an unequal relationship between students and the administration. The roles of national consultants and
unrecognized organizations were also mentioned along with the need for more transparency within the All Greek Council.

- What is your theory of change?

Ideas about theories of change mentioned by Commission members include the need to embrace fraternity/sorority life, the need for a “big stick,” getting more students involved in the recognized system, high accountability with high support, having clear policy with swift, certain, and severe/meaningful outcomes, the need for system change, and the need to potentially build a new system rather than reforming what is already in place. Thoughts about dealing with unrecognized organizations, the use of amnesty policies, struggles with new member intake, influencing the “middle members” to do the right thing, and the need to incorporate research-based interventions were also brought up.

- What is the vision for FSL?

Commission members expressed priorities including consistency, accountability from both staff and students, a safer environment for students, trust between staff, students, and national headquarters, fraternities/sororities seen as a resource for the campus, an increase in membership, increased inclusion of faculty/staff, and the system behaving in ways the University can be proud of.

Mr. Wrona ended the presentation by sharing a summary of what was discussed.

IV. Developing Recommendations – Dr. Robert Griffin and Dr. Emily Feuer

Because of the great deal of dialogue and progress being made during Mr. Wrona’s presentation, Dean Griffin requested he continue his presentation past the time originally allotted. Because of this, there was no time to discuss recommendations. This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

V. Wrap Up and Next Steps - Dr. Robert Griffin

Dean Griffin reminded members there will be a meeting next week (November 20). He also encouraged members to add to the working documents on potential strategies and a document focused on the questions Mr. Wrona posed to the group. In addition, Mr. Urena informed members about upcoming new member presentations and invited all members to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 8:59pm.