



OFFICE OF FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Division of Student Life



An Experience *115 years* in the Making

The Greek Community of the University of Washington provides a comprehensive educational and social learning experience for our members through the promotion of Brother/Sisterhood, leadership, personal development, academics, and service to the University and Seattle community.

Discover what's next.
It's the Washington Way.

Our Story

Our story began in 1896 with the establishment of the first fraternity of the University of Washington at its new campus by Lake Washington. More than 115 years later it has grown to include fifty fraternities and sororities comprised of 3,600 students and thousands of alumni/ae. For many decades the University and the fraternities and sororities (collectively known as the Greek Community) had an arms-length relationship. The organizations operated without University recognition or support. Direct advisement of the programs and activities of the Interfraternity Council (fraternities) and Panhellenic Association (sororities) was via advisors privately employed by the councils. In 1993 the University entered into individual recognition agreements with each organization which offered benefits in exchange for programming and other requirements.

In recent years the University and Greek Community came to share the common belief that working together was beneficial for all concerned. In 2009 a unique operational and funding agreement was reached between the two councils and alumni/ae leaders as well as the University administration. With this agreement, the story of the Greek Community continued with the creation of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (OFSL).

The culmination of the vision to create the OFSL resulted in six tenets by which we strive to serve the Greek Community: programming, advocacy, advisement, connections to services, training, and promotion of standards. These tenets serve to bridge the mental and physical divide created by 45th Street between the Greek Community and the University. This assistance is provided by three professional staff members at multiple levels, including the councils, fraternities and sororities, individual student leaders, advisors, house corporations, and alumni/ae.

Today the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life provides the Greek Community a "seat at the table" within the University structure. The OFSL also encourages and facilitates a state of cooperation and collaboration between Greek entities as well as between the Greek Community and other student organizations, departments, administration, neighbors, and the University as a whole.

The Story of Fraternity and Sorority Life is old, yet it has just begun...

Our Commitment

Access – We promote outreach to all incoming students via the recruitment process and facilitate connections to University services and resources. We advocate for the needs of the members and organizations, help bridge relations between the organizations and their (inter)national headquarters, and serve as an administrative resource for members and advisors.

Engagement – We advise and provide leadership development, training opportunities, and programming for fraternities and sororities. We assist students with acclimation into the Greek Community and leadership roles. We cultivate relationships with advisory and house corporation boards, facilitate relationships between organizations and departments, and advocate collaboration and cooperation.

Diversity – Students within fraternities come from a myriad of backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and socio-economic experiences. New outreach to international students has been initiated. Service to the community to help people of all backgrounds is a priority for Greek organizations. Philanthropic endeavors raised \$576,000 for charitable organizations. Countless hours of hands-on service were provided directly to those in need. New programs with the United Greek Council and the National Pan-Hellenic Council are underway.

Care – We serve as advisors and often as counselors. We respond to emergencies and provide support in difficult times. We offer connections to essential University services in a time of need and serve as a resource to parents with questions or concerns. Additionally, we participate in the Consultation and Assessment Team a collaborative effort of University units to respond to emergent needs of students.

Student Learning – We help students develop decision making skills in order to enhance leadership development, ethical growth, and critical thinking. We facilitate student participation in regional and national conferences which focus on diverse and emerging issues. We encourage the use of best practices.

Our Services

Programming – Provide educational programs and learning opportunities via presentations at individual fraternities and sororities, as well as support for the programming efforts of the councils. Support advisors and house corporations through awareness of national trends and best practices.

Advocacy – Represent the needs and interests of the Greek Community within the University as well as to non-University constituents. Support the efforts of student leaders, advisors, house corporations, and alumni through creation of new services and development efforts.

Advisement – Directly advise the efforts of council officers as well as regularly meet with fraternity and sorority presidents to provide advice and support. Hold quarterly meetings for advisors and house corporations. Meet with representatives and officers of the (inter)national offices of the fraternities and sororities to apprise them of the standing of the organization.

Connections – Facilitate connections between Greek organizations and members and University points of service, resources, and programs. Encourage University department interaction and involvement in the Greek Community.

Training – Plan and execute council officers' retreat and presidents' retreat. Assist with Recruitment Counselor training. Work with individual officers in understanding responsibilities of positions. Provide training regarding the Greek Community to University departments and programs.

Standards – Encourage high standards in the areas of housing, recruitment, behavior and accountability, while acknowledging the value of peer governance. Through the encouragement of high standards and best practices, guide Greek Community to top 10 status in the nation as well as each fraternity and sorority being within the top 10% of its chapters nationwide.

Quick Facts

- Greek life began at the University in 1896.
- The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life was formed in July 2009. It provides services to 32 fraternities and 17 sororities.
- 11% of University students are Greek.
- 29% of UW students accepted into the Teach for America program were Greek affiliated.
- 40% of Greek members are currently on the Dean's List.
- The Greek community raised \$576,000 this past year for nonprofit organizations.
- OFSL staff members regularly attend events, programs, and meetings at fraternity or sorority houses or sponsored by the organizations.
- OFSL staff members are active members of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors and regularly attend professional development conferences.

"I can say wholeheartedly and with complete conviction that being a member of a sorority has drastically impacted my college experience, and has been a journey that has helped shape me into the woman I am today. Through involvement with my own chapter, and with Panhellenic, I have developed stronger leadership skills, participated in philanthropy and community service events, excelled academically, acquired an incredible network of alumnae support, and built relationships with some of the most incredible people I have ever met in my life."

Lesley Schreiber, UW Senior

"I was never sure I'd join a fraternity when I came to college, but after joining the Greek Community I've noticed myself becoming more successful socially and a better leader. My fraternity encouraged me to push my limits and grow as a person, and the opportunities it's given me have played an important role in the development of my character."

Jason Barber, UW Senior

"My fraternity has introduced me to so many amazing people. It's made the idea of Brotherhood mean something big to me-- these are the friends that I'll have for the rest of my life."

Richard Clough, UW Junior

"Once a month, my sorority volunteers at the Union Street Gospel Mission serving food to the homeless. Giving back to the community is important to Greek members and living with 80 other women makes it easy to organize service opportunities."

Katie Smith, UW Sophomore

Challenges & Opportunities

- Challenge: OFSL is limited in programming and storage space as well as space for growth of staff or council services. Opportunity: Space exists in other locations that provide the potential for a preeminent Greek life office facility, ensuring national recognition and room for significant growth for programs, services, and staff.
- Challenge: Only two of four Greek councils fall under the OFSL umbrella. Opportunity: If future University funding permits and the councils agree, then services, programs, and staff can be tailored to advise all four councils.
- Challenge: Greek members are not fully aware of University services and programs. Likewise, University departments have not significantly interacted with Greek letter organizations. Opportunity: Connect Greek organizations and members with University services and introduce University departments to the various facets of Greek life.
- Challenge: OFSL funding is dependent upon a combination of state funds, which may decrease, and council contributed funds. Opportunity: Increase outreach and development opportunities to endow OFSL operations and facilities.



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