

Reaching the Summit

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What is it?

- Reaching the Summit (RTS) is a comprehensive plan for excellence in WVU Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Elements of a strategic plan
- New community standards
- Response to problematic behavior
- Innovative institutional response to collegiate and alumni influences of behavior
- Recognition Review



Why was it necessary?

- Greek Life prior to 2014
- Catalyst: Passing of Nolan Burch
- Decision to ENHANCE the community, not destroy it
- Greek Life 2015-2017
- Fraternity & Sorority Life 2017- present
 - Progress was being made in terms of risk management, interpersonal development, etc.
 - Harmony was beginning to be restored
 - The Masquerade
- Allegations of sexual misconduct, hazing, drug use and distribution, alcohol abuse/hospitalizations, racism & prejudice
- The culture was changing, but not fast enough to ensure student safety



Says who?

- Upper administration began losing faith in Greek Life
- President Gee remained steadfast in desiring a values-based community

- Students & Alumni also indicated that it was time for a change



So here's what we did...

To Address Problematic Behavior

- Reduce new member education period from 8 to 4 weeks
- Place IFC Chapters on a new member education & social event moratorium
- All chapters to engage in a membership review

To Realign Our Values

- Increase minimum GPA to join from 2.50 to 2.75
- Reinforce Deferred Membership Policy
- Increase minimum GPA for a chapter to be in good standing from a 2.50 to a 2.75
- Recognition review by a working group
- New programs/education opportunities to be formulated by working group



When did it happen?

- Sunday, February 11- Presidents Conference
- Monday, February 12 at 6pm- Emergency Phone Conference
- Tuesday, February 13 at 9am- Meeting with Key Stakeholders; the Plan is presented
- Wednesday, February 14 at 6pm- All presidents and advisors are assembled; President, Provost, General Counsel, Dean of Students, Director... make the announcement
- Thursday, February 15- NIC/NPC make contact opposing certain elements
- Tuesday, February 27- NIC/NPC comes to campus to appeal certain elements
- Wednesday, April 18- Working Group Meeting # 1



The Working Group

- 14 members made up of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and HQ partners. Met formally twice
- Original goal was to provide action plans for chapters during the recognition review
- One chapter had 3 additional violations to be adjudicated by OSC at time of review
- HQ partners...one was awesome; one was not.
- Summit Standards Revisions (focus more on bystander prevention education, etc.)



Chapters Went to Work

- Some groups lost their charter before the review (Pi Kappa Alpha, Phi Gamma Delta, Sigma Alpha Mu)
- Sigma Chi and Kappa Alpha Order were to come to the working group with a plan of action to change culture. They did so.
- All chapters did the membership review (Oct. 1 deadline)



But then....

- Financial interests outweighed desire to change
- “We have to fill our houses”
- “You shouldn’t make any decision without consulting us first!”
- Deferred Membership was put back on the table
- Violation of “due process rights”
- WVU cannot be permitted to do this; to do so would threaten our very existence if other university’s follow their model
- Dr. Richardson is a Monster!
- Adults telling students they don’t have to listen to these rules
- Our students are caught in the middle



The IIFC

- Sigma Chi
 - Alpha Sigma Phi
 - Kappa Alpha Order
 - Phi Sigma Kappa
 - Theta Chi
- Similar things happen at University of Michigan, University of Nevada at Reno



So, Now What?

- Gray Area & chapters in limbo
 - HQ pressuring others to join
 - Gee's response with a 10 year ban
 - NIC's inability to keep their members in line
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- Trying to keep harmony going.
 - Our story is unfinished



What I Can Say Firmly

- Our students care about their community
- Our IFC is bonded in a way like we never seen before
- The numbers that matter, are up... (retention/persistence)
- All Greek GPA at a 3.08
- All new member GPA for Spring 2019 men joining IFC is a 3.36
- Only 4 women released during Panhellenic Recruitment as there is no longer a “grade risk”
- NPHC is growing
- Multicultural Greek Council Forming
- Harmony is coming back

