Greek Life Task Force

Le Norman J. Strong
John E. Kolb
Greek Life Review Update

Agenda

• Committee Structure
• Committee Membership
• Core Issues
• Core Recommendation Ares
• Guest Panels
• Schedule
“By supporting academic achievement, community service, and leadership development, our Greek system has produced young men and women who have demonstrated strength of character, and who have, in true Rensselaer tradition, changed the world.”

When Greek organizations fulfill their intended purposes they create deep friendships, provide members a support network, and aid in the personal development of students. We know that for many of our students, Greek life is an essential part of their experience at Rensselaer.”

Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson – August 27, 2018
Open Lines of Communication: This was an opportunity for all participants to meet, get to know one another, develop a better understanding of each other’s perspectives, and to have a full and frank airing of the issues that each perceives as challenges for the continued sustainability of the current Greek Life system.

Providing a Voice in the Process: All participants were introduced to the members of the Greek Life Task Force and provided contact information to ensure that they can give feedback on issues or topics they would like to see reviewed.

Arriving at a Better Understanding of the Issues: The discussion helped all participants see more clearly the urgent problems within the Greek Life community: problems of falling membership, issues of legal jeopardy, a high rate of sexual misconduct, problems with health and safety violations, and how current conditions present a clear and present risk to Greek Life members and the Rensselaer community as a whole.

Deliverables to Move the Process Forward: By the second day of frank discussion, each organization had undertaken to identify three clear goals that could help them improve their membership experience. Each chapter agreed that within one week they will provide written descriptions of their three goals to their staff liaison in the Office of Greek Life Commons (OGLC).
1. Only chapters in "good standing" may participate in rush; judicial cases and the Greek Life Five Star assessment will be utilized to determine if a chapter is in good standing.

2. Chapters must adhere to a checklist of requirements that will be developed by the Greek Life Task Force in collaboration with the Deans of the Greek Life Commons and approved by the Dean of Students.

3. All Greek Life members, alumni/ae advisers, house corporation board members, and alumni/ae who will have any form of contact with students participating in rush must undergo an approved training program and be certified as having successfully completed the program.

4. Chapters who do not submit the required certification documents may not participate in rush.

5. Individual chapter members who complete the training program must sign an agreement indicating their participation in the training, and their agreement to adhere to the principles and guidelines governing their involvement in rush, recruitment, and intake activities.

6. Individual chapter members who do not complete the training, and/or who do not sign certification documents may not participate in any aspect of rush.

7. Any chapter found in violation of rush guidelines will be suspended for two (2) calendar years or six (6) semesters.
Greek Life Review Committee Structure

Executive Sponsor Group

- Provide guidance, support, and resources to the Greek Life Review Committee and associated process
- Ensure adherence to Institute-wide policies and procedures
- Ensure engagement by, and critical input from, Institute and other key stakeholders
- Oversee documentation, information review, and discussion related to the Rensselaer Greek Life system
- Review key findings and recommendations
Greek Life Task Force

- Review current operating models, associated programs, conditions, services, facilities, and vulnerabilities of Rensselaer Greek organizations
- Structure Discussion Panels and garner input on core questions
- Invite external organizations, including representatives from other universities, to provide a broader perspective
- Gather appropriate benchmarking from universities that are viewed as having model Greek Life systems; universities that have modified their Greek Life systems in response to issues; and universities that have alternative living/learning systems
- Propose strategies that align Rensselaer Greek organization programs, activities, operations, and facilities with CLASS
- Propose recommendations to enhance Rensselaer Greek Life, and address issues, vulnerabilities, and opportunities
- Review and consolidate the Statement of Relationship Between Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Social Fraternities/Sororities at Rensselaer and the Greek Commons Agreement, to align with CLASS and conform with the Greek Life Task Force recommendations
Greek Life Task Force Discussion Panels

- Participate in designated discussion panels and sponsored events
- Provide critical input to the Greek Life Task Force around core questions from their unique perspectives
- Provide feedback, through written summaries, to the Greek Life Task Force

Greek Life Review Committee Structure
Greek Life Review Committee Membership

Executive Sponsor Group

• Le Norman J. Strong, Interim Vice President for Student Life (Chair)
• Craig A. Cook, General Counsel and Secretary of the Institute
• Graig R. Eastin, Vice President for Institute Advancement
• John E. Kolb, ’79, Vice President of Information Services and Technology and Chief Information Officer
• Curtis N. Powell, Vice President for Human Resources
• Claude D. Rounds, Vice President for Administration
Greek Life Review Committee Membership

Greek Life Task Force

- John E. Kolb, ‘79, Vice President of Information Services and Technology and Chief Information Officer (Chair)
- Justina Thompson ’20
- Vishruth Gopalakrishnan ’20
- Emily Lockwood ’20
- Laurel White ’07
- Sara Stein ’04
- Roger Mike ’70
- Susan P. Gilbert, Professor and Head, Department of Biological Sciences
- Johnson Samuel, Associate Professor, Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering
- Travis T. Apgar, Assistant Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students
- Michell Tollinchi-Michel, Assistant Vice President for Student Transitions
- Le Norman J. Strong, Executive Sponsor Group Chair
Greek Life Review Committee Membership

Greek Life Task Force Discussion Panels

- Travis T. Apgar, AVP for Student Life & Dean of Students (Facilitator)
- LeNorman J. Strong, Interim Vice President for Student Life (Facilitator)
- Michell Tollinchi-Michel, AVP for Student Transitions (Facilitator)

Greek Life Review Committee Membership

- Jack Conlin ’20
- Briggite Obermeyer ’20
- Bryan Johns ’19
- Erin Lazar ’19
- Paige Mastalerz ’19
- Aditya Mitra ’19
- Zachariah Spurrier ’19
- Katie Todd ’17
- Bryan Jones, ’09
- Sara Stein ’04

- Gregory Waters ’97
- Suzanne Cano Meeker ’88
- John Spohn ’82
- Robert Riggs ’02, Executive Vice President of Phi Kappa Theta International Fraternity - 2007-present
- Jacqueline Farmer, Telecomm. Analyst, ITI-DotCIO
- Norris Pearson, Operations Manager, Houston Field House
Three Principle Themes

Sustainability
• How do we improve 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?

Variability in the System
• How do we keep the strong chapters strong and help the weaker chapters improve?
Core Issues (1)

CLASS

- Chapter Mission
- Purpose and values
- Sisterhood/Brotherhood/Affinity
- Chapter supervision
- Alumni/ae engagement and support
- Diversity and inclusiveness

- Greek Commons
- House residency and programming
- Education and training (New member and ongoing member)

- Academic
- GPA
- Persistence

- The Arch
Core Issues (2)

Behavioral
• Alcohol/Substance Abuse
• Title IX/sexual assault
• Bystander intervention
• Anti-hazing
• Mental Health
• Bias and discrimination

Financial
• Financial stability
• Facility care/costs
• Residency/Occupancy
• House management

Health/Safety
• Cleanliness
• Code compliance

Agreements and Scorecard
• Greek Life relationship statement and Greek Commons agreement
• Comprehensive Scorecard
• 5-star rating
• Financial audits
• Academic performance
List of Areas for Recommendations

- Establishing strong relationships
- Hard alcohol and substance abuse
- Relationship of finances, behaviors, occupancy, health/safety
- CLASS
- Rensselaer Student Judicial System
- Relationship Statement and Greek Commons Agreement
- Develop scorecard that is transparent and public
- Intentional emphasis on diversity and inclusion
- Academics
- The Arch
Guest Panel: University Leaders

Friday, November 9th (4:00 – 6:00pm) – CBIS Auditorium

• Dr. Suzy Nelson, Vice President and Dean of Students, MIT (Exemplar Program)

• Kara Miller McCarthy, Robert G. Engel Director of Sorority & Fraternity Life, Cornell University (Reformed Program)

• Steve Klass, Vice President, Campus Life, Williams College (Eliminated Greek Life)
Guest Panel: Inter/national Greek Organizations

Sunday, November 11th (8:30 – 10:00am) – CBIS Auditorium

- Dr. Jamie Riley, Alpha Phi Alpha
- Rob Riggs, Phi Kappa Theta
- Michael Carey, Delta Tau Delta
- Bill Farkas, Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity
- Mandi Wise Evans, Delta Zeta Sorority
- Troy Bartels, Alpha Phi
- William Foran, North American Interfraternity Conference
- Ashley Canty, North American Interfraternity Conference
- Frances Mitchelson, National Panhellenic Conference
August
• Launch Greek Life Task Force
• Conduct Greek Life Forums

September
• GLTF Meetings and communications to community
• Facilitate campus discussion groups

October
• GLTF Meetings and communications to community
• Draft presentation by end of the month

November
• External Panels
• Community briefings
• Draft report to President Jackson
• Final report to President Jackson
President Shirley Ann Jackson

“...Just as it served an essential role in my own education, the Greek system has been an important part of our Rensselaer community for a long time. It must evolve with the times, however. The work that all of us are doing will lay the foundation for what we hope will be another 165 years of contributions. It depends upon you. It depends upon all of us...”
Thank You

https://info.rpi.edu/greek-life-task-force

GLTF@rpi.edu